



Ex-MP Mthandeni,
11 inmates walk free



By Thokozani Mazibuko

FORMER Ngwempisi Member of Parliament, Mthandeni Dube, has walked free from the Matsapha Correctional Centre after serving part of his 18-year sentence imposed in July 2024. Dube’s release forms part of a group of 11 inmates granted conditional release by His Majesty’s Correctional Services (HMCS) as part of ongoing rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Form 4 pupil
wins army
recruitment race

Page 3



Immigration
Officers to carry
firearms under new bill

Page 4



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By Thokozeni Mazibuko

FORMER Ngwempisi Member of Parliament, Mthandeni Dube, has walked free from the Matsapha Correctional Centre after serving part of his 18-year sentence imposed in July 2024.

Dube's release forms part of a group of 11 inmates granted conditional release by His Majesty's Correctional Services (HMCS) as part of ongoing rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Announcing the release at Matsapha on Tuesday, HMCS Commissioner General Phindile Lomakhosini Dlamini said Dube and the other inmates were being conditionally released under specific behavioural expectations.

"Their release is conditional, and they are expected to be on their best behaviour, respect the rule of law, and not commit offences. Any breach of these conditions will result in their immediate return to serve their jail terms," the Commissioner General said.

Dube, alongside fellow legislator Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza, was arrested on July 25, 2021, during a period of widespread pro-democracy unrest that followed the death of a university law student. The two lawmakers were later charged under Eswatini's Suppression of Terrorism Act, accused of inciting violence through public speeches calling for democratic reforms, including the election of the prime minister.

His release follows weeks of speculation surrounding internal royal clemency processes and procedural reviews within the correctional system. Reports indicate that Dube's freedom comes after administrative assessments and recommendations within HMCS, supported by rehabilitation and conduct evaluations during his incarceration.

Commissioner General Dlamini noted that the correctional service prioritizes discipline, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society as part of its mandate to transform offenders into law-abiding citizens.

"Our correctional system is not only about punishment but also about rehabilitation and reformation. When inmates show remorse and willingness to change, we consid-

Ex-MP Mthandeni, 11 others walk free from jail



▲ Former Ngwempisi Member of Parliament Mthandeni Dube and 11 other inmates have been released from jail.

er them for conditional release in line with the law," she said.

Other inmates released alongside Dube include Boycie Gama (57), Nkosinathi Fondo Matsaba (45), Michael Mavuso (55), Joseph Moyane (49), Mfanyana Mabuza, Khuzwayo Khumalo (75), Aaron Msibi (80), Cabi Mabuza (60), Sitile Dlamini (42), and Catherine Hlatjwayo (53).

Dube's return to public life is expected to reignite discussions on national unity and reconciliation. His supporters view his release as a potential turning point for peacebuilding, while authorities emphasize adherence to the law and respect for national institutions. Commissioner General Dlamini concluded by urging all released inmates to embrace a new beginning:

"We urge them to be responsible citizens, to contribute positively to their communities, and to uphold the laws of the Kingdom of Eswatini."

Dube is expected to reunite with his family and community in Ngwempisi in the coming days.

ComGen warns released inmates to uphold conditions or face return to prison

His Majesty's Correctional Services (HMCS) Commissioner General Phindile Lomakhosini Dlamini has issued a stern warning to inmates recently granted conditional release, reminding them that their newfound freedom comes with strict behavioural obligations and close supervision by correctional authorities.

Speaking during the release ceremony at the Matsapha Correctional Centre, Commissioner General Dlamini cautioned the former inmates - among them former Ngwempisi Member of Parliament Mthandeni Dube - that they remain under the authority

of HMCS and must conduct themselves with discipline, respect, and total compliance with the law.

"Their release is conditional. They are expected to be on their best behaviour, respect the rule of law, and refrain from engaging in any conduct that may bring them into conflict with the law," Dlamini emphasized.

She stressed that the released individuals are not permitted to speak to the media or engage in any public commentary related to their incarceration or ongoing supervision, saying such restrictions are part of the rehabilitation process aimed at ensuring successful reintegration into society.

"They remain under the supervision of His Majesty's Correctional Services. Any form of media engagement, political activity, or public statement without approval will be considered a violation of their release conditions," she said.

Dlamini made it clear that HMCS officers will continue to monitor the conduct of all conditionally released inmates through structured supervision programmes. She noted that this oversight is intended to support their reintegration while ensuring they remain compliant with the terms of their release.

"We will be monitoring them closely. Any breach of these conditions will result in their immediate return to custody to serve the remainder of their sentences," the Commissioner General warned.

The Commissioner added that the correctional service operates under the principle that rehabilitation and discipline go hand in hand, and that conditional release should not be mistaken for full pardon.

"This is not an end to their sentence but a privilege extended to those who have demonstrated remorse and good conduct. It is therefore crucial that they maintain that standard even outside prison walls," she explained.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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AIMED towards sustainable transport transformation, His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela, Minister for Natural Resources and Energy recently led a high-level delegation to India to explore best practices in electric mobility policy and implementation.

This visit marks a pivotal milestone in Eswatini's ongoing efforts to develop a comprehensive National Mobility Policy aimed at fostering sustainable development and enhancing climate resilience. The benchmarking exercise was facilitated by expert consultants Fichtner Engineers (India) and Computronics Systems (Eswatini), whose collaboration underscores the technical rigour behind this knowledge exchange initiative. The delegation's itinerary included meetings with key Indian government agencies and industry leaders who are at the forefront of electric mobility innovation.

Upon arrival, the Eswatini delegation received a warm and official welcome from the Commissioner of the Delhi Transport Department and her team. The Commissioner highlighted India's ambitious strides

Eswatini advances electric mobility ambitions ... Kingdom learns from India's electric bus procurement model

in transforming its transport sector through electrification and clean energy integration. His Royal Highness expressed sincere gratitude for the hospitality extended by the Government of India and acknowledged the country's pioneering role in electric mobility. He reaffirmed Eswatini's commitment to adopting cleaner, greener, and more inclusive transport solutions tailored to the nation's unique context.

One of the key engagements was with Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL), a government-owned enterprise operating under India's Ministry of Power.

CESL shared valuable insights into its innovative bulk procurement model for electric buses, a strategy that has successfully facilitated large-scale deployment of electric vehicles in India and enabled exports to countries such as Mauritius.

This model leverages economies of scale to reduce costs and accelerate adoption, serving as a replicable framework for Eswatini's ambitions.

CESL also advised the Eswatini delegation to prepare for a significant increase in electricity demand as the country transitions to



▲ Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela in a group picture with India high-ranking officials. Eswatini is looking to learn from India ways to explore best practises in electric mobility policy and implementation.

electric mobility.

The company emphasised the importance of integrating renewable energy sources, particularly solar power, to sustainably meet this demand and reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector.

Further enriching the visit, HRH Prince Lonkhokhela held discussions with the Additional Secretary at India's Ministry of Heavy Industries. These talks delved into India's advancements in clean transport innova-

tions beyond electric vehicles, including hydrogen and ethanol-powered trains. Such technologies represent the next frontier in decarbonising transport and offer promising avenues for Eswatini to explore as part of its broader sustainable mobility strategy.

This comprehensive benchmarking exercise exemplifies Eswatini's proactive approach to learning from global leaders and adapting international best practices to local realities.

By Thokozani Mazibuko



Form 4 pupil wins army recruitment race

AN 18-year-old Form 4 student from Ntandweni High School has proven that determination and courage can open doors to a brighter future. Busiswa Ndlangamandla, representing the Ladies Category Position 1 under Dvokodvweni Inkhundla, emerged victorious in the army recruitment selection held at Malindza-Mbadlane.

With youthful confidence and a heart full of ambition, Busiswa shared her joy after being announced among the successful candidates. “I thank my class teacher for believing in my dreams of becoming a soldier,” she told Eswatini Daily News (EDN), her face beaming with pride.

Despite her newfound success, Busiswa says this is only the beginning of her journey. “Even at the army barracks, I will continue with my dream of becoming a journalist. I will continue with my studies. Winning the army recruitment race will definitely change my story and that of my family,” she said.

Her victory has brought pride not only to her school but to the entire community of Malindza-Mbadlane, where residents have hailed her as a symbol of hope and

perseverance for the youth. Teachers at Ntandweni High School also expressed their excitement, describing Busiswa as a disciplined and hardworking learner who always aimed high.

The Dvokodvweni Inkhundla recruitment event, part of the ongoing national army vetting process, saw hundreds of hopefuls competing for a limited number of positions. Bucophu and other local leaders supervised the verification of identity documents to ensure fairness and transparency.

Busiswa’s achievement stands as an inspiring reminder that with faith, mentorship, and determination, even young women from rural communities can rise to the call of duty and still chase their academic dreams.

As she prepares to take on her next challenge in uniform, Busiswa’s message to her peers is simple yet powerful: “Never stop dreaming, even when your dreams seem far away.”



▲ Busiswa Ndlangamandla dreams of being a professional journalist and working in the communications department in the army.

Mthandeni rules out return to politics

By Thokozani Mazibuko

FORMER Ngwempisi Member of Parliament Mthandeni Dube has ruled out any immediate return to politics following his release from the Matsapha Correctional Centre, saying his current focus is on rebuilding his life and spending time with his family.

Speaking in an interview with the Eswatini Daily News (EDN), Dube expressed gratitude to His Majesty King Mswati III for his mercy and leadership, describing him as “a King who forgives.” The former legislator said he intends to use his time after release to reflect, rest, and reconnect with his loved ones after a challenging period of incarceration.



▲ Former MP Mthandeni Dube has indicated he is not interested in getting back to politics.

“I have no plan to run for any parliamentary seat soon. I just want to rest and fix my life with my family,” Dube said.

“I thank His Majesty for being a King who forgives. The others who are left behind in prison know the process to receive pardon,” he added.

Dube was released last week after serving part of an 18-year sentence handed down in July 2024. His release was part of a group of inmates conditionally freed by His Majesty’s Correctional Services (HMCS) under the supervision of Commissioner General Phindile Lomakhosini Dlamini.

The former MP, who was arrested on 25 July 2021 alongside Hosea MP Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza, had been convicted under the Suppression of Terrorism Act for offences related to the 2021 pro-democracy unrest. His release follows weeks of administrative review and internal clemency processes within the correctional system.

During the release ceremony, Commissioner General Dlamini reminded all freed inmates that their release is conditional and subject to continuous supervision by HMCS.

“Their release is conditional. They must be on their best behaviour, respect the rule of law, and refrain from engaging in acts that could lead them back to prison,” Dlamini

said.

She further warned that any violation of these terms would result in the immediate revocation of their release and return to custody.

Since walking free, Dube has maintained a humble and reserved tone, saying he wishes to live peacefully and contribute positively to his community.

Grateful

“I am grateful to be home and to see my family again. This experience has taught me a lot about life, humility, and forgiveness,” he said softly.

Dube also urged those still serving sentences to remain patient and follow the proper procedures if seeking clemency.

“The process is clear, and I believe those who are eligible will receive the same mercy when the time is right,” he said.

His remarks come amid ongoing discussions about reconciliation and rehabilitation within Eswatini’s correctional system. Officials say conditional releases are part of broader efforts to reintegrate rehabilitated inmates while encouraging discipline, responsibility, and respect for the law. For now, Dube says politics is not on his agenda. “I am focused on peace, family, and rebuilding my life. That is all that matters to me right now,” he concluded.

“I thank His Majesty for being a King who forgives. The others who are left behind in prison know the process to receive pardon”

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By Delisa Magagula

THE Ministry of Home Affairs has confirmed that immigration officers could soon be armed under sweeping changes proposed in the revised Immigration Bill the first major update to the country's immigration laws in more than four decades.

The proposal was revealed during a workshop with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs held at The Happy Valley on Tuesday, November 4, 2025. The session focused on the review of the Immigration Bill, which dates back more than 40 years and is now undergoing a complete overhaul to align with current realities.

According to Section 17, Subsection 2 of the draft Bill, an immigration officer may be permitted to carry a government-issued firearm as determined by the Director in consultation with the National Commissioner of Police.

The clause sparked intense debate among Members of Parliament, with differing opinions on whether immigration officers should be armed while on duty.

Minister of Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe defended the inclusion of the clause, saying it was part of broader reforms to strengthen border control and enhance national security.

"When a law outlives its purpose, it becomes a loophole instead of a safeguard. This Bill is over 40 years old. It needs to be reviewed to reflect modern realities and ensure that our officers are well equipped to protect our borders effectively," said Dlamini.

She added that while the Bill allows for immigration officers to carry firearms, this would not take effect immediately.

"The inclusion of the provision does not mean that the officers will be armed right away. The implementation will depend on future circumstances. The law may be in place now, but whether it becomes active in five or ten years will depend on the needs of that time," said the Princess.

The Minister emphasized that the proposed amendment is a proactive measure to prepare the immigration department for potential future security challenges.

Meanwhile Home Affairs Communications Officer, Mlandvo Dlamini, echoed the Minister's statement, explaining that the clause was not an instruction but a provision to ensure readiness.

"The Bill provides for this as a legal framework, not as an immediate order. It doesn't mean that once the Bill is passed, all immigration officers will instantly be carrying guns. It's simply making sure that if the need arises, there's already a law in place to regulate it," he said.

The provision drew mixed reactions from members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, who raised questions about necessity, training, and implementation.

Mtfongwaneni MP Mdockies questioned why immigration officers needed firearms at all, saying he was not convinced by the justification provided.

"I need a stronger reason as to why immigration officers should carry firearms. We have to ask ourselves whether there are indicators that warrant such a measure. I don't see any, not now and not in the near future," he said.

Mdockies added that the role of immigration officers should remain focused on enforcing immigration laws, not taking on functions that align more closely with law enforcement agencies. Other members of the committee, including MPs from the Hhohho Region and Tsembeni Magongo,

Immigration Officers to carry firearms under new bill



▲ Home Affairs Minister Princess Lindiwe has announced that immigration officers may soon be permitted to carry firearms as part of new security measures under the revised Immigration Bill.

raised concerns about the risks associated with arming civil officers and stressed the importance of proper training if the law is ever implemented.

"If we are to go down this road, there has to be proper training. Those given firearms must be disciplined and must go through rigorous training perhaps the same kind of training our military officers undergo. We cannot just hand out guns without ensuring responsibility and restraint," said Magongo.

Several MPs also referenced other countries that do not permit immigration officers to carry firearms, warning against adopting a policy that could blur the lines between immigration enforcement and policing.

"We must not compare ourselves blindly to other nations," one Hhohho regional MP said during the discussion.

Despite the concerns, The Minister, Princess Lindiwe assured the committee that the provision was meant to empower the Ministry to act decisively should future conditions require heightened security measures.

"The global landscape is changing. Borders are becoming more complex, and we must be ready. This Bill ensures that we are not caught unprepared in the years to come," said The Minister, Princess Lindiwe.

The workshop also touched on other key elements of the revised Bill, including stricter vetting of residency applications and measures to curb the misuse of Eswatini's national identification system by foreign nationals.

The Minister, Princess Lindiwe said one of the Ministry's biggest concerns was the increasing number of foreign nationals particularly of Indian descent who now possess national identity cards and have been granted residency or citizenship through unclear processes.

"We have seen a rise in cases where foreigners are holding national ID cards. This Bill will address that by tightening procedures and ensuring that only those who meet the legal requirements are granted residency or nationality," said the Minister.

The Minister, Princess Lindiwe said the aim of the revised Bill is to close gaps in the current law that have allowed unregulated



▲ Minister of Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe defended the inclusion of the clause, saying it was part of broader reforms to strengthen border control and enhance national security.

entry, unauthorized residency, and identity misuse. "We must re-examine how people are gaining entry into the country and how they are being granted citizenship or permanent residency. The Bill will introduce tougher scrutiny and bring order where there has been inconsistency," she said.

Members of the Portfolio Committee welcomed the Minister's commitment to reform, saying the Bill must protect the country from irregular migration while ensuring transparency and accountability in how immigration matters are handled.

"The consensus is that this Bill must regulate and monitor the process of granting nationality and residency," said one committee member. Worth noting, the new Immigration Bill, once passed, is expected to

replace legislation that has been in effect since the early 1980s. The Ministry of Home Affairs says the revised law will align immigration practices with the nation's development goals and strengthen national security without compromising human rights or administrative fairness. The Minister, Princess Lindiwe concluded by reiterating that the Ministry's goal is not to militarize immigration but to ensure preparedness.

"We are modernizing the system. This Bill is about ensuring our officers are equipped, our borders are secure, and our laws are relevant to the times we live in," concluded the Minister. The workshop ended with the committee agreeing to continue consultations before the Bill is tabled in Parliament for debate.



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UN calls for Western Sahara talks based on Morocco's autonomy plan

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on Friday stating that genuine autonomy for Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty could be the most feasible solution to Rabat's 50-year conflict with the Algeria-backed Polisario Front.

Western Sahara, a tract of desert the size of Britain, has been the scene of Africa's longest-running territorial dispute since colonial power Spain left in 1975.

The U.N. Security Council, in a U.S.-drafted text, called for the parties to engage in negotiations based on an autonomy plan first presented by Morocco to the United Nations in 2007. Morocco considers the territory its own while the Polisario Front seeks to establish an independent state called the Sahrawi Republic. "We urge all parties to use the coming weeks to come to the table and engage in serious discussions," U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Mike Waltz told the council after the vote. "We believe regional peace is possible this year, and we will make every effort to facilitate progress."

Russia, China and Pakistan abstained, while Algeria did not vote. The remaining 11 council members voted in favor of the resolution, which also renewed for one year the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Western Sahara, known as MINURSO.



"The final decision on the future cannot, must not, belong to anyone other than the people under colonial domination," Algeria's U.N. Ambassador Amar Bendjama told the council after the vote. "This text ignores the proposals of the Polisario Front."

SECURITY COUNCIL ASKS FOR REVIEW OF MINURSO

Morocco's autonomy proposal would establish a local legislative, executive and judicial authority for Western Sahara

elected by its residents, while Rabat would retain jurisdiction over defense, foreign affairs and religious matters. The Polisario instead wants to hold a referendum with independence as an option.

Morocco is seeking a win-win and "face-saving" solution for all the parties to the conflict, King Mohammed VI of Morocco said after the U.N. vote. He urged Sahrawi refugees held in the Polisario-run Tindouf camps in southwestern Algeria to endorse autonomy.

The King said Morocco is starting "a new

chapter in the process of consolidating the Moroccaness of the Sahara." He also renewed his call for a "brotherly dialogue" with Algeria and said Morocco is committed to the Maghreb Union.

Thousands gathered in the streets of Morocco's cities to celebrate the vote, carrying flags and chanting patriotic slogans.

Polisario Front representative Sidi Omar said the resolution does not imply any recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara. Afterwards, the Polisario Front issued a statement saying it will not take part in "any peace process or negotiations based on proposals that aim to legitimize the Moroccan military occupation." The Security Council resolution also asked U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to provide within six months "a strategic review regarding MINURSO's future mandate, taking into account the outcome of the negotiations".

U.S. President Donald Trump reaffirmed support for Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara in July, saying a Moroccan autonomy plan for the territory was the sole solution. Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, had said the U.S. is working on a peace deal between Algeria and Morocco.

France made a similar move, recognizing Rabat's sovereignty over the territory and greenlighting investments there. In June, Britain became the third Security Council member to back autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty. Spain has also backed Rabat's position, along with an increasing number of European states, signaling a shift in EU member states' foreign policy on the issue.

(Reuters)

Inmate's Royal pardon journey: From death row to redemption

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

AFTER spending 35 years behind bars, former death row inmate Boyzie Gama says his greatest desire now is to share his story with the youth not for sympathy, but as a warning.

"I want to warn the youth," Gama said with a calm yet firm voice. "Using dangerous weapons, drugs, bad friends and gangsterism only lead to death and

destruction. I have lived that life, and I know where it ends."

Gama, now 57, was only 22 years old when he was convicted of a violent crime and sentenced to death a sentence later commuted to life imprisonment. He is among the 12 inmates who recently received a royal pardon, walking out of prison with a heart full of gratitude and a mind focused on redemption.

From the gallows to grace

Speaking shortly after his release, Gama

reflected on the terrifying early years of his incarceration when he lived each day not knowing whether it would be his last. "Death row is not a place anyone wants to be. I was full of anger and regret, but over time, I found God and forgiveness. That is when my transformation began," he shared.

While serving his sentence, Gama made a decision that changed his life forever he turned to education and faith.

Starting with adult literacy classes, he worked his way through secondary education, later earning several certificates and diplomas in counseling and theology.

Today, he proudly holds multiple academic qualifications and is set to graduate from an American university with a four-year degree in Theology, Psychology, and the Bible.



▲ Boyzie Gama (57) said he is lucky to be alive after he was sentenced to death by hanging while he was 22 years old.

... 'I am a changed man'

GAMA describes his journey as one of pain, repentance, and hope.

"Prison didn't just punish me; it taught me who I really am," he said. "I learned discipline, humility, and the value of time. Above all, I learned that forgiveness both giving and receiving brings true freedom."

He credits the Correctional Services Department for supporting rehabilitation initiatives that gave inmates a second chance at life. "If you take the opportunities that prison offers education, skills, and spiritual growth you can walk out a better person," he said.

A message to the youth

Gama now dreams of visiting schools, communities, and youth centers to speak directly to young people. "Many of our young brothers and sisters are being destroyed by drugs, alcohol, and crime. I want them to see me and understand that this is not the life to choose," he said.

He hopes his life story from death row to redemption will inspire others to change before it is too late. "No matter how far you've gone, there is always a way back," he added.

A royal act of mercy

Gama's release comes under a royal pardon extended to 12 inmates who demonstrated good behavior and genuine rehabilitation. The act is part of His Majesty King Mswati III's continuous effort to promote forgiveness, reconciliation, and second chances. For Gama, that mercy is not taken lightly. "I thank His Majesty for this act of grace. I was once lost, but today I am free not just in body, but in spirit. I intend to use my freedom to serve others," he said. As he steps back into society after more than three decades, Gama stands as a living testament to transformation a reminder that even in the darkest places, light can still be found.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

REDI secures E5 million insurance cover for King V delegates

THE Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) has announced a public liability insurance cover worth E5 million for delegates attending the upcoming King V Presentation set to take place this Thursday at Esangweni, Matsapha. The insurance cover is part of REDI's comprehensive risk management and corporate governance strategy for one of the country's most anticipated corporate events of the year.

World Bank to boost local-currency lending in Africa

THE International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private investment arm, is expanding its local-currency lending and direct investments into companies across Africa to help projects reach the scale required to attract major global funds, Managing Director Makhtar Diop told the Africa Financial Summit in Casablanca on Monday. "What investors tell us is that when we have assets of less than a billion, it doesn't interest us," said Diop.

Oil slips on oversupply, stronger dollar

LONDON — Oil prices fell over 1 per cent on Tuesday as OPEC+'s decision to pause output hikes in the first quarter next year along with weak manufacturing data and a stronger dollar weighed on the market. Brent crude futures fell 76 cents, or 1.2 per cent, to \$64.13 a barrel by 1256 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was down 81 cents, or around 1.3 per cent, at \$60.24 a barrel.

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Prime Rate (July 2023)		11%
Inflation (July 2023)		4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

Eswatini to raise border entry limit beyond E1 000

By Delisa Magagula

THE Ministry of Finance has announced plans to increase the cash limit travellers can bring into Eswatini at border entry points, which currently stands at E1,000.

The increment, revealed by Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg during this week's Finance in Focus address, forms part of the Government's broader efforts to modernise and digitise border and revenue services.

Rijkenberg said the decision is intended to align the country's entry regulations with evolving trade and financial trends across the region.

"There are some lovely things in the pipeline, looking at increasing the limit of E1,000 at the border gates to a higher amount of entry things," he said.

Although he did not disclose the exact figure or implementation date, the minister confirmed that the review is already underway. He explained that the increase is one of several measures being developed to make government processes more efficient and accessible to citizens and businesses.

"We are trying to make sure the man on the street really gets a feel for what's going on and why we do it. We're looking at digitising a lot of the services outside of revenue services. A lot of these things are in the pipeline, and I normally like to talk about them when they are actually being done so we can announce them properly," said the Minister.

According to the Ministry, the new entry limit will be established through consultations between the Ministry of Finance, the Eswatini Revenue Service, and other border management agencies.

Officials are said to be assessing how best to



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg.

balance easier cash movement for travellers with measures that prevent illicit financial activity.

Economist and trade analyst Dr Thulani Dlamini said the move could be beneficial for both small traders and cross-border investors.

"The current E1,000 limit has been restrictive for people doing legitimate small business transactions, especially in the informal sector. Raising it to a reasonable amount would make Eswatini's border policies more responsive to regional trade realities, but it must be coupled with strong monitoring systems," he said.

Financial governance consultant Nompilo

Mabuza added that while the review is long overdue, it must be approached carefully.

"An increase in the entry limit could improve cash flow for small traders and business travellers, but there should be robust reporting and compliance mechanisms to prevent abuse," she said.

The Ministry of Finance said the new framework would also be tied to its ongoing digital transformation agenda. This includes the introduction of automated systems to process declarations and payments at border gates.

Rijkenberg noted that the digitisation process aims to reduce manual paperwork and improve transparency, making transactions easier for both the government and the public.

Worth noting is that, the government is also positioning these reforms as part of a larger strategy to attract investment and facilitate smoother trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"The increase is being paired with a move toward digitisation of revenue and border services systems," the Minister confirmed, adding that the ministry is working to ensure that the new processes align with global anti-money-laundering standards.

Although no specific timeline has been given, Rijkenberg indicated that the changes would be implemented once technical and legal reviews are complete.

"We prefer to make announcements when things are actually being done so that we can communicate details clearly," he said.

The adjustment comes amid ongoing efforts to streamline Eswatini's financial systems and create a more business-friendly environment.

Analysts believe the change could attract more regional traders and encourage compliance at border gates, as higher limits reduce the incentive for undeclared transactions.

Eswatini leads AU push for continental industrialisation

By Delisa Magagula

IN the same address, Minister Rijkenberg outlined Eswatini's leadership role in a new African Union (AU) initiative aimed at driving industrialisation across the continent.

The minister, who currently chairs the AU's Specialised Technical Committee on Finance, said Eswatini has been mandated to develop and coordinate a strategy that would see African countries manufacturing and supplying value-added products to one another instead of exporting raw materials and importing finished goods.

"As a continent, we are exporting our raw materials and importing value-added products. What we are proposing is a shift each African country will focus on producing specific goods and have the right of supply to other governments on the continent," Rijkenberg said.

Under the proposal, each of Africa's 54 countries will be assigned specific product categories ranging from laptops and pharmaceuticals to construction equipment based on their raw ma-

terials, skill sets, and production capacity.

Governments and state-owned entities, which collectively control about a third of Africa's purchasing power, would then be required to prioritise procurement from within the continent.

The system would allow, for example, Nigeria to focus on producing laptops, Zambia on copper cables, and South Africa on automobiles.

He further said when Eswatini or another member state needs to buy such products, suppliers from the designated country would have the first right to tender, provided they meet the same quality, price, and service standards as competitors.

"It means that when Eswatini is buying laptops, and we go through a process of tender, Nigeria has the right of supply if they can match price and quality," Rijkenberg said.

The plan includes a 10-year rollout period, with a 10 percent annual increase in local con-

tent requirements, recently reaching 100 percent African production.

Intellectual property from companies would remain protected, and partnerships with global brands would be encouraged to transfer skills and technology to local industries.

Rijkenberg said Eswatini hopes to host a future AU summit to launch the initiative formal-

ly, with His Majesty King Mswati III expected to officiate.

"I really believe in this plan personally, I think it will industrialise us and benefit Eswatini hugely," he said.

Economic researcher Dr. Samkeliso Nxumalo said the plan could be transformative if implemented correctly.

"The key will be coordination, trust, and political will. If African governments commit to buying locally and enforce quality standards, this could reduce unemployment and create sustainable industries," he said.

African Union



By Delisa Magagula

THE Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) has announced a public liability insurance cover worth E5 million for delegates attending the upcoming King V Presentation set to take place this Thursday at Esangweni, Matsapha.

The insurance cover is part of REDI's comprehensive risk management and corporate governance strategy for one of the country's most anticipated corporate events of the year.

The King V Presentation is expected to draw top chief executives, board members, and senior corporate leaders from across Eswatini's business landscape.

According to REDI, the insurance policy is designed to safeguard both the organisation and the attending delegates against potential risks that could arise during the high-profile event.

The E5 million policy will cover a range of liabilities, including injuries to delegates, property damage, event-specific incidents, third-party claims, nuisance and interference, as well as legal and defence costs associated with any incidents that may occur.

Speaking during the announcement, REDI Chief Executive Officer, Dr Sikhomba Gumbi, said the insurance cover was not just a precaution but an essential measure in line with sound governance and prudent risk management.

"We are bringing together the top CEOs in the country together with their boards into one venue. This is a very big risk," Dr Gumbi said.

"If a calamity were to happen, the impact would be catastrophic. The effect on local businesses would be humongous almost like an economic Armageddon. We are therefore acting prudently to avert any disaster. We want our delegates to have peace of mind. They should attend the event in their numbers, relax, and focus on the King V and the corporate governance discussions," he said.

► Muzi Siyaya, the Managing Director of Ubombo Sugar Limited, will be a speaker at the event.



Dr Gumbi added that REDI's partnership with the insurance company reflects a commitment to responsible leadership and foresight in organising large-scale business events. He emphasised that risk management is not an afterthought but an integral part of corporate governance.

"As an organisation that promotes good governance, we must lead by example. Our partnership with Oracle Insure ensures that REDI upholds the highest standards of accountability and responsibility when hosting key national events," he said.

Worth noting is that, Oracle Insure, a leading insurance provider in Eswatini, confirmed its support for REDI's initiative, describing the partnership as an important step in strengthening corporate preparedness within the local business environment.

A spokesperson for Oracle Insure said the company was proud to be associated with REDI's commitment to risk governance.

"Public liability cover is a crucial component of corporate event management. It demonstrates foresight and care for all stakeholders involved," said the Oracle representative.

"Our role is to provide protection and assurance, allowing delegates and organisers to focus on the core objectives of the event without worrying about unforeseen risks," added the representative.

Oracle Insure noted that its partnership with REDI aligns with its broader mission of supporting sustainable business practices through innovative insurance solutions tailored to the needs of Eswatini's corporate sector.

The King V Presentation, organised under the theme of advancing corporate governance and leadership excellence, is expected to attract more than 300 delegates from the public and private sectors.



▲ Chief Executive of REDI Dr Sikhomba Gumbi.

Noteworthy is that, the gathering will focus on discussions surrounding the King V Report, which outlines new principles and practices for good governance in business and institutional leadership.

REDI has described the event as a pivotal moment for Eswatini's corporate community, offering an opportunity for executives and board members to align their strategies with global governance standards.

By securing insurance cover for all delegates, REDI is setting a new standard for how major corporate events are managed in the country.

Analysts within the business community have noted that such measures demonstrate maturity and professionalism in event planning especially in an era where safety, liability, and compliance have become central to corporate reputation management.

Dr Gumbi said REDI's decision also reflects sensitivity to the realities of modern corporate risks. From health emergencies to logistical mishaps, he said, no large event is immune to the unexpected.

"Risk management is not

just about avoiding loss; it's about ensuring continuity, confidence, and credibility. When delegates walk into that venue, they should know they are fully protected," explained Gumbi.

The King V Presentation will focus on unpacking the King V Code on Corporate Governance, which emphasises ethical leadership, transparency, accountability, and sustainable business practices. The code builds on previous King reports that have guided governance frameworks across Africa and internationally.

The Esangweni event will bring together voices from the private sector, government, and academia, creating a platform for collaboration and dialogue on strengthening governance structures within local institutions.

REDI said the event's goal is not only to introduce the King V principles but also to promote practical implementation within companies and organisations operating in Eswatini.

"This is more than a conference it's a conversation about how we lead, how we govern, and how we create resilience in our institutions," Dr Gumbi noted.

World Bank to boost local-currency lending in Africa

By Colleen Goko

THE International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private investment arm, is expanding its local-currency lending and direct investments into companies across Africa to help projects reach the scale required to attract major global funds, Managing Director Makhtar Diop told the Africa Financial Summit in Casablanca on Monday.

"What investors tell us is that when we have assets of less than a billion, it doesn't interest us," said Diop.

"When you talk to BlackRock, when you talk to all these people, they tell you that we need a certain volume so that we can

invest in our countries and have long-term resources," he said.

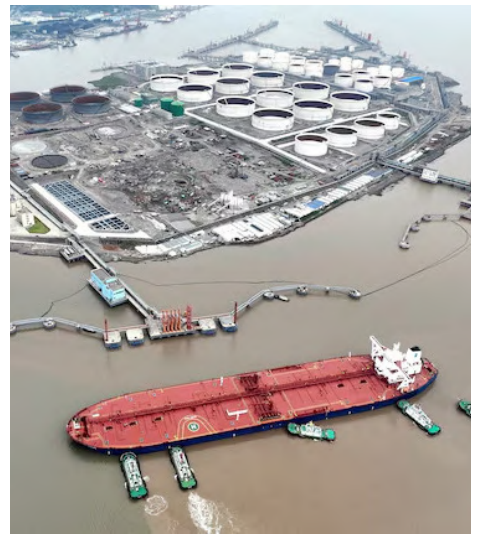
There is a widespread push to attract more private money into the developing world as rich nations slash aid spending and concessional finance is squeezed, and experts also say that local-currency lending can shield countries from currency volatility over which they have limited control.

Africa accounted for more than \$15 billion of IFC commitments last year, mostly in debt and trade finance. Diop said that local-currency lending already accounts for roughly 30 per cent of the IFC's portfolio.

The IFC is also seeking partnerships with commercial banks to exchange dollar resources for local-currency lines. Diop said deeper market integration, including interoperable stock exchanges, would help mobilise savings and attract long-term investors. (Reuters)



▲ International Finance Corporation (IFC) Managing Director Makhtar Diop.



▲ An aerial view shows tugboats helping a crude oil tanker to berth at an oil terminal, off Waidiao Island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, China.

Oil slips on oversupply, stronger dollar

By Seher Dareen

LONDON — Oil prices fell over 1 per cent on Tuesday as OPEC+'s decision to pause output hikes in the first quarter next year along with weak manufacturing data and a stronger dollar weighed on the market.

Brent crude futures fell 76 cents, or 1.2 per cent, to \$64.13 a barrel by 1256 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was down 81 cents, or around 1.3 per cent, at \$60.24 a barrel.

"The succession of poor manufacturing PMIs from Asia and then the U.S. ISM is a worry for oil demand. So is the ever present market upsetting tariff threat," said John Evans, analyst at PVM Oil Associates.

"The renaissance of the U.S. dollar is another suppressant for oil prices at the moment and we anticipate a resumption of a grind lower in the here and now."

On Sunday, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies, known as OPEC+, agreed to a small oil output increase for December and a pause in increases in the first quarter of next year.

Additionally, the boost to oil prices from the U.S. sanctioning Russian energy companies Lukoil and Rosneft was fading, chief analyst of commodities Bjarne Schieldrop at SEB Research said in a note.

"Come Nov 21 when the sanctions (on other companies that continue to trade with the Russian companies) go into force they will likely evaporate, disappear or be pushed out in time."

Also weighing on the market was a stronger dollar that hovered near a three-month high as a divided Federal Reserve - on whether or not to cut rates again in December - prompted traders to rein in interest rate cut wagers.

A higher dollar makes dollar-priced assets more expensive to those holding other currencies.

In Asia, Japan's manufacturing activity shrank in October at the fastest pace in 19 months on a slump in demand in key automotive and semiconductor sectors, a private-sector survey showed.

Market participants are now awaiting the latest U.S. inventory data from the American Petroleum Institute (API), due later in the day. A preliminary Reuters poll showed U.S. crude oil stockpiles were expected to have risen last week. (Reuters)

European shares pull back sharply after AI-induced rally; dollar gains

By Lucy Raitano and Kevin Buckland

LONDON/TOKYO — European stock markets slipped on Tuesday as a recent tech-fuelled rally faded and top Wall Street banks warned of a stock market selloff, while the dollar rose to a three-month high.

The pan-European STOXX 600 was last down 0.9 per cent, having earlier slipped as much as 1.6 per cent.

Earlier, Asian shares tumbled from all-time highs as investors booked profits following strong tech-led gains over recent weeks.

U.S. futures last pointed sharply lower on Tuesday, with S&P futures down 1 per cent and Nasdaq futures off 1.3 per cent.

The chief executives of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley warned at an investment summit in Hong Kong of the prospect of a stock market correction of more than 10 per cent over the next two years.

Signs of AI caution

Michael Brown, senior research strategist at Pepperstone, said some market participants regarded a slide in Palantir shares post-earnings as indicative of a greater degree of scepticism about the AI theme.

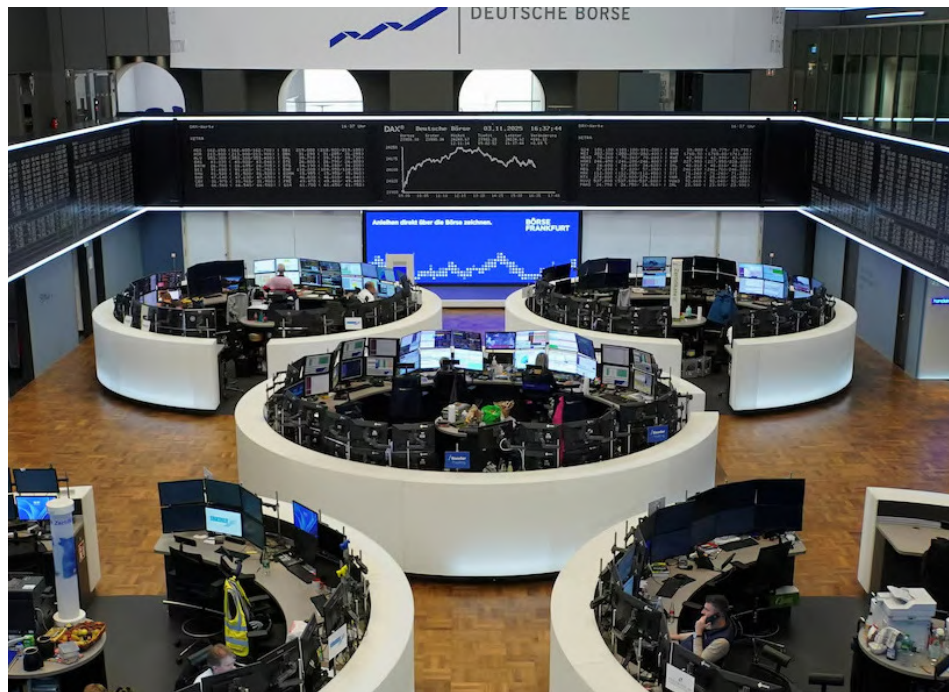
"I'm not entirely sure I buy into that, but that's the story that's going around," said Brown. He also pointed to technical factors on the S&P 500 that could have exacerbated selling pressures.

"Ultimately I think this is a pause in the broader rally, rather than the tide sort of definitively turning against the bulls," he said.

Palantir Technologies fell almost 6 per cent in early Frankfurt trading on Tuesday after earnings released on Monday.

Palantir stock trades at an eye-watering 12-month-forward price-to-earnings ratio of 246.2, compared with Wall Street darling Nvidia's 33.3, according to LSEG data.

The catalyst for the latest leg up in stocks was Amazon's \$38 billion cloud services deal



▲ The German share price index DAX graph is pictured at the stock exchange in Frankfurt, Germany.

with ChatGPT creator OpenAI.

"People are turning cautious about these circular transactions around AI, with Nvidia at the centre of everything," said Tony Sycamore, an analyst at IG.

"It's concern about all the capex that's been spent, without knowing where the revenue is going to come from."

On a tech earnings discussion and Q&A call on Tuesday, Kristofer Barrett, fund manager and head of global equities at Carmignac, said he remained confident on AI, flagging increasing big tech capex guidance.

But he also flagged "excess hyping" of recent deals as a worry.

"..From a market perspective it's pretty bad, because we're basically pulling forward newsflow, we're talking about things we're going to do three years from now, if we're already discounting that... that obviously takes away potential from future returns," he said

"It also starts discussion around, 'Is this a bubble?'"

Barrett highlighted a recent run higher of unprofitable tech stocks, noting that some parts of the market - not necessarily AI-

related but in other tech sectors like space and quantum - are reaching high market caps despite not being profitable and in some cases not even having products out.

UK, U.S. economies in focus

Britain was in focus after a speech on Tuesday by its finance minister Rachel Reeves that appeared to pave the way for broad tax rises, weighing on UK gilts.

Broader sentiment was also dampened by weakness in U.S. economic data, while a divergence in views among Federal Reserve officials clouded the outlook for a December interest rate cut.

The U.S. dollar rose to a nearly nine-month peak versus the yen, as well as a three-month high against the euro.

The U.S. dollar was supported by reduced bets for near-term Fed easing, edging up to 154.8 yen for the first time since February 13, and to \$1.149 per euro for the first time since August 1.

However, those advances evaporated as traders bought the yen and euro for their haven appeal as stock markets slid. (Reuters)

A two-month-old fuel blockade by al Qaeda-linked militants has all but paralysed the capital of Mali, turning the screws on the military government and raising concern that the jihadists might try eventually to impose their rule on the West African country.

Security analysts say the group known as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), which has been operating for months within 50 km (30 miles) of Bamako, currently has neither the intention nor the military capability to seize the city of 4 million people, which it briefly attacked last year.

But the JNIM strategy of gradually starving Bamako of fuel, forcing schools to shut and depriving businesses of diesel-generated electricity poses the gravest challenge yet to the military leaders who took power in 2021.

The jihadists' likely goal is to trigger another coup, half a dozen security analysts and diplomats told Reuters. It would be Mali's third since 2020, further depriving the country of a viable power centre and allowing JNIM to amass

more weapons and funds.

In the long run, JNIM is seeking negotiations either with the current government or a post-coup administration, which would be a milestone in its hunt for political legitimacy, according to a Control Risks client note published last week.

"With JNIM's activity putting unprecedented pressure on the government, we warn that the risk of a collapse of the regime, whether through a coup or another form of political crisis, will be very high over the coming weeks," the note said.

A source close to JNIM did not respond to a request for comment about the aims of the fuel blockade.

The IPC's first determination of famine during the conflict was for the Zamzam displacement camp south of al-Fashir in August 2024.

Al-Fashir was subject to RSF as-

Jihadists' fuel blockade poses biggest threat yet to Mali's military rulers



▲ People gather at a petrol station in Bamako, Mali, November 1, 2025, amid ongoing fuel shortages caused by a blockade imposed by al Qaeda-linked insurgents in early September.

saults and besieged for about 18 months before it fell late last month, deepening a geographical split in Sudan. During the siege, residents said food supplies were cut off, forcing people to eat animal feed and sometimes animal hides. Places where people gathered for community kitchen meals were targeted by drone attacks, they told Reuters.

As a result, all children arriving in the nearby town of Tawila after fleeing al-Fashir were malnourished, MSF project coordinator Sylvain Pennicaud told Reuters on Monday, while adults arrived emaciated.

International Criminal Court prosecutors said on Monday they were collecting evidence of alleged mass killings and rapes after al-Fashir's fall. The head of the Red Cross said history was repeating itself in Darfur.

Monday's IPC report, based on analysis for September 2025, said Tawila, as well as Mellit and Tawisha, two other destinations for people fleeing al-Fashir, were at risk of famine.

The IPC said the overall number of Sudanese facing acute food insecurity declined by 6% to 21.2 million people - or 45% of the total population - due to gradual stabilisation and improved access in central Sudan, where the Sudanese army took control at the start of the year.

However, the situation deteriorated in the Darfur and Kordofan regions as fighting concentrated there, depriving people of livelihoods, increasing prices, and driving displacement, IPC said.

Global aid cuts and bureaucratic impediments hobbling the ability of the United Nations and other aid agencies to provide food and other services have increased the humanitarian challenge in Sudan.

A statement it issued in early September announcing the blockade said its target was "these bandits who are in power", who it accused of persecuting Malians especially outside the capital.

Mali's communications ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

ESCALATING ATTACKS AS MILITARY STUMBLES

Spun out of an ethnic Tuarég uprising in 2012, JNIM has for over a decade been advancing from northern Mali into the centre of the country and inside neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger.

Assimi Goita, Mali's current military leader, seized power promising to turn the tide in the fight against the Islamist group, but his government's strategy of severing defence cooperation with France and the United States and instead leaning on Russia has been a failure.

JNIM has escalated attacks on military posts this year, boasting of killing soldiers by the hundreds while amassing pilfered weapons and working to control territory around urban centres.

Last week, it reached a deal for a hefty \$50 million ransom payment for two Emirati hostages.

JNIM has also advanced into southern Mali for the first time while expanding operations in the west, putting it in a position to enforce the fuel blockade by attacking convoys from coastal countries including Ivory Coast and Senegal.

Its focus now appears to be Bamako.

"The fuel blockade is more than an act of economic warfare - it is also a terrorist tactic," said Justyna Gudowska, executive director at investigative research group The Sentry.

(Reuters)

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FRENCH politicians are escalating their fight with Chinese online fast-fashion retailer Shein, threatening a ban over childlike sex dolls on its site, just as the company plans to open its first-ever permanent shop in Paris.

After France's consumer watchdog found sex dolls resembling children for sale on Shein's platform, finance minister Roland Lescure threatened on Monday to block Shein's access to the French market if it ever sold such dolls again.

Shein said it had sanctioned the sellers and implemented a ban on sex dolls. The Paris prosecutor's office said on Tuesday it was investigating online retail platforms Shein, Temu, AliExpress and Wish over alleged dissemination of contents including child pornography on their marketplaces.

Shein, one of the world's biggest fast-fashion retailers, had already sparked anger among French politicians and retailers over its low-cost business model and, most recently, its plans for the concession outlet set to open on Wednesday in Paris department store BHV. Other outlets will open later in Galeries Lafayette department stores in five regional cities.

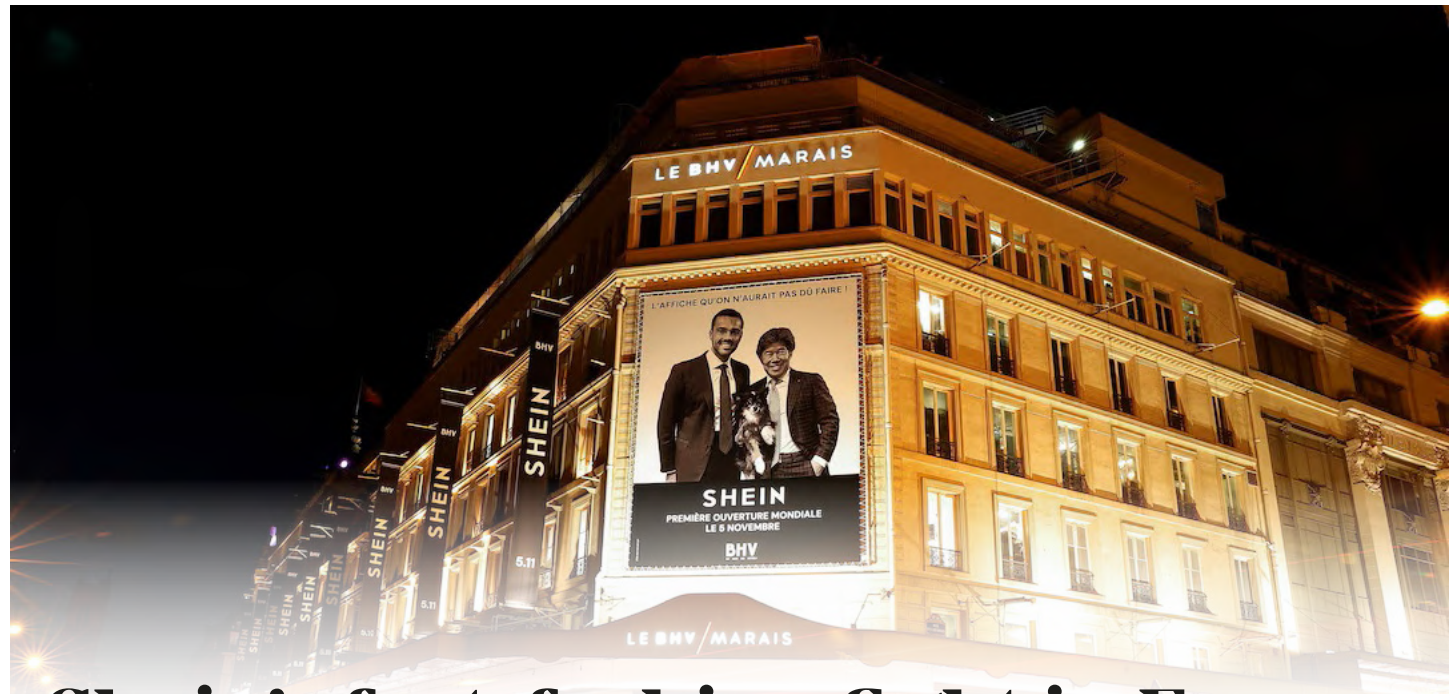
On hearing of the Shein shops, Véronique Louwagie, France's commerce and small business minister until September, began organising against them.

She phoned the president of Galeries Lafayette, the mayors of Angers, Dijon, Grenoble, Limoges, and Reims, where the Shein outlets are planned, and the head of French public bank Caisse des Dépôts, which was meant to fund a BHV real estate deal, she told Reuters.

The campaign illustrates the coordinated effort by French politicians, retailers and regulators to oppose Shein's expansion and protect high street retailers, ahead of tough new legislation on online platforms which Shein has fought against.

SHEIN 'DESTROYS SHOPS'

French lawmakers say Shein's rapid growth is driven by an unfair advantage:



Shein's fast-fashion fight in France goes up a gear with sex doll scandal

a customs duty exemption on low-value ecommerce packages that allows it to sell at rock-bottom prices. Meanwhile, French fast-fashion chains like Jennyfer and Naf Naf have gone into bankruptcy.

"Shein impacts the vitality of our regions, destroys jobs and destroys shops," Louwagie told Reuters.

Shein argues its "on-demand" business model, with factories making small batches before ramping up if a product sells well, is more efficient, and that its online marketplace can help French brands and retailers reach more customers.

Shein was approached to set up the French outlets by Société des Grands Magasins (SGM), which has been trying to turn around the struggling BHV and regional Galeries Lafayette department stores and hopes the launch will attract a younger cli-

entele.

Galeries Lafayette, however, said last month that the Shein concession stores would go against its values, and on Tuesday said it had agreed with SGM to end their franchise agreement - meaning the regional department stores will no longer carry the Galeries Lafayette name.

SGM has yet to decide on a new name for the five former Galeries Lafayette stores, a spokesperson said.

"We believe in Shein's project," said Karl-Stéphane Cottendin, general director at SGM, in an interview with BFM TV on Monday. "There's some controversy surrounding it, but we also have a brand (Shein) with 24-25 million consumers in France."

SGM and Shein seemed to embrace the controversy.

A billboard unveiled on Saturday above

the BHV store in Paris' Marais district featured a photo of SGM President Frédéric Merlin alongside Shein's executive chairman Donald Tang and his dog Satchi, under the tagline: "The billboard we shouldn't have made!"

"Creating a buzz is a way of doing business today, a more modern kind of business," said Cottendin.

Shein has been trying to win trust in France.

It hired French leaders including former interior minister Christophe Castaner as advisors, and sought to strike deals with French retailers, while Tang has travelled around the country, met critics and attended gatherings of the French elite, but failed to turn the tide of criticism.

(Reuters)

Star-eating black hole unleashes record-setting energetic flare

STAR-EATING black hole unleashes record-setting energetic flare

Scientists are observing the most energetic flare ever seen emanating from a supermassive black hole, apparently caused when this celestial beast shredded and swallowed a huge star that strayed too close.

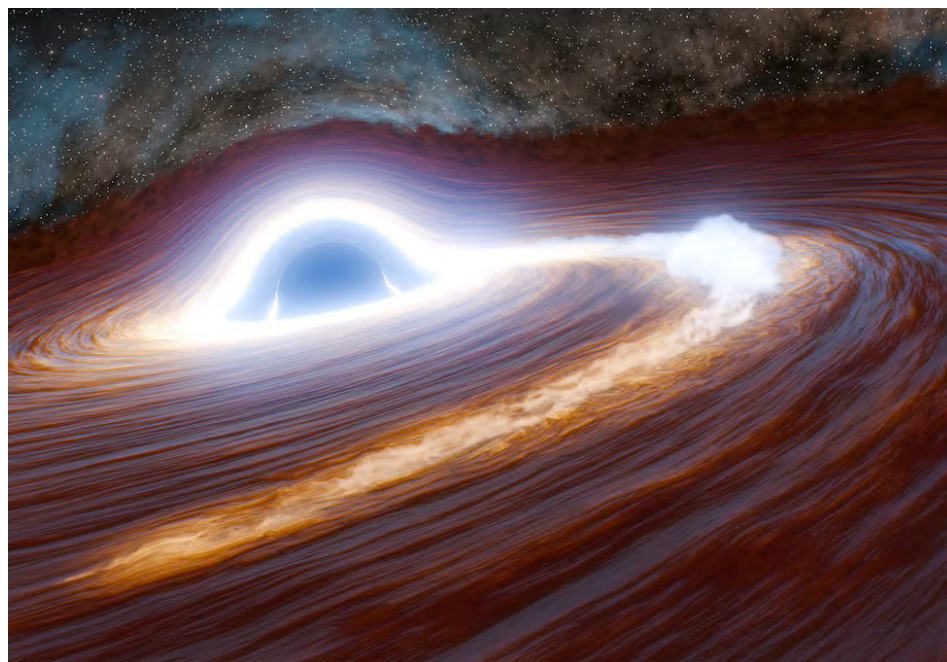
The researchers said the flare at its peak was 10 trillion times brighter than the sun. It was unleashed by a black hole roughly 300 million times the mass of the sun residing inside a faraway galaxy, about 11 billion light-years from Earth. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).

Black holes are extraordinarily dense objects with gravitational pull so strong that not even light can escape. Most galaxies are thought to have one at their center. The black hole in this research is extremely massive - more so, for instance, than the one at the center of our Milky Way that possesses roughly 4 million times the mass of the sun.

The researchers said the most likely explanation for the flare is a large star being pulled into the black hole. As material from the ill-fated star falls inward, it causes a flare of energy when it reaches the black hole's point of no return.

The researchers believe the star was at least 30 times, and perhaps up to 200 times, the mass of the sun. It may have been part of a population of stars orbiting in the vicinity of the black hole and somehow was sent too close through some interaction with another object in the neighborhood, the researchers said.

"It seems reasonable that it was involved in



▲ Artist's impression shows a star, with a mass at least 30 times the mass of the sun, being shredded in a phenomenon called a tidal disruption event after it strayed too close to a supermassive black hole, with a mass roughly 300 million times that of the sun, in a galaxy located more than 11 billion light-years from Earth.

a collision with another more massive body in its original orbit around the supermassive black hole which essentially knocked it in," said Caltech astronomer Matthew Graham, lead author of the study published on Tuesday in the journal Nature Astronomy, opens new tab.

"It was put on a much more elliptical orbit, which brought it much closer to the supermassive black hole at its closest pass - too close, it turns out," Graham added.

Supermassive black holes are surrounded

by a disk of gas and dust being drawn inward after being caught by their gravitational strength.

"However it happened, the star wandered close enough to the supermassive black hole that it was 'spaghettified' - that is, stretched out to become long and thin, due to the gravity of the supermassive black hole strengthening as you get very close to it. That material then spiraled around the supermassive black hole as it fell in," said astronomer and study co-author K.E. Saavik Ford of City Uni-

versity of New York Borough of Manhattan Community College and Graduate Center.

The flare would be the result of the gas from the shredded star heating up and shining as it falls into oblivion.

The star thought to be involved was unusually massive.

"Stars this massive are spectacularly rare both because smaller stars are born more often than massive ones, and because very massive stars live very short lives," Ford said.

The researchers suspect that stars that orbit near a supermassive black hole can increase in mass by attracting some of the material swirling around the black hole, making them abnormally large.

The researchers observed the flare using telescopes in California, Arizona and Hawaii. They considered other possible causes such as a star exploding at the end of its lifetime, a jet of material streaming outward from the black hole or a phenomenon called gravitational lensing that could have made a fainter event look more powerful. None of these scenarios fit the data.

Because of the time it takes for light to travel, when astronomers observe faraway events like this they are looking back in time to an earlier epoch of the universe.

The flare brightened by a factor of 40 during the observations, apparently as more and more material from the star fell into the black hole, and peaked in June 2018. It was 30 times more luminous than any previously observed black hole flare. It is still ongoing but diminishing in luminosity, with the entire process expected to take about 11 years to complete. (Reuters)

Dick Cheney, powerful former US vice president who pushed for Iraq war, dies at 84



▲ Former Vice President Dick Cheney speaks at the Republican Jewish Coalition's annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

DICK Cheney, a driving force behind the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, was considered by presidential historians as one of the most powerful vice presidents in U.S. history.

He died at age 84 on Monday from complications of pneumonia and cardiac and vascular disease, his family said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Republican - a former Wyoming congressman and secretary of defense - was already a major Washington player when then-Texas governor George W. Bush chose him to be his running mate in the 2000 presidential race that Bush went on to win.

As vice president from 2001 to 2009, Cheney fought vigorously for an expansion of the power of the presidency, having felt that it had been eroding since the Watergate scandal that drove his one-time boss Richard Nixon from office. He also expanded the clout of the vice president's office by putting together a national security team that often served as a power center of its own within the administration.

Cheney was a strong advocate for the 2003

invasion of Iraq and was among the most outspoken of Bush administration officials warning of the danger from Iraq's alleged stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. No such weapons were found.

He clashed with several top Bush aides, including Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, and defended "enhanced" interrogation techniques of terrorism suspects that included waterboarding and sleep deprivation. Others, including the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the U.N. special rapporteur on counter terrorism and human rights, called these techniques "torture."

His daughter Liz Cheney also became an influential Republican lawmaker, serving in the House of Representatives but losing her seat after opposing Republican President Donald Trump and voting to impeach him in the wake of the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol by his supporters. Her father, who agreed with her, said that he would vote for Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in 2024.

"In our nation's 248 year-history, there

UK to criminalise protests outside homes of public officials under new law

BRITAIN will introduce a new criminal offence banning protests outside the homes of elected officials, judges and local councillors, as part of wider efforts to curb harassment and intimidation in politics.

Under the Crime and Policing Bill, police would be given powers to stop demonstrations aimed at influencing officials in their public duties or private lives, the government said on Tuesday. Those convicted could face up to six months in prison.

"The level of abuse faced by those taking part in British politics is truly shocking - it's a threat to our democracy," security minister Dan Jarvis said in a statement.

"People should be able to participate in our politics without fearing for their own or their family's safety."

A parliamentary survey found that 96% of British lawmakers had experienced harassment, while an independent body that

oversees elections in Britain said more than half of candidates in the last general election faced threats or intimidation.

Before winning the election last year, the now Prime Minister Keir Starmer was targeted, when pro-Palestinian activists left children's shoes and a banner outside his London home, urging him to back an arms embargo on Israel.

In 2023, the then prime minister Rishi Sunak faced protests from climate activists, opens new tab outside his London and North Yorkshire residences.

The government said the bill would also introduce new offences targeting protest tactics, including bans on climbing war memorials, using flares or fireworks, and wearing face coverings to conceal identity in designated protest zones.

Ministers say the measures are designed to protect democratic institutions and ensure public safety, while critics warn they could further restrict the right to protest.

(Reuters)

has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump," said the man who had long been a foe of the left.

Cheney was troubled much of his life by heart problems, suffering the first of a number of heart attacks at age 37. He had a heart transplant in 2012.

TAKING ON IRAQ

Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who had been colleagues in the Nixon White House, were key voices pushing for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In the run-up to the war, Cheney suggested there might be links between Iraq and al Qaeda and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. A commission on the 9/11 attacks later discredited this theory.

Cheney predicted U.S. forces would be "greeted as liberators" in Iraq and that the troop deployment - which would last around a decade - would "go relatively quickly ... weeks rather than months."

Although no weapons of mass destruction were found, Cheney in later years insisted that the invasion was the right decision based on the intelligence at the time and the removal of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power.

More than a decade earlier, as defense secretary under President George H.W. Bush, Cheney had directed the U.S. military operation to expel an Iraqi occupation army from Kuwait in the first Gulf War.

He urged Bush senior to take an uncompromising line against Iraq after Saddam Hussein sent his troops to occupy Kuwait in August 1990. But at that point Cheney did not support an invasion of Iraq, saying the United States would have to act alone and that the situation would become a quagmire.

Because of Cheney's long ties to the Bush family and experience in government, George W. Bush chose him to head his vice presidential search in 2000. Bush then decided the man doing the search was the best candidate for the job.

Upon his re-entry into politics, Cheney received a \$35 million retirement package from oil services firm Halliburton, which he had run from 1995 to 2000. Halliburton became a leading government contractor during the Iraq war. Cheney's oil industry links were a subject of frequent criticism by opponents of the war.

THE FIRST REPUBLICAN IN GENERATIONS

Richard Bruce Cheney was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, to Marjorie Lorraine (née Dickey) and Richard Herbert Cheney on January 30, 1941, the day then-President Franklin Roosevelt turned 59. His mother was a waitress turned softball player, his father a federal worker with the Soil Conservation Service.

Both sides of the family were staunch New Deal Democrats, he wrote in his 2011 book "In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir."

Convinced that the president would want to know that he shared a birthday with the newborn, Cheney's grandfather urged Marjorie and Richard to share the news by telegram with the White House.

In his family he "was the first Republican probably since my great-grandfather who fought in the Civil War on the Union side," he told the PBS documentary "Dick Cheney: A Heartbeat Away."

He moved as a boy to Wyoming with his family, before attending Yale University. "I was a mediocre student, at best," he said. He dropped out.

EMBRACING DARTH VADER

Cheney went to Washington in 1969 as a congressional intern and held various White House jobs during the Republican administrations of Nixon and Gerald Ford. One of his earliest mentors was Rumsfeld, who worked as secretary of defense in both the Ford and George W. Bush administrations. When Cheney became Ford's chief of staff, he succeeded Rumsfeld.

During the 10 years he served as Wyoming's only congressman, Cheney had a highly conservative record, consistently voting against abortion rights. He also voted against the release of imprisoned South African leader Nelson Mandela and against gun control and environmental and education funding measures.

His wife Lynne, who had been his high school sweetheart, became a conservative voice on cultural issues. Liz, the couple's eldest daughter, was elected to the House in 2016 after building a reputation for pushing hawkish foreign policy views similar to her father's.

During his time as vice president, late-night television comedians referred to Cheney as Darth Vader.

(Reuters)



▲ Police officers walk outside The Bell Hotel during a protest, after the British government won a court ruling resulting in asylum seekers not being evicted from the hotel in Epping, Britain.

MISS TEEN AFRICA 2024/25. . .

Siniketiwe Maseko to represent Eswatini

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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SINIKETIWE Maseko, an 18-year-old model hailing from Mvutjini is poised to bring pride to Eswatini as she prepares to represent the nation at the prestigious Miss Teen Africa pageant.

Crowned Miss Teen Hhohho Queen for 2024/2025, Siniketiwe’s journey is a compelling story of resilience, ambition, and the power of dreams. Expressing her excitement and gratitude, Siniketiwe shared, “I’m so honoured to represent Eswatini at an international level, especially in one of the famous pageants like Miss Teen Africa. I’m so glad that through my hard work, I finally fulfilled one of my dreams.”

Siniketiwe believes that her personal values and qualities align perfectly with the ethos of the Miss Teen Africa pageant. “I think Eswatini should expect nothing but the best from me. I promise to keep good character and good leadership skills throughout the whole pageant,” she affirmed, underscoring her commitment to representing her country with dignity and integrity.

For Siniketiwe, pageantry is more than just a competition, it is a platform for empowerment and transformation. “Such platforms mean a dream come true to me as I love pageantry and I’m looking forward to other pageants to come,” she said. Her journey, however, has not been without challenges. Coming from humble

beginnings, Siniketiwe faced numerous obstacles, including financial hardships that threatened to derail her education.

“My goal is not only to create a better life for myself but to inspire and touch the hearts of many, particularly the youth. Having come from humble beginnings, from being that one girl deemed to be disadvantaged in my group of friends, to needing to have my high school tuition funded, as well as carrying the weight of uncertainty regarding funding for my further education, these are just a few of the many struggles I’ve faced,” she revealed with candour.

Despite these hurdles, Siniketiwe’s perseverance never wavered. She found solace in pageantry, even when faced with criticism that it might interfere with her studies. “I faced a lot of backlashes for partaking in pageantry as it would ‘interfere with my studies’. Nonetheless, through hard work and dedication, I proved to flourish in both,” she explained.

Looking ahead, Siniketiwe has a clear vision for what she hopes to achieve through her participation in Miss Teen Africa. “By joining Miss Teen Africa, I aspire to encourage and prove to young girls that it is, in fact, possible to succeed in multiple areas of life. You can do anything you put your mind to,” she said passionately.

▲ Siniketiwe Maseko.



Sancheziey ignites Swati pride with ‘Batawuvuma’

SANCHEZIEY, a prominent Swati Cultural Afro Pop artist, has electrified his fanbase with the release of his latest single, ‘Batawuvuma.’

Dropped last Saturday after much anticipation following a teaser in late September, the song is a bold cultural statement and a declaration of success, resonating deeply with the Swati community. Describing the essence of ‘Batawuvuma,’ Sancheziey explained that the track is “written to give one success certainty while sending a clear statement to fans that this year we’re going to make it either they like it or not.”

The inspiration behind ‘Batawuvuma’ is rooted in the work of Siyabonga Gogo, a key influence on Sancheziey’s sound. He noted that the song aligns “directly in line with the sound, vibe and deep Cultural flair of Swati,” creating an irresistible urge for listeners to engage in traditional Swati cultural dance. The track’s production took place at Emadlweni Music, with Tus Mvuleni crafting the beat, while Sancheziey himself handled the mixing and mastering. He remarked that “the Salukazana sound has started to make sense since Siyabonga Gogo,” hinting at a musical lineage and continuity that fans can expect to follow.

The collaborative spirit behind ‘Batawuvuma’ is evident in its rich layers

and vocal textures. The song features an imbongi-style poetic intro by Ulaka Lebhubesi and backup vocals from a collective of artists including Nkay, Drax 404, Apex the Vocalist, Kasikazi, Yaya, Tus Mvuleni, and Sancheziey himself. This team effort culminates in a track that blends Maskandi rhythms, Afro Pop energy, and Swati cultural soundscapes, which Sancheziey described as “exactly what I anticipated before a single string was played.”

Message

At its core, the song’s message is about resilience and victory. Sancheziey conveyed that the beat “is all about fighting till the opposition force of your success gives up and claps for you,” a sentiment that resonates with many in the Swati community who face their own struggles. The visual representation of Batawuvuma was crafted with equal care and symbolism. Sancheziey shared that the artwork needed to be “something special and spiritual” to match the song’s energy.

After two weeks of planning, the team chose the Malolotja Nature Reserve, specifically its challenging waterfalls, as the perfect backdrop. The physical challenge of reaching the waterfalls inspired Sancheziey to alter the second verse of the song, reflecting the effort and determination



▲ Sancheziey’s ‘Batawuvuma’ visuals.

involved in the creative process. The artwork features “two warriors ready for war,” symbolising strength and readiness to face challenges head-on.

For the visual concept, Sancheziey enlisted Nomphumelelo Dlamini, a Swati woman living in Sandton known for her dedication to fitness and strength. He emphasised that she was “the best fit for the vision I had in my mind.” The visuals were brought to life by Ejal’dini Studios, a team renowned for delivering exceptional videography and photography that complement the song’s powerful themes.



▲ DJ UrCousinPhayo.

UrCousinPhayo for Eswatini Lifestyle Awards After Party

ESWATINI DJ UrCousinPhayo is set to take centre stage as one of the headliners for the newly rebranded Eswatini Lifestyle Awards After Party

Scheduled for November 29, 2025, at the prestigious Mavuso Trade Centre, the Eswatini Lifestyle Awards will unfold over several exciting hours. The festivities begin with a red-carpet event from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, offering attendees a chance to witness the arrival of Eswatini’s most influential figures in style.

Following this, a lively karaoke session from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm will engage guests in an interactive and entertaining warm-up before the main awards ceremony, which will run until 10:00 pm. Ticket prices are set at E250 for general admission and E350 for VIP access, making the event accessible while offering premium experiences for select guests.

The transformation from the former Jumbo Festival to the Eswatini Lifestyle Awards marks a significant strategic shift. This rebranding effort is designed to broaden the event’s scope and enhance its prestige by explicitly highlighting the awards component. The change reflects a deeper commitment to acknowledging the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations that shape Eswatini’s vibrant lifestyle sectors, including business, leadership, corporate affairs, culture, fashion, and creativity.

Jumbo Khumalo, the event director, expressed his excitement about this new chapter. “We are thrilled to announce the rebranding of the Jumbo Festival to Eswatini Lifestyle Awards. This exciting new chapter reflects our commitment to celebrating the best of Eswatini’s praiseworthy personalities across all fraternal of lifestyle like business, leadership, corporate, culture, fashion and creativity.”

Since its inception, the Jumbo Festival has been a vibrant platform showcasing Eswatini’s rich talent and innovation. It has provided a stage for both emerging and established figures to be recognised for their contributions to the country’s dynamic lifestyle landscape. Over time, the organisers identified the need to place greater emphasis on the awards aspect to better honour excellence and inspire continued growth and achievement within the community.

“The Jumbo Festival has been a staple of Eswatini’s lifestyle scene, showcasing talented individuals across various categories. As we continue to grow and evolve, we have recognised the need to intensify the awards part of the concept henceforth the resolution to have the word ‘awards’ in the event name,” Khumalo explained.

True Classic takes ‘Makoti Longeva’ nationwide

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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True Classic Entertainment.

TRUE Classic Entertainment has announced the much-anticipated ‘Makoti Longeva Tour.’

This tour, spearheaded by the dynamic True Classic crew, which includes M Nation, Cool Drop, DJ Citie, and Histo, is set to bring a wave of energy and celebration to music lovers, particularly in Siteki. The tour is centred around the hit single ‘Makoti Longeva,’ which has already made

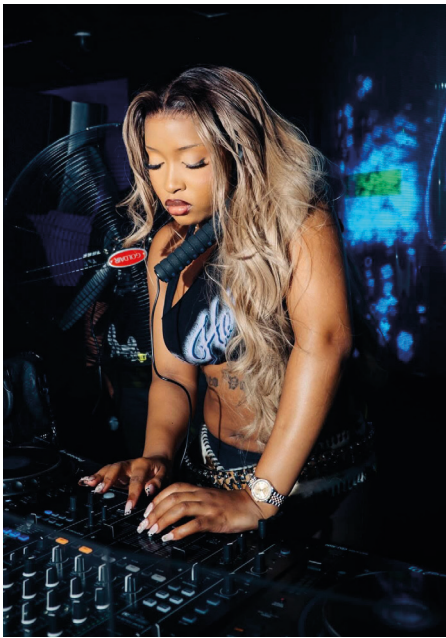
significant waves since its release a month ago. Garnering over 170,000 views on YouTube, the song has captured the attention of a broad audience, signalling its potential to become a defining track in Eswatini’s contemporary music landscape.

The tour aims to capitalise on this momentum by taking the song directly to fans across the country, with the inaugural event scheduled for November 8, 2025, at the Espinho Lounge in Siteki. M Nation, the lead artist and a prominent figure in the True Classic collective, shared insights into the motivation behind the tour.

“We are promoting the song Makoti Longeva. We have realised that the song has so much potential and we are trying to make sure it reaches all parts of the country,” he explained.

The event promises a rich lineup of performances, featuring not only M Nation but also Histo, Cool Drop, Pro RBS, DJ Citie, and Grinder. This diverse roster showcases the depth of talent within True Classic Entertainment and highlights their collaborative spirit. Fans can expect a night filled with electrifying performances, engaging rhythms, and a celebration of Eswatini’s unique musical identity. Entrance to the event is free until 7 pm, after which an entry fee of E50 will be charged. This pricing strategy encourages early attendance and ensures accessibility for a wide audience, fostering a communal atmosphere where music enthusiasts can come together.

True Classic Entertainment’s dedication to delivering quality entertainment is evident in their promise to give their best throughout the tour. M Nation expressed confidence in the upcoming event, stating, “People should expect the best from True Classic Entertainment. We will give our best in this tour.” In closing, M Nation extended an invitation to the people of Siteki and beyond. “We would like to ask everyone in Siteki to buy tickets and come through. We have a lot to share with them, and we promise the best entertainment ever.”



▲ Uncle Waffles.

Uncle Waffles headlines Nkomazi Fest 2025

THE internationally acclaimed Amapiano powerhouse, Uncle Waffles, is set to headline Nkomazi Fest 2025.

This major musical celebration is scheduled for December 24, 2025, at Kamhlushwa Stadium. Presented by Goat Energy, this year’s edition of Nkomazi Fest promises a spectacular blend of sound, style, and summer energy and the announcement of Uncle Waffles as the festival headliner has already sent fans into a frenzy across Eswatini and South Africa.

Known to the world as the “Princess of Amapiano,” Uncle Waffles has risen from humble beginnings in Eswatini’s buzzing creative scene to become one of Africa’s most recognised DJs and performers. Her electrifying performances, viral dance moves, and globe-spanning tours have made her a symbol of the new African sound proudly taking the world by storm.

Now, for one night only, the queen is coming home to the southern heartbeat, and she won’t be alone. The event will also feature chart-topping South African heavyweights Nasty C and Lloyiso, bringing a perfect mix of Amapiano, R&B, and Hip-Hop to Mpumalanga’s Christmas Eve skies.

Headliner

With Uncle Waffles leading the charge as the main headliner, she will be flanked by two of South Africa’s most dynamic talents: Nasty C, the award-winning rapper known for his lyrical sharpness and international collaborations, and Lloyiso, whose soulful voice has become a fixture of modern South African pop. General tickets are going for E150, with VIP access priced at E450. Cooler boxes will cost E100.

The festival, open to patrons aged 18 and above, is powered by a strong coalition of partners including Goat Energy, SAB, Coca-Cola, SAMPRA, and Computicket. For many Eswatini music fans, Uncle Waffles’ headlining role at Nkomazi Fest is more than just a performance; it’s a symbolic homecoming. Though based in South Africa, her story continues to inspire a generation of young Swazi creatives who see her success as proof that dreams crafted in small towns can echo across continents.

In just a few years, Uncle Waffles has performed across Europe, North America, and Asia, earning praise for her high-energy sets and fashion-forward stage presence. She has graced stages from Coachella to Paris Fashion Week, becoming both a DJ and a global cultural ambassador.

Machawe Simelane to release live-recorded ‘Awulinganiswa’

MACHAWE Simelane is poised to make a significant impact on the gospel music scene once again with the upcoming release of his second single, “Awulinganiswa.”

Following the warm reception of his debut single, this new track promises to deepen his connection with fans and worshippers alike, showcasing his evolving artistry and heartfelt devotion. Recorded live at the renowned Mavuso Trade Centre, “Awulinganiswa” captures the raw energy and spiritual fervour of a live worship experience.

This setting adds a unique dimension to the song, allowing listeners to feel immersed in the atmosphere of praise and reverence that defines Machawe’s music. The live recording also highlights his vocal prowess and ability to engage an audience, qualities that have already endeared him to gospel music enthusiasts. The title “Awulinganiswa” translates to a powerful affirmation of God’s unmatched greatness.

Machawe describes the song as “a heartfelt expression of worship and reverence,”

emphasising its role as a reminder that “truly, there’s no one like our God.” This message resonates deeply within the gospel community, offering both encouragement and inspiration to believers navigating the challenges of life. Machawe’s return to the music scene with “Awulinganiswa” is more than just a follow-up single; it is a testament to his commitment to spreading hope and faith through music. His ability to blend meaningful lyrics with engaging melodies positions him as a rising star in the gospel genre, one who is dedicated to uplifting spirits and fostering a sense of unity among listeners.

Fans and new listeners alike can look forward to accessing “Awulinganiswa” on all major digital streaming platforms. Machawe has confirmed that the single will be available on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, Deezer, and Amazon Music, ensuring wide accessibility and convenience for his growing audience. He encourages everyone to stream the song upon its release, inviting them to join in the worship experience that the track embodies.



▲ Machawe Simelane.

Khuzani Mpungose shines at HAP Awards

“IF you make it in the USA, you can make it anywhere,” says Khuzani Mpungose, the celebrated South African maskandi artist.

Recently, he was honoured with the title of ‘Best Independent Artist Africa’ at the Hollywood & African Prestigious Awards (HAP Awards).

Khuzani was nominated in two categories: Best Independent Artist (Africa) and Best Male Artist (Africa).

He travelled to the United States to accept his award during a prestigious ceremony held at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles, California.

The HAP Awards recognise outstanding talents across various genres, including music, film, comedy and fashion.

Established in 2017, these awards have become a global platform that amplifies African excellence, connecting creatives from the continent with their counterparts in Hollywood. Following his achievement, Khuzani took to Instagram to express his gratitude to his fans, stating: “If you make it in the USA, you can make it anywhere, because conquering the USA means you’ve already faced the world’s toughest test. From here on, no dream is too big and no stage too far.”

Ahead of his win, Khuzani reflected on the significance of being recognised on an international stage like the HAP Awards.

He described it as a blessing and a testament to the progress of Maskandi music.

“This recognition belongs to every supporter who believed in the journey of authentic African sound,” he shared.

Khuzani further elaborated on the honour, explaining what it means not only for him but for African artists as a whole.

“These nominations are proof that our sound, born in villages and carried through generations, can stand proudly on global stages. It shows that African music, in its truest form, doesn’t need translation - it speaks straight to the heart,” he added. Khuzani’s journey is a remarkable story of persistence, innovation, and leadership.

Born and raised in Nkandla, he has become a household name across Africa, consistently selling out major venues and setting new attendance records in cities such as Durban, Johannesburg, and Pietermaritzburg.

His annual Gcwalisa Spring Picnic All White and Blue Nation Festival events attract tens of thousands of fans, demonstrating that Maskandi music is not only alive but thriving in a modern, youth-driven market.

Over the past decade, Khuzani has shattered multiple industry barriers.

His albums have consistently achieved platinum status, earning him one of the largest followings in African traditional music.

He stands out as one of the few independent artists who have maintained commercial success without major label backing, showcasing his creative independence and strong connection with his audience. (IOL)



▲ Khuzani Mpungose, the celebrated South African maskandi artist.



Sol Phenduka regrets losing ‘Uhuru’ masters

RADIO personality and podcaster Sol Phenduka has opened up about how he lost the masters to his hit song “Uhuru”.

Before songs like “iJager” and “Diqabang”, Phenduka released “Uhuru”, a tribal house classic that still gets club play today.

However, one decision he made early in his career cost him ownership of his work. The track, released in 2012 from his self-titled album, remains one of his most memorable songs.

When a fan posted a screenshot of the song on X, Phenduka responded with “Classic”, acknowledging the song’s legacy.

Another fan then asked if he owned the masters to the track, and his response revealed how he lost them.

Phenduka explained that he recorded the song at home on his laptop, including the rest of the album, but ended up giving up ownership when the label covered the production costs.

“No, I don’t own these masters. I made the song on my own at home in my living room on the laptop. In fact, the entire album. The label paid me for the production costs,” he said. He added that at the time, he was in desperate need of the money and didn’t take time to understand what that meant legally.

By accepting the payment, the label automatically took control of the masters since they financed the project.

“I desperately needed the money then and didn’t bother to research the implications (they were probably in the contract somewhere). By doing this, the label now owns the master because they have paid for the PRODUCTION.”

He admitted it was a mistake that came with a lesson, adding that the irony is the song’s title “Uhuru”, which means “freedom.” In the music industry, “masters” refer to the original recordings of a song or album. Whoever owns the masters controls how the music is used, licensed, or reproduced.

According to experts, this means they earn from streaming, film placements, commercials, and other uses of the music.

For an artist, owning their masters means retaining creative and financial control over their work. When a label covers production costs, as in Phenduka’s case, ownership often shifts to the label unless otherwise stated in the contract.

Many local artists today have faced a fight to keep their masters because it determines who truly profits from their creations. (IOL)

‘Jub Jub tried to be part of son’s life but was denied access’

SONGSTRESS Zandie Khumalo-Gumede has spoken out in defence of media personality and musician Molemo “Jub Jub” Maarohanye, following his public claims that his former partner, Kelly Khumalo, has repeatedly denied him access to their son, Christian.

On Sunday, November 2, Molemo took to Instagram to express his frustration over what he described as years of rejection and blocked attempts to be part of his child’s life. This came after Kelly, while speaking on the L-Tido Podcast in October, labelled the fathers of her children, including Jub Jub, deadbeats.

Kelly, however, excluded the late soccer star Senzo Meyiwa, whom she believes would have been a doting dad to her third child.

Khumalo was sharing the challenges of single-handedly raising her three children. However, on Sunday, in a series of emotional posts, Jub Jub accused Kelly of preventing him from seeing their son and turning down his efforts to support the child both emotionally and financially.

“I don’t want to go to court fighting over this,” he said.

“You know how many times I’ve tried to get hold of you to reach my son. You know how many times your sister [Zandie], [Mhlo] Gumede, and your mother have been trying to talk about this so I can have access to my son. You’re controlling my son as if he’s an AI [artificial intelligence]. I’m not a deadbeat dad.”

He further claimed that even during his time in prison, he made an effort to send gifts and maintain a relationship with his son, but the gifts were sent back.



▲ Media personality and musician Molemo “Jub Jub” Maarohanye.

“I’ve tried every possible way to do the right thing, even offering to pay damages and perform the necessary cultural rites, but I keep getting blocked.”

The pair’s strained relationship dates back over a decade. Jub Jub and Kelly’s romance began in the late 2000s but ended amid controversy and public drama.

In 2010, Jub Jub was arrested and later convicted for his role in a car accident that claimed the lives of four schoolchildren.

During his incarceration, Kelly raised their son alone, and the relationship between the two families has remained tense ever since.

In response to Jub Jub’s recent allegations,

Zandie came forward to offer clarity.

Speaking to Sunday World, she acknowledged the longstanding dispute but stressed that the issue lies between Jub Jub and Kelly, not the broader family.

“Normally, I wouldn’t comment on this, but because it concerns Christian [Jub Jub’s son], I feel compelled to speak up,” Zandie said.

“I care about my nephew deeply and treat him as my child. When it comes to him, no one can tell me what to do.”

Zandie confirmed that Jub Jub has indeed made several attempts to reconnect with his son, even involving her and their mother in mediation efforts.

“At one point, my mother and I were mediating discussions, but unfortunately nothing came of it,” she explained.

“Molemo also wanted to come and pay damages at home. He even spoke to my husband, Gumede, who then spoke to my mother. Sadly, that too didn’t work out due to a lack of cooperation on our side.”

While avoiding direct criticism of her sister, Zandie acknowledged that both parties share responsibility for the ongoing impasse.

“Molemo and Kelly still have unresolved issues, which are clear from their public feuds. I don’t want to get into details, but Molemo has genuinely been trying and keeps getting rejected.

“I’ve also spoken to Christian about his father; it’s clear he wants to see him, but I cannot take him to his father without his mother’s permission.

“Both Molemo and Kelly are at fault. They have hurt each other deeply, and they need to resolve their issues first before they can co-parent effectively,” she said.

(Sunday World)



Can Weird Migraine Fixes Make a Difference?

WHEN migraine medications don't help enough, many take unusual, even weird steps to ease symptoms.

Most haven't been formally studied, but in theory, they sound plausible. Also, there's something to be said for the "placebo effect." That's when there's no scientific reason that something will work but you feel better anyway. Just remember that your triggers may be different from someone else's, and what may work for one person could cause or worsen a migraine in another.

Junk Food

Fat, sugar, salt, and caffeine can be migraine triggers. But for some, when you put them all together in a fast-food meal – like a burger, soda, and fries – it's their secret migraine cure. One explanation is that caffeine eases pain, and salt and sugar help if the migraine was triggered by low sodium or low blood sugar. Some specifically crave salt during a migraine and swear by high-sodium foods like pickle juice or soy sauce to fix this electrolyte imbalance. But eating or drinking a lot of high-sodium foods can be very dangerous.

Overly Tight Hairstyles

Though a simple ponytail can be a trigger, the idea here is to pull your hair back – at the temples, in a braid, or in a tight French braid – to stimulate nerves and release endorphins to fight pain. This pulling is one element of Thai massage, which also uses stretching and rocking motions instead of the usual rubbing and can make migraines less intense. Also try scalp massage, positive pressure to boost circulation and possibly ease stress.

Shaving Your Head (or Parts of It)

Some people shave their heads so that there's no barrier between their scalp and a pain reliever you use on your skin, like a cold compress or ice pack. While research shows that a lack of hair doesn't make a difference in how well an ice pack works, there's plenty of evidence that cold itself can help ease migraine pain right away. It numbs the area and lessens inflammation. A small study showed that a frozen wrap over the carotid arteries at the front of the neck can be very effective – no shaving needed.

Awkward Body Positions

The benefits of yoga for pain relief make it easy to see why twisting into a pretzel might help with migraine. (There are even special poses for this purpose.) Some people stand or sit with a craned neck or press their upper face into a fist to offset head pressure. Similar to a recovery pose, one way to realign bad posture (a migraine trigger): Lie on your back, knees bent, and lace your hands behind your head. Gently press your elbows to the floor until you feel a stretch and hold for up to two minutes.

Pinching Your Eyebrows

Whether you use your fingers or a hairclip, the idea is to disrupt the trigeminal nerve, the largest nerve in the skull. It acts as a pathway between the face and the brain, with nerve endings in the eyebrow area. This part of the forehead is a trigger point, so pressing against it could relieve migraine



tension. Also try placing a thumb under each side of the brow bone and pressing up and in at the same time, or try pressing with your index fingers at regular intervals along the bone.

Pressure From Household Items

A rubber dog bone, a back massager, the rounded top of a walking cane – these are a few of unusual items used for a common approach to migraine relief that's usually done with the hands – acupressure. Focus on trigger points, like the hollows on either side of your spine at the base of your skull. You can also use two tennis balls in a sock, making small circles with them. Apply pressure for up to a minute, then rest and repeat up to 10 times, but avoid skin that's irritated.

Applying Heat

Hot packs, heating pads, and steamy showers ease tight muscles and increase blood flow to the brain. Some people aim a hair dryer directly at the throbbing site. Others put their feet in a hot water bath at regular intervals, sometimes using a dedicated slow cooker. But there are safety concerns about using an appliance for other than its intended purpose, so use a foot bath. Skip foot treatments if you have any cuts, sores, or any problems sensing hot (or cold).

Lying Down on a Cold Surface

Cold combats migraine pain. From bathroom floor tiles to an empty tub, these cool surfaces have a head-to-toe effect for some. The idea is like cold stone therapy, which uses cold stones on the head and other points to reduce blood flow to the brain. An extreme variation, cold water immersion, causes hormonal changes that ease pain for some people. Cold showers or a dip in a tub filled with cold water could work, too. But if it's done for too long, it can lead to hypothermia.

Shoving Lidocaine up Your Nose

Some people have found success putting lidocaine gel on a cotton swab and gently applying it inside each nostril. As wacky as this sounds, there's research to back up its usefulness. A review of five studies about it found it eased migraine pain within minutes and drastically cut the need for rescue medications. But be careful, because it can cause burning or stinging in the nose or eyes.

Intentionally Getting Brain Freeze

Brain freeze from eating ice cream too quickly is usually an uncomfortable feeling. But doing it during a migraine is a positive for some. It can cause helpful changes in the brain's blood flow, first constricting then dilating it. Ice cold Coke or a Coke slushie may be particularly effective because it

delivers hydration, cold, sugar, and caffeine. But it's important to remember that too much caffeine can be a problem. You might have soda only when a migraine hits.

What Else Might Work

There are many other alternatives with science behind them:

► **Ginger.** Raw slices or ginger extract may help, especially to control nausea.

Essential oils like peppermint, rosemary, lavender, and basil may be soothing as a topical or when inhaled.

► **Acupuncture.** Having thin needles applied at strategic points causes a helpful immune system response.

► **Hot and cold.** Rotating between heat – which increases the blood flow to your brain – and cold – which decreases it – can have a stronger effect than either one alone.

► **Magnesium.** Many people with migraine are short on this mineral, and a daily dose of 600 milligrams of magnesium citrate to restore levels may help with prevention.

► **CoQ10.** Half the people taking part in two studies had a 50% decrease in how often they had migraines and how serious they were after taking a daily dose of 300 milligrams for three months.

Always check with your doctor before starting a supplement to make sure it won't interfere with any medication you take for other conditions.

WebMD

What Are Palpitations?

WHEN you experience heart palpitations, you have a heightened awareness of your own heartbeat.

It may be beating too fast, too slow, or irregularly. You might feel like your heart is racing, thumping, or fluttering. You may feel these sensations in your neck or your chest.

- Causes of Heart Palpitations**
- Heart palpitations are usually harmless, but occasionally, they can be caused by a serious condition such as arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).
- Some common causes of heart palpitations include:
- Stress, anxiety, or panic attacks
 - Stimulants such as caffeine, tobacco, methamphetamines, cocaine, and medicines containing pseudoephedrine
 - Fever
 - Imbalance of thyroid hormone
 - Hormonal changes

- Risk Factors for Heart Palpitations**
- Some conditions can make it more likely that you'll have heart palpitations, such as:
- Panic attacks or anxiety disorders
 - Stress
 - Pregnancy
 - Stimulant medicines like cold or asthma medicines
 - Overactive thyroid glands
- A history of heart problems such as structural heart changes, previous heart attacks, previous heart surgery, or irregular heartbeats

- When You Should See a Doctor**
- If your heart palpitations only last a few seconds and are infrequent, they probably don't need to be evaluated. You should be evaluated, however, if you have a history of heart disease and have palpitations that happen frequently or get worse.
- You should also be evaluated if your heart palpitations coincide with:
- Fainting
 - Chest pain or discomfort
 - Severe dizziness
 - Severe shortness of breath

Supraventricular Tachycardia

Sometimes, heart palpitations are caused by a type of arrhythmia called supraventricular tachycardia. This is a very fast heart rate that occurs above the lower heart chambers. It can cause your heart to beat erratically or rapidly. You may have a fast pulse and feel dizzy.

Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of arrhythmia. It causes a fast and erratic heartbeat. There may not be any symptoms, or you may notice chest pains, palpitations, or shortness of breath. Atrial fibrillation can interfere with the blood flow to your lower heart chambers and can cause clots or a stroke.

Ventricular Tachycardia

Ventricular tachycardia is a type of rapid heartbeat that occurs in the lower heart chambers. This arrhythmia can be associated with structural heart disease.

10 things to do if it isn't beating right



When it is, it can sometimes cause a loss of consciousness and, rarely, cardiac arrest or death.

Complications of Heart Palpitations

If palpitations are caused by a heart condition, complications can include:

- Fainting because of low blood pressure
- Cardiac arrest
- Stroke, if palpitations are caused by atrial fibrillation
- Heart failure if the arrhythmia reduces the heart's ability to pump

Diagnosing Heart Palpitations

Your doctor will conduct a physical examination. If they think your palpitations might be caused by a heart condition, you may need further testing.

Some tests your doctor may conduct include:

- An electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG) to measure the electrical activity of your heart
- A Holter monitor, which is a portable EKG device that you wear for a day or more
- Event recording, which involves pressing a button when symptoms occur for 30 days or more

- Echocardiogram, which uses sound waves to create moving images of your heart

Lifestyle Treatments for Heart Palpitations

You may be able to help treat your palpitations with some lifestyle changes such as:

- Reducing stress with relaxation techniques, yoga, or deep breathing
- Avoiding stimulants such as caffeine, cold medicines, and nicotine
- Avoiding illegal drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamines. **WebMD**

NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A rickshaw moves on the street during a downpour in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



▲ A forensic officer takes pictures of the London North Eastern Railway (LNER) train where a series of stabbings took place, at a platform at Huntingdon Station, near Cambridge, Britain.



▲ Dust rises as part of the Torre dei Conti tower collapses following an earlier partial collapse, near Via dei Fori Imperiali, near the Colosseum, in Rome, Italy.



▲ A general view of runners on the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge during the New York City Marathon.



▲ Colombian singer Shakira performs during her 'Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran World Tour' concert at the Vive Claro Stadium, in Bogota, Colombia.

Ronaldo reveals emotional retirement will come ‘soon’

CRISTIANO Ronaldo has revealed he plans to retire “soon” as the Portugal and Al Nassr star prepares for a tearful end to his glittering career.

Ronaldo discussed his thoughts on retirement and his life after football in an interview with Piers Morgan Uncensored.

The 40-year-old, who has scored a remarkable 952 goals, is one of the most decorated players in the history of the game, but the end is in sight for his astonishing career.

Asked when he would consider hanging up his boots, Ronaldo, who is under contract with Al Nassr until 2027, replied: “Soon. But I think I will be prepared.

“It will be tough, of course. It will be difficult? Yes. Probably will cry, yes. I’m an open person. It will be very, very difficult, yes.

“But Piers, I prepare my future since 25, 26, 27 years old, I prepare my future. So I think I will be capable to support that pressure.”

Ronaldo is confident he will be able to cope without football because he wants to focus on his family and his off the pitch interests.

“Nothing will be able to compare that the adrenaline that we have for football to score a goal,” he said.

“But everything has a beginning, and everything has an end. I have other passions. I’m going to have more time for me, I’m go-

ing to have more time for my family to raise my kids.

“I want to follow Cristiano Junior because he’s at an age when kids do stupid things. I was the same. Mateo loves football as well.

“I want to do more fun things. I love playing Padel with my closest friends. We are getting quite good.”

After starting his career with Sporting Lisbon, Ronaldo enjoyed successful spells at Manchester United and Real Madrid, Juventus.

He won three Premier League titles and the Champions League among other trophies in his first stint in Manchester.

Ronaldo joined Saudi Pro League side Al Nassr after leaving United for a second time in 2022.

He still looks out for the Premier League club’s results, given his affinity with their current manager – his former Portugal teammate Ruben Amorim.

But the five-time Ballon d’Or winner warned United fans to not expect miracles from Amorim, who is in the midst of a rollercoaster reign at Old Trafford following his arrival 12 months ago.

“He’s doing his best,” Ronaldo said. “What are you going to do? Miracles. Miracles is impossible.

“He’s not going to do miracles. They have good players but they don’t have, some of them, in mind what Manchester United is.



▲ Cristiano Ronaldo.

“Manchester United is still in my heart. I love that club. But we have all to be honest and look for ourselves and say, ‘Listen,

they are not in a good path’. So, they need to change and it’s not only about the coach and players, in my opinion.” (Supersport)

Gauff sweeps Paolini aside to revitalise WTA Finals defence

COCO Gauff claimed a much-needed 6-3, 6-2 victory over Jasmine Paolini to keep her WTA Finals title defence alive in Riyadh on Tuesday.

The American third seed had lost her opener two days prior to Jessica Pegula but was far more clinical against Paolini, whose second singles defeat of the week means she has no chance of advancing to the semifinals.

“I’m really happy with how I played today, definitely a turnaround from my first match,” said Gauff, who posted her 10th top-10 win of the season.

Against Pegula on Sunday, Gauff struggled with her serve, committing 17 double faults and winning just 28 per cent of the points behind her second delivery.

Her performance in the first set of her second match was already a significant improvement, as she won nine of 11 points on her second serve, misfiring just twice for two double faults.

The 21-year-old leapt to a 3-0 lead and despite Paolini’s attempted comeback, was able to reclaim her advantage to take the opening set in 40 minutes.

The second set was a straightforward affair as Gauff notched two breaks of serve en route to her second win in five meetings with the Italian this season.

“I was just trying to play relaxed. I’ve played a WTA Finals where I lost



▲ Coco Gauff.

all three of my matches (in 2022). So I tried to avoid that today,” said the two-time Grand Slam champion.

“I thought I served smart. I don’t

think Jasmine was 100 per cent today and I would like to wish her well. Playing singles and doubles here is not easy.”(Supersport)

Andretti signs IndyCar star to multi-year extension

ANDRETTI Global announced a multi-year extension on Monday with NTT IndyCar Series driver Kyle Kirkwood, through “2026 and beyond.”

Specific length of the contract was not revealed by Andretti Global.

Kirkwood, 27, has won five times and reached six podiums in the No 27 Honda since joining Andretti in 2023.

“Kyle represents exactly what we strive for across TWG Motorsports and Andretti Global,” Andretti Global president Jill Gregory said.

“His blueprint for success has made him a key part of our INDYCAR line-up defined by talent, tenacity and a relentless drive to win. Kyle’s growth and ambition reflect the strength of Andretti Global and our commitment to developing world-class competitors on and off the track.”

Kirkwood’s breakout 2025 campaign included Grand Prix wins at Long Beach (April 13), Detroit (1 June) and Illinois (15 June). He finished fourth in the season standings.

“We’ve had an amazing three years together and our future together is very bright,” Kirkwood said.

“We have proven to be true contenders, and most recently, Championship contenders. Our trajectory has only been up, and I am confident that we will be fighting again for championships. Between the new shop, leadership, the many evolving factors within the organisation, I believe this team is an absolute powerhouse, and we’re so excited for the journey ahead.”

Joining Kirkwood in Andretti’s 2026 line-up are two-time IndyCar champion Will Power and 2022 Indianapolis 500 winner Marcus Ericsson.

(Supersport)



▲ Kyle Kirkwood.

Bafana players handed R5 million bonus

MINISTER of Sports, Arts and Recreation Gayton McKenzie on Tuesday announced that Bafana Bafana's players would be given a R5 million bonus ahead of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations finals and the 2026 Fifa World Cup finals.

"R5 million will be going to the players in preparation for the African Nations Cup and the World Cup," McKenzie told a media session at Freedom Park in Pretoria.

Safa 'Mokoena-gate' investigation over

McKenzie also said that the South African Football Association have completed their investigation into the administrative blunder that led to Bafana being docked three points during World Cup qualifying.

Bafana fielded Teboho Mokoena in a World Cup qualifier against Lesotho in March, when the midfielder was supposed to be suspended after picking up two yellow cards earlier in the group stages. Fifa reversed the 2-0 win in that game for Bafana, as per their rules handing a 3-0 win to Lesotho.

Hugo Broos' Bafana ended up making it to the World Cup finals anyway, but the mistake could have been disastrous. McKenzie confirmed that Bafana team manager Vincent Tseka had taken responsibility for the error, but said there were mi-



▲ Gayton McKenzie, Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, has announced a R5 million bonus for Bafana Bafana's players.

tigating circumstances.

"SAFA has complied with my request and has completed its investigation. They provided me with a very comprehensive investigation, and I can report today that we now have full clarity on what happened," said McKenzie.

"The report confirms this was not an act of negligence or sabotage, but rather a strange, highly unusual set of coincidences.

"The two yellow cards issued to Teboho Mokoena came 16 months apart, an almost unheard of gap.

The team manager Vincent Tseka, who has taken responsibility for that oversight despite numerous excruciating circumstances, was not present when the second card was issued as he had left the field to fetch ice for the players.

'Bafana are still under-resourced'

"That extraordinary coincidence tells us something deeper that our national team is operating under immense strain. Despite the tremendous progress on the field and positive results, Bafana Bafana are still under-resourced."

(The Citizen)

Sabalenka to take on Kyrgios in 'Battle of the Sexes' match

WOMEN'S world No 1 Aryna Sabalenka will take on Australian maverick Nick Kyrgios in a 'Battle of the Sexes' exhibition match in Dubai on 28 December, organisers announced on Tuesday.

Sabalenka will face Kyrgios in a modern rendition of tennis icon Billie Jean King's 1973 showdown with fellow American Bobby Riggs, which turned out to be a watershed moment for both tennis and the women's movement.

Played in Houston's Astrodome, some 90 million tuned in worldwide to watch King storm to a straight sets victory which propelled the fight for equality in sports.

Aged 55 at the time, Riggs had beaten Australia's Margaret Court four months earlier before King, aged 29, exacted revenge.

In 1992, eight-time Grand Slam champion Jimmy Connors, then aged 40, beat 18-time major winner Martina Navratilova, then 35, under modified rules.

"I have so much respect for Billie Jean King and what she has done for the women's game," four-time Grand Slam champion Sabalenka said in a statement.

"I'm proud to represent women's tennis and to be part of this modern take of the iconic Battle of the Sexes match."

Sabalenka and Kyrgios have teased the match on numerous occasions in



▲ Women's world No 1 Aryna Sabalenka.

the past few months, with the contest initially slated to be hosted in Hong Kong.

World number 652 Kyrgios, who has played just five matches this year since returning from a serious wrist injury that kept him out for 18 months, said in September that he could easily beat Sabalenka.

When asked about the Australian's comments during her run to the US Open title, the Belarusian said she was eager to prove Kyrgios wrong.

"I have a lot of respect for Nick and his talent, but make no mistake,

I'm ready to bring my A-game," Sabalenka said.

Kyrgios reached a career-high singles ranking of 13 in 2016 and also made it to the final of Wimbledon in 2022.

The 30-year-old is a major draw on and off the court at Grand Slams with his natural talent and unapologetic personality, which has also landed him in controversies in the past.

The match will take place at the Coca-Cola Arena in Dubai.

(Supersport)

Haaland warns he can get even better

ERLING Haaland has warned opponents he is still not the finished article despite his phenomenal goalscoring record for Manchester City.

The Norwegian forward, who faces former club Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday, has netted a staggering 26 goals in 16 games for club and country this season.

Former England striker Alan Shearer said last month that if Haaland stays long enough, he will "no doubt" shatter his own all-time Premier League record of 260 goals.

Haaland, 25, was asked at City's pre-match press conference on Tuesday whether he could beat his record for goals in a season.

"Not to sound arrogant, but which one?" he asked.

The reporter clarified that he was asking about Haaland's tally of 52 goals for City in 2022/23, when the club won the Treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup.

During that season, Haaland's first in England, he scored 36 Premier League goals – setting a new record for a single campaign.

The marauding 1.95-metre striker admitted he was "in a good way" this season but said he was more focused on the team than individual records.

"I can't think about records I can break," he said. "That's the last thing I think of. I try to help the team win football games. That's my job and that's my main focus.

"I know it's boring. I know

you want me to say the complete opposite, but that's not how it is."

In a scary message for his opponents, Haaland said he was improving as a player, adding that he had been working on his headers.

"I think you can always get better and better," he said. "So there's something I try to practise still and you can see I'm getting better and better and there's still a long way to go."

City boss Pep Guardiola made Haaland part of his leadership team this season and described him at his own press conference on Tuesday as a "real world-class player who is incredibly humble".

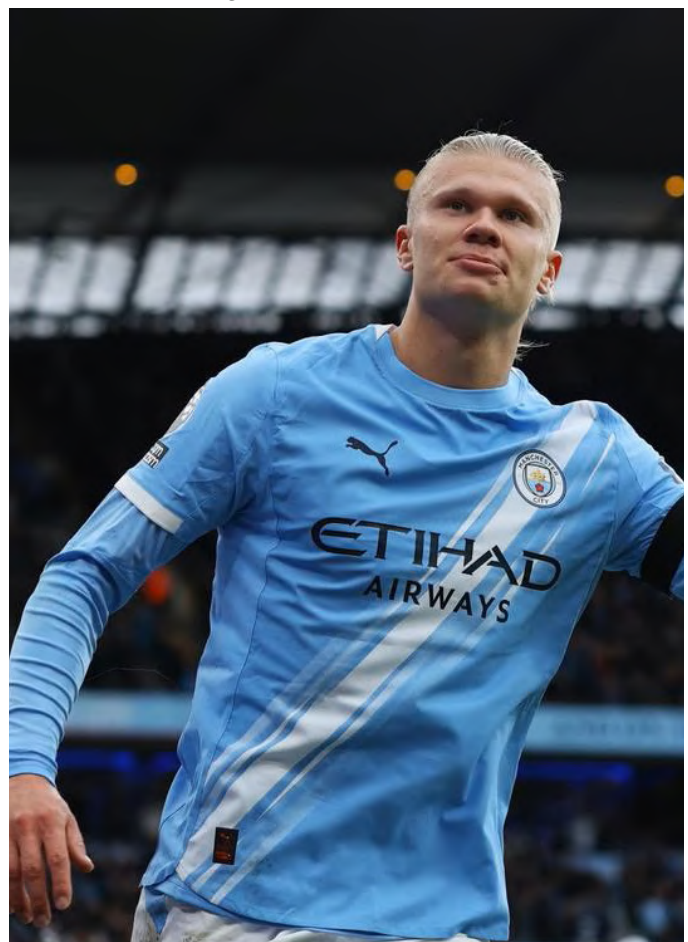
"I know he wants to score goals, but I have the feeling he always wants what is best for the team," he said. "And that is difficult to find.

"He has this ability, talent, kindness, whatever you want to say. Of course he has to score goals, that's the best way to help us, that is perfectly clear, but he signed a contract for 10 years and he is involved in many things."

Haaland himself, who became a father last year, said he was "still the same kid", just with more experience.

"I'm still the same kid in some situations, and I'm still that kid from Bryne (in Norway), but with much more experience in life," he said.

(Supersport)



▲ Erling Haaland.

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE COACHES ANALYSIS

Top 5 jobs on the line

... Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe first out, who’s next?

By Chris Dlamini

AS we head right into matchday 5 in the MTN Premier League 2025/26 season, some coaches have had tough times and put their jobs under the microscope as fans are already casting their doubts.

Leading the list was winless giants’ veteran coach Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe - he was replaced last week.

He cannot be the only one. Hlophe is now the Technical Director (TD) at Wanderers. After he was replaced, a few other coaches are currently on the axe man’s hit list unless they drastically turn things around quickly in the next three to four matches. Their jobs look well under the microscope in one way or the other. Anything beyond three more games could prove enough for their employers to pull the trigger, especially with supporters also likely to say enough is enough and call for change. Some of these coaches with top teams were challenging for honours is the only expectation - no playing around. Who are these gaffers?

1. Dominic Kunene (Young Buffaloes)
- The former senior national team head coach is having a disheveled start to the season. His team has already lost twice to one team in a short space. Second-placed Malanti Chiefs knocked them out of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup in early September, then stung them again in the league. Malanti is fresh from the second-tier league since their relegation in the 2021/2022 season.
- Last week, Buffaloes, who have all the quality and experience, lost 1-0 to Mthunzi ‘Lomphofu’ Ginindza-led Rangers. The league’s leading scorer with four goals now, Hleliso Gamedze, is from Rangers. Buffaloes have four points on number 10 in the standings, with one win, a draw, and a defeat.

2. Bongani Mhlongo (Green Mamba)
- He has too much quality in his



team, blended with experience. Mhlongo is leading a title-winning side, but they haven’t yet hit their level - inconsistency is their weakness.

- He has now added well-travelled Eswatini international Banele ‘Pupu’ Sikhondze to his star-studded team with big names like former internationals Sabelo ‘Sikhali’ Ndzinisa and Njabulo ‘D4D’ Ndlovu. He could still be adapting himself, but time is something he may not have if goals and wins prove elusive - he had preseason with the club. His side was held to a goalless draw by elite debutants Amawele in their third game of the season. Otherwise, they are ninth with four points in the standings.

3. Meck Mwase (Moneni Pirates)
- He needs consistency in his team’s results. With Rangers this Saturday, he has a tough one - it has never been an easy game.
- Mwase’s side has six points in four matches, after two wins and two defeats. Having come through during preseason, the mandate and expectation is that he delivers a knockout title



and the league.

4. Mbongiseni Mamba (Sisonkhe)
- His team was in the relegation cesspool even last season and this time must do better to survive. Mamba’s team is yet to win a match, let alone have a point after losing all their three games, and face a tough and wounded Royal Leopard on Wednesday in their pending fixture.

5. Tabankulu Celtics (Ncamiso Nxumalo)
- He is no big name player and when he came, he ought to work with Percy Shongwe but the latter left to Red Rhinos in the National First Division (NFD) League. He started well in their opening match but has not won in the last two of the three.
- He has lost twice, the last being the 3-2 defeat to Manzini Sea Birds. Celtics do not look like the side ready to return to the NFD in only one elite season.



E70 000 for Mandla Mahewu league

By Sibusiso Masilela
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GROWING from strength to strength. Premier has strengthened its long-standing relationship with the Hhohho Regional Football Association with a E70 000 handshake under the Mandla Mahewu wing.

The 14-year marriage, which began in 2011, was renewed with a new sponsorship for the 2025/2026 Mbabane Regional Football League, held on Tuesday at Sigwaca House.

The sponsor representative, Sithembile Khumalo, said the sponsorship was part of corporate social investment.

“We are pleased with our partnership with the HRFA and our continued investment in

the sport. This sponsorship forms part of our corporate social responsibility, and we look forward to a successful season,” she said.

Eswatini Football Association Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederick Mngomezulu expressed gratitude to the sponsor for the gesture.

“We are grateful for the support of the sponsor which will play a major role in the development of football in the country. We commend the Hhohho Regional Football Association for cementing its relationship with the sponsors,” he said.

HRFA Chairman Dr Comfort Shongwe thanked the sponsor for continued support.

“We would like to thank the sponsors for their loyal support, which has helped us develop talented players who are in the Premier League. We urge teams to support the sponsor in its business endeavours,” he said.



▲Premier representative Sithembile Khumalo presenting E70 000 to EFA CEO Frederick Mngomezulu, HRFA chairman Comfort Shongwe and officials Nkosinathi Dlamini and Themba Motsa.



▲EFA CEO presenting PC Systems Girls Under 19 schools champions Ngwane Park with a trophy with other officials including the sponsor Mandla Zulu and HRFA Comfort Shongwe.

Ngwane Park crowned PC Systems Girls U19 champs

By Sibusiso Masilela
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HARD work pays Ngwane Park High School has been rewarded for their heroics in the inaugural PC Systems Girls Under-19 tournaments.

The champions took home E6 000 for their heroics in the new school tournament during a presentation held at Sigwaca House on Tuesday.

Runner-up Mjinga High School went home E5 000 richer, while third-placed Lozitha High School received E4 000 courtesy of the Information and Technology Company.

The sponsor, Mandla Zulu, congratulated the champions for their achievement.

“We are pleased with the progress of the league and commend the champions for their gallant performance. We are looking forward to a bigger and better competition next year as we continue to nurture talent,” he said.

Eswatini Football Association Chief Executive Officer Frederick Mngomezulu said the competition was a success.

“We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which has helped us to produce future national team players. We commend the good work done by the Technical Director’s office in ensuring that the tournament is a success,” he said.

Three teams for Zone VI club championships

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THREE clubs will represent the country in the 2025 Zone VI club championships in December at Polokwane.

The representatives are Correctional Sunrise (males and females), Royal Eswatini Police Service (males and Females).

Scorpions Ladies are also part of the Polokwane bound envoys for the annual regional interclub competition.

Eswatini National Volleyball Association (ENVA) Vice Secretary Philile Lokotfwako confirmed the latest news.

“Three clubs will represent the country in Zone VI Club Championships, and we wish them the best of luck during the international assignment,” she said.

The mother body recently wrapped up the VA Cup over the weekend at Mavuso Sports Centre.

Correctional emerged victorious over Scorpions with a 3-1win in the

Ladies finals.

REPS conquered the male category by getting the better of Bob Cats by 3-2.

The two champions took home E3 000 for their achievements.

Lokotfwako further congratulated the winning teams for their successes.

“We are happy with the proceedings of the tournament. Congratulations are for the champions of the two categories,” she said.

The 3rd and 4th place playoff saw Correctional Males get the better of rivals, Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force.

REPS Ladies outsmarted Zakhele by 3-1.

The full results
Semifinals
Females
Zakhele 0-3 Scorpions
REPS 1-3 Correotional
Finals
Scorpions 1-3 Correotional
Males
Semifinals
Bob Oats 3-0 UEDF
REPS 3-1 Correotional
Finals
REPS 3-2 Bob Oats



▲REPS volleyball team.



▲Correctional males volleyball team.



▲ Royal Leopards midfield dynamo Junior Magagula could soon ply his trade out of the country.

Maniema tables E250k bid for Junior

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ROYAL Leopards midfield dynamo Junior Magagula could soon ply his trade out of the country.

This follows a E250 000 bid by DR Congo side AS Maniema for the services of the former Moneni Pirates player.

Magagula impressed the Congolese side during the recent CAF Confederation Cup assignment between the clubs.

A source close to the matter revealed that talks between the two sides are proceeding smoothly.

“Maniema has tabled an E250 000 bid for Junior through the facilitator of the deal, Alimas Bin Saleh famously known as Adebayor. Talks could be concluded in the next fourth night,” the source said.

Leopard Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frank Hurube could not comment on the matter when compiling the report after his cell phone rang unanswered.

Magagula could become the third Liswati to ply his trade in the diamond-rich African state after the duo of Felix ‘Fela’ Badenhorst and Mthunzi ‘Xavi’ Mkhontfo, who were previously in the books of AS Vita club.

He could become the country’s sixth foreign-based players after Lindo Mkhonta(Zesco United, Zambia), Justice Figareido (Chippa United, South Africa), Mxolisi Mkhonto (Morapule Wanderers, Botswana), Banele ‘Stiga’ Ndzabandzaba (Botswana Defence Force), and Sizwe Gwebu (Uganda Police).

The player has numerous Sihlangu caps under the guidance of various coaches such as Kostadin Papic, Dominic Kunene, Zdravko Logarusic, and the incumbent Sifiso ‘Nuro’Ntibane.



‘Birds’ in Mayaluka Stadium health scare

By Sibusiso Masilela
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CAPITAL city giants Mbabane Swallows have raised safety concerns about the playing surfaces of the Mayaluka Stadium.

The red and white glamour white side are claiming that the Big Bend venue is having a dark substance, which is a risk to the players, through a letter sent to the Premier League of Eswatini by their Head of medical committee, Samkeliso Mdluli.

The red and white glamour side recently played an MTN premier League match against Ubombo Sugar FC at the same venue

where they recorded a 2-1 win over the sugar belt side.

“As the Medical Team of Mbabane Swallows FC, we wish to formally raise serious medical concerns regarding the condition of the playing surface at Mayaluka Stadium.

During recent matches, we have observed the presence of a dark or black dusty substance on the pitch, suspected to be machinery ashes or an industrial by-product used as soil or manure. This substance generates dust clouds during play, which has led to multiple players reporting respiratory symptoms, including chest pain, persistent coughing, and the expectoration of black-colored mucus or sputum,” Mdluli said.

Mdluli further stated that the substance could cause respiratory problems for the

players.

“These symptoms are highly concerning as the inhalation of such particulate matter can pose significant long-term health risks, potentially affecting not only the lungs and respiratory tract, but also the skin, eyes, and cardiovascular system. Continuous exposure may lead to chronic bronchitis, allergic reactions, or even reduced pulmonary capacity, which can impair player performance and overall well-being,” he said.

PLE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pat Vilakati confirmed the news when reached for comment.

“We have received a letter from Mbabane Swallows and forwarded it to the stadium authorities,” he said.

Nsingizini, G. Mamba face off

By Chris Dlamini

WILL it be the third consecutive win for defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs when they host Green Mamba on Wednesday.

The two star-studded sides meet at King Sobhuza Stadium in Nhlanguano at 3pm. The last time they met in the second-round last season, Green Mamba lost 1-0.

However, the defending champions were edged 2-1 in the first round. Coming from the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League 2025/26 second preliminary stage, the expectation is high.

Green Mamba has not had things go their way so far after three games, having only won in their opening game against Mbabane Swallows. They have four points in three games and sit on ninth on the standings.

Nsingizini could take the top spot with a win as they have six points whilst at the summit, Swallows had nine. Goal difference

would separate them with the current leaders. Meanwhile, the ticket for the game costs E30 and is available in all MTN Eswatini outlets.

Other than this game, police outfit Royal Leopard with be looking to record their first win in three after a draw with Young Buffaloes and then the 3-2 defeat to Swallows last Sunday.

The two sides go head-to-head at KaLanga Technical Centre at 3pm. Both sides are rooted at the bottom of the table.



▲ Nsingizini players during a recent match.



**Ronaldo to
says he will
retire soon**

Page 19



**‘Birds’ in
Malayuka Stadium
health scare**

Page 23

Eswatini Wednesday 5
October 2025
Daily News
Sport



Maniema tables

E250k bid for Junior

**...DR Congo topside AS Maniema impressed with Royal
Leopard midfield dynamo Junior Magagula** *Page 23*