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to Durban custody

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Eswatini, Taiwan strengthen economic ties



By Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI and Taiwan are forging a stronger economic partnership that promises to transform the Kingdom’s development trajectory.

At a high-profile business seminar held in Mbabane, Hilton Garden Inn in Mbabane on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, government and industry leaders unveiled plans for a groundbreaking Taiwan Innovation and Business Park in Phocweni, signalling a new era of collaboration focused on technology, manufacturing, and trade.

Manqoba Khumalo, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade, delivered a keynote address that underscored the significance of this partnership and its transformative potential for Eswatini’s economic landscape.

Minister Khumalo opened his address by expressing his honour in speaking at the seminar and highlighted the multiple engagements between Eswatini and Taiwan this year, all aimed at fostering trade and investment.

He praised the Government of the Republic of China Taiwan for its unwavering commitment to Eswatini’s economic development agenda. “The latest partnership has manifested in the form of the Taiwan Innovation and Business Park which will be built in Phocweni, an initiative that received the blessing of His Majesty King Mswati III earlier this year,” he said.

This Innovation and Business Park is poised to be a game-changer, providing Taiwanese companies with a strategic working space to access regional markets with ease from Eswatini. Khumalo emphasised that this project is part of Eswatini’s broader ambition to become a manufacturing hub for the region. “This is the third mission we have

Visionary partnership as: Eswatini, Taiwan strengthen economic ties



▲ Taiwan’s Ambassador to Eswatini, H.E. Jeremy Liang making his remarks.

received this year from Taiwan, and we are putting our efforts into turning these missions into real tangible projects for economic development,” he added.

The minister outlined several key sectors where opportunities abound for collaboration. He described Eswatini as offering a “unique landscape for diverse economic activities,” supported by a steadfast commitment to creating a conducive environment for trade. He noted that various incentives for foreign investors would be detailed by



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority during the seminar.

Highlighting Taiwan’s global leadership in technology and innovation, Minister Khumalo invited Taiwanese businesses to share their expertise and invest in Eswatini’s growing industries. “This will not only boost our economy but also enhance technological advancement in Eswatini,” he remarked.

He also pointed to agriculture as the backbone of Eswatini’s economy and expressed keen interest in collaborations in agro-pro-

cessing technology. “The strength that Taiwan has in the food processing and packaging space deserves our attention, and hence we want to host companies in this area,” he said.

Tourism was another sector identified for growth through bilateral cooperation. Minister Khumalo referenced recent engagements between tourism stakeholders of both nations aimed at increasing tourist traffic. “Given our rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, partnering in tourism can unlock new avenues for growth,” he stated, envisioning joint ventures that would benefit both countries economically.

In a call to action, the Minister urged businesses present at the seminar to think creatively about partnership opportunities that would foster sustainable development and mutual prosperity.

He highlighted several government initiatives designed to attract and support investors, including the Permanent Resident by Investment program and the operational business one-stop shop. The Permanent Resident by Investment program aims to provide long-term certainty for investors to live and work in Eswatini.

Minister Khumalo further expressed heartfelt gratitude to Taiwan for its commitment to making Eswatini an investment home. “Together, we can build a brighter future through innovation, investment, and cooperation,” he affirmed, emphasising that active participation in Eswatini’s economy is essential for shaping a shared economic future.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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TAIWAN’s Ambassador to Eswatini, His Excellency Jeremy Liang, underscored the transformative potential of the Taiwan Industrial Innovation Park (TIIP).

“Eswatini is our most important diplomatic ally in Africa,” he said, emphasising the deepening economic ties between the two countries.

“The construction of the Taiwan Industrial Innovation Park is the most significant initiative we have undertaken together. It will help Eswatini upgrade its industries, create jobs, and support Taiwanese businesses’ global expansion, achieving mutual benefit and win-win results.”

Ambassador Liang extended a warm welcome to the delegation led by Lo Ching-jung and expressed gratitude to Eswatini’s Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade and the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) for organising the investment seminar.

He highlighted the rapid momentum behind the TIIP, noting that nearly 50 Taiwanese companies have shown strong interest in investing in Eswatini within just a few months.

“Eswatini offers numerous investment advantages,” Liang explained. “Competitive labour costs, good public security, political stability, and an impressive economic growth forecast of around 6 per cent over the next two years make it an attractive destination. Furthermore, the new U.S. tariff

TIIP to drive job creation, industrial upgrading in Eswatini — Amb. Liang

policy places Eswatini at a base tariff of only 10 per cent, giving it a competitive edge over neighbouring countries when exporting to the U.S.”

The Ambassador also pointed out the strategic timing of the TIIP initiative, which followed the visit of Minister Lin Chia-lung, special envoy of Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te, who met with His Majesty the King in April to discuss trade and economic cooperation. “Minister Lin’s visit helped solidify important agreements, and the TIIP is a cornerstone project born from that dialogue,” Liang said.

Taiwanese companies visiting Eswatini represent a broad spectrum of industries, including textiles, plastics, cosmetics, auto parts, building materials, packaging, casting, office furniture, and banking.

Ambassador Liang emphasised that their investments will significantly contribute to Eswatini’s industrial diversification and upgrading.

He also praised Eswatini’s efforts to create a favourable investment environment, citing the establishment of the Business One-Stop Service (BOSS) office to streamline company registration and investor-friendly immigration policies. To ensure reliable infrastructure, Eswatini has secured a 10-year power supply agreement with South Africa’s ESKOM, guaranteeing stable electricity for the next decade.



▲ A section of the attendees at the high-profile business seminar.

Looking ahead, Ambassador Liang revealed that the Taiwanese government is considering incentives to encourage companies to join the TIIP, boosting investor confidence further. “With the strong determination and cooperation of both governments, I am confident we can build a high-quality industrial park that will become a benchmark in Southern Africa,” he stated.

He concluded by thanking the Eswatini government for its swift action in allocating

158 hectares near Matsapha for the TIIP and singled out Minister Khumalo for his personal dedication to the project. “His presence at every investment seminar and direct engagement with business delegations clearly demonstrate the Kingdom’s commitment to this partnership,” Liang said.

“Together, we aim to make the TIIP a model industrial park that benefits the people of Eswatini and strengthens Taiwan-Eswatini relations.”

By Delisa Magagula

Ndimande brothers return to Durban custody



▲ The Ndimande arriving for their court appearance.



▲ The Ndimande brothers in Durban Court.

THE long-awaited return of Siyabonga and Malusi Ndimande to South Africa has marked a turning point in one of the country’s most high-profile murder investigations, the killing of rapper Kiernan ‘AKA’ Forbes and his close friend Tebello ‘Tibz’ Motsoane. The brothers, who were extradited from Eswatini, are now back in police custody in Durban after months of legal processes and diplomatic coordination between the two neighbouring countries. The Ndimande brothers arrived at King Shaka International Airport under heavy police escort late Sunday evening. Their extradition was finalised following a ruling by the Eswatini High Court, which dismissed their final appeal to block transfer to South African authorities. The pair had been held at Matsapha Correctional Facility since their arrest earlier this year. South African Police Service (SAPS) spokesperson Brigadier Athlenda Mathe confirmed that the two suspects are now under police custody in Durban, where they are expected to make a first court appearance in connection with the murder case later this week.

“The extradition process has now been concluded. The suspects are in South Africa and will appear before a court of law to answer to the charges related to the murders of Kiernan Forbes and Tebello Motsoane,” Mathe said. Meanwhile, AKA’s father, Tony Forbes, has expressed relief at the latest development, describing it as a long-awaited moment for the family and for the public who have followed the case closely since February 2023. “It has been a long and painful journey. We’ve had to live every day not knowing if those responsible would ever be brought back to face justice. Seeing this progress gives us some comfort, but the real closure will only come through the court process,” he said. The case has drawn regional attention due to the cross-border nature of the investigation. The Ndimande brothers were arrested in Mbabane after police traced them through cooperation between the SAPS and the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS). Their extradition marks the first major

criminal handover between the two nations since the signing of their updated bilateral agreement on mutual legal assistance. Lt-Gen Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, KwaZulu-Natal’s Provincial Police Commissioner, who has overseen the investigation from its earliest stages, said the return of the brothers

will strengthen the prosecution’s case. “Our focus has always been to ensure that everyone involved in the planning and execution of this crime is accounted for. The extradition of the Ndimande brothers means we can now consolidate all evidence and proceed toward prosecution.”

Kiernan AKA Forbes and his long-time friend, celebrity chef and entrepreneur Tebello Tibz Motsoane, were shot dead outside Wish Restaurant on Florida Road, Durban, on February 10, 2023. CCTV footage of the incident, showing two gunmen approaching and firing at close range, spread widely online, sparking national outrage and grief. The police investigation later identified multiple suspects, alleging a coordinated hit involving spotters, shooters, and getaway drivers. Six men were previously arrested in connection with the killings, and authorities have stated that the Ndimande brothers are believed to have played key roles in the orchestration of the attack. According to court documents filed earlier this year, the Ndimande brothers allegedly fled to Eswatini within days of the murder. They were arrested in March following an international manhunt and had since been fighting extradition through local courts in Mbabane, claiming fears for their safety. Eswatini’s Ministry of Justice confirmed last week that all procedural requirements for extradition had been met, paving the way for their transfer to South African authorities. “The government of Eswatini has acted in accordance with the law and the principles of cooperation between states. This was a sensitive case, but justice must take its course,” said the Ministry at the time. While the case progresses, Tony Forbes has continued to urge the public to remain patient and allow the courts to do their work. He has consistently emphasised that the family seeks justice, not revenge. “We have always trusted the justice system. Our family has gone through unimaginable pain, but we believe in letting the truth come out in court. We just want accountability, nothing more, nothing less,” he said. Forbes also thanked the public for their continued support and solidarity, noting that his son’s legacy continues to inspire fans across the continent. “AKA was more than just a musician. He was a son, a father, a friend, and a proud South African. Seeing how many people still care about him and want to see justice done gives us strength,” he said. Meanwhile, in Durban, residents gathered outside the courthouse early Tuesday morning, expressing relief at the news of the brothers’ return. Some said they had lost faith that the suspects would ever be extradited. Durban local Sanele Dlamini, who witnessed the police convoy passing through the CBD, said the sight brought back memories of the night the rapper was killed. The Ndimande brothers are expected to face multiple charges, including premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and unlawful possession of firearms. They are likely to be joined to the existing case involving six other suspects already in custody. Police sources say additional arrests cannot be ruled out, as investigations into the financial trail behind the alleged contract killing continue. Authorities have not yet confirmed who allegedly ordered the hit. “We are not closing the investigation. Our team continues to follow leads. Everyone who had a hand in this crime will be brought before the court,” said

Family survives hail of bullets in Big Bend

By Thokozani Mazibuko

POLICE in Big Bend are investigating an attempted murder case after a family of six narrowly escaped death in a late-night shooting at the Mahlabaneni area on Saturday.

The incident occurred around 2030 hours on November 8, 2025, when the family was returning home from an outing. According to police reports, as they approached their homestead, gunmen opened fire, riddling the house with bullets in what investigators believe was a planned attack.

“Four shots were fired through the house window, but fortunately, no one was injured,” said Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni in an official statement.

Mnguni said early investigations suggest that the assailant or assailants were waiting

outside the family’s property before opening fire. A 16-year-old boy, who was walking slightly behind his family at the time, told police he heard the gunfire but could not identify the shooter. “The shots came from outside the fence,” he said, indicating that the attacker may have been lurking nearby.

Police have not yet established a motive, and no arrests have been made. Mnguni said the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) is pursuing all leads and has appealed to the public for assistance.

“Anyone with information that may lead to the arrest of the suspect or suspects is urged to contact Lubombo RCBO Mr. Justice Mabuza at 7606 8572, Desk Officer Inspector Dlamini at 7628 2166, or the Big Bend Police Station at 2363 6416,” she said. Members of the public may also dial 999, 9999, or 112 in case of emergencies.

Police patrols have reportedly been intensified in the area as residents express concern over the attack, which has left the Mahlabaneni community shaken.



▲ Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni.

Focus on Army Recruitment Race

First graduate wins army race

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

THE army recruitment drive reached its 40th stop at Madlangemphisi Inkhundla, where a graduate made history by taking top honours in the ladies' category.

Thabile Matfonsi, 29, a teacher graduate from Mavula, emerged victorious after outpacing dozens of other determined women in the tough army recruitment race. Matfonsi, who completed her studies at CIT College in Siteki last year, showcased both physical strength and mental endurance as she crossed the finish line to the sound of loud cheers from an enthusiastic crowd.

The ongoing army recruitment exercise, coordinated by the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF), has seen hopefuls from all over the country participate in competitive races designed to test fitness, determination, and discipline key traits for those seeking to serve in the military.

"I am overjoyed and grateful for this moment. It's not just about winning, but about

proving that hard work and education can go hand in hand with strength and resilience," Matfonsi said after the race, still beaming with pride.

Her victory, organisers noted, marks the first time a university graduate has won in the ladies category since the nationwide recruitment drive began earlier this year. Officials said her success highlights the growing interest among educated young people in contributing to national service through the army.

Brigadier General Luhlanga, who presided over the event, congratulated all participants for their effort and perseverance despite the scorching heat. He commended Matfonsi's performance, describing it as a testament to Eswatini's youth potential and a reflection of the army's values of excellence and discipline.

Madlangemphisi Inkhundla's event forms part of the ongoing UEDF national recruitment campaign, which has already covered 40 of the country's constituencies, with more races expected in the coming weeks as the force continues its search for the next generation of disciplined men and women ready to serve the Kingdom.



▲ Simile Dlamini winner of the male category at Gilgal Army Recruitment Race.



▲ Thabile Matfonsi the graduate who won the army recruitment.



Massive crowds turn out in Gilgal and Madlangemphisi

HUNDREDS, if not more than a thousand spectators, gathered over the weekend to witness the latest leg of the Eswatini National Army recruitment races held in Gilgal and Madlangemphisi Inkhundla respectively.

The events drew large crowds of young men and women hoping to secure a place in the country's military, as well as families and community members who came out in support.

The recruitment races have become a national spectacle's recent weeks, attracting massive participation across the country as the army continues its drive to enlist new recruits for the 2025 intake. At both venues, hopefuls arrived as early as dawn, some traveling long distances to take part in the grueling endurance

test that has become the hallmark of the selection process.

Army officials on site said the response has been overwhelming, reflecting the growing interest among the youth to serve in the armed forces. "We are encouraged by the turnout and the level of commitment shown by these young people," said one senior officer, adding that the recruitment team was impressed by the discipline and determination displayed by participants.

Spectators lined the roads cheering on the runners, turning the races into community celebrations. Local vendors seized the opportunity to sell refreshments and food, adding to the festive atmosphere that has accompanied the recruitment campaign across the regions.

The army recruitment drive,

which began in Lubombo, has since moved to various Tinkhundla, including Sithobelweni, Nkilongo, and Hhohho. The process involves a series of physical fitness tests, medical examinations, and interviews aimed at identifying the most capable candidates to join the force.

For many participants, the recruitment represents not just a career opportunity but also a chance to contribute to national service. "Joining the army has always been my dream," said a hopeful recruit at Gilgal. "I've been preparing for this day for months, and I'm proud to have made it this far."

The recruitment races are expected to continue in other regions in the coming days as the army moves closer to finalizing its list of successful candidates.

Former ladies soccer player wins in Gilgal

FORMER South Africa-based soccer player Nontsikelelo Mangwe, aged 19, from Macetjeni, has emerged as the top female winner at the Gilgal Inkhundla army recruitment race, dazzling crowds with her speed, strength, and determination.

Mangwe, who once played competitive football across the border, outpaced dozens of female contestants to claim first place in the demanding endurance race held on Tuesday. The event drew hundreds of participants and spectators as part of the ongoing Eswatini National Army recruitment drive.

Beaming with pride at the finish line, Mangwe credited her success to faith and perseverance. "I thank God for carrying me through," she said. "It wasn't easy, but I believed that with His strength, I could make it. My background in football helped me stay fit and disciplined."

Her victory added a special highlight to the Gilgal recruitment event, which has been marked by impressive performances and growing participation from young people eager to join the armed forces.

Army officials praised Mangwe's performance, describing her as an example of the type of determination and resilience the army looks for in new recruits. "We are proud of all participants, especially young women like Nontsikelelo who are breaking barriers and showing exceptional courage," said one



▲ Former South Africa-based soccer player Nontsikelelo Mangwe.

recruitment officer at the venue.

Spectators cheered enthusiastically as Mangwe crossed the finish line, many waving flags and shouting words of encouragement. Local community members said her story would inspire other young women to step forward and take part in future army recruitment exercises.

A local resident, Gugu Dlamini, said Mangwe's win symbolized the changing face of the nation's youth. "She's proof that women can do anything when they set their minds to it," Dlamini said. "Today she didn't just win a race she made history for our community."

The Gilgal event formed part of the ongoing national army recruitment campaign, which has toured several Tinkhundla, including Sithobelweni, Nkilongo, and Madlangemphisi. The campaign continues to draw record crowds and fierce competition as hopefuls vie for a chance to serve their country.

For Mangwe, Tuesday's victory could mark the beginning of a new journey, from the football field to the training ground, as she sets her sights on becoming one of Eswatini's next generation of soldiers.



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Senate passes MVA bill raising accident compensation to E3 mln

By Delisa Magagula

ACCIDENT survivors and families of victims may soon receive higher compensation after Senators on Tuesday passed the Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund Bill No. 6 of 2025, which seeks to raise the total liability limit for multiple claimants from E1 million to E3 million.

The Bill, tabled by Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg, was approved by the Senate and will now be referred to the Ministry of Finance Portfolio Committee for further review before final enactment.

Once signed into law, the Bill will amend the Motor Vehicle Accidents Act No. 13 of 1991 to align with current legal developments, extend the mandate of the Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund (SMVAF), and remove disparities between categories of claimants.

The amendment has been welcomed by road accident victims and families who have long lobbied for an increase in the maximum claims payable under the Fund. Under the current law, multiple claimants involved in a single accident can claim up to E1 million, while the total amount for general damages is E150 000 per claimant. The proposed Bill will double these amounts, raising the general damages limit to E300 000 per claimant and the total pay-out for multiple claimants to E3 million.

Additionally, compensation limits for fare-paying passengers will rise from E200 000 to E1.5 million, while benefits for social passengers those travelling without paying will increase from E50 000/E500 000 to E200 000/E1.5 million, respectively.

Workmen's compensation for passengers will also be expanded, with proposed limits ranging from E100 000 to E1 million, while funeral expense claims will increase from E10 000 to E15 000. The maximum payment for loss of income remains at E1 million.

The Bill



▲ Senators pictured after being sworn in at the House of Parliament.

also introduces general capping provisions relating to medical stabilisation, treatment, and rehabilitation costs.

It establishes new categories of liability, ensuring that different types of claimants are treated fairly and equitably. Previously, critics argued that the Fund's pay-out structure was out dated and unfair, particularly in cases involving multiple victims.

For years, emaSwati have called for higher claim limits, citing tragic accidents such as the Malagwane collision, where over 20 cars collided with a truck and later caught fire.

In such cases, survivors were forced to share the existing E1 million ceiling, which many argued was insufficient to cover medical, rehabilitation, and other costs.

According to Minister Rijkenberg, the Fund has paid out over E600 million in compensation over the past five years, highlighting the growing financial burden of road accidents on both the government and society.

Speaking at the SADC Road Accident Funds' Meeting at Hilton Garden Inn earlier this year, the Minister emphasised that the cost of road accidents extends beyond compensation pay-outs.

He noted that public institutions, including hospitals, police, and road infrastructure

agencies, collectively shoulder costs that run into billions of Emalangenis over the same period.

Meanwhile the Bill also proposes several modernisation measures. It broadens the definition of fuel to include alternative sources such as electric vehicles, reflecting the rise of clean energy transport solutions.

The definition of driving will now also include driverless vehicles, and the fuel levy will apply not only to importers but also to blenders and producers of fuel within the country.

Another significant change is the reduction in the claim lodging period. Currently, claimants have up to 24 months to file a claim, barring exceptional circumstances.

The proposed law shortens this period to four months to reduce incurred but not reported (IBNR) claims.

However, victims will retain the right to appeal the Fund's decision in court within 12 months, providing a legal avenue for disputes.

The proposed amendments come after landmark legal cases challenged the constitutionality

ty of certain provisions of the existing Act. One such case involved Muzikababa Benedict Sibiya, who in 2013 was severely injured in a hit-and-run accident. Section 11 of the Motor Vehicle Accidents Act previously required victims to identify the vehicle or driver involved in order to claim compensation for bodily injury or death.

Sibiya contended that the provision was unfair and irrational, as he had been rendered unconscious and could not identify the vehicle responsible.

He was admitted to the Mbabane Government Hospital Intensive Care Unit, underwent a craniotomy, and was later transferred to Hope House for a month of rehabilitation. At the time of the accident, he was a third-year student at Luyengo Campus, University of Eswatini, pursuing a BSc in Animal Science.

The High Court ultimately declared Section 11 unconstitutional in 2021, ruling that it discriminated against victims unable to identify the offending vehicle and unfairly limited compensation. The judgment prompted legislative reforms now incorporated into the 2025 Bill.



▲ Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

E856mln processed through Eswatini

OVER E856 million worth of transactions have been processed through the Eswatini Payment Switch (EPS) since its launch less than a year ago, signalling a major advance in the country's digital financial inclusion efforts. The figures were revealed by Brian Sihlongonyane, Deputy Head of Information Technology at the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), during the unveiling of the 2025 State of Inclusive and Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) Report in Ezulwini.

Eswatini hosts SIIPS report launch

ALONGSIDE the report launch, the State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) 2025 Media Workshop was hosted at the CBE Complex in Ezulwini. Both local and international journalists gathered for an interactive learning session focused on financial inclusion and digital finance reporting.

Stocks rise as US shutdown nears end

LONDON — Global shares edged up on Tuesday, nudged by a sense of relief at the imminent end of the U.S. government shutdown, though gains were tempered by nagging worries about valuations in the technology sector, while the dollar held firm. European shares rose for a second day, fuelled in part by gains in London's FTSE 100. It hit record highs as the pound fell following British employment data that gave investors more confidence in the chances of a growth-boosting rate cut from the Bank of England next month.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.7644	17.2293
G.B. Pound	21.9798	22.6504
EURO	19.4034	20.0113
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

Central Bank reserves rise to a sharp E14.4 billion

By Delisa Magagula

THE Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has reported a strong increase in the country's gross official reserves, which climbed to E14.4 billion in October 2025.

This marks a significant 34.2 per cent increase month-on-month and a 14.2 per cent rise compared to the same period last year.

According to the Bank's latest Monthly Statistical Release for September and October 2025, the rise in reserves improved the nation's import cover from 2.5 months in September to 3.4 months in October.

The CBE noted that this improvement strengthens Eswatini's external position and enhances its ability to meet international payment obligations.

The report also shows that credit extended to the private sector rose by 2.1 per cent from the previous month and 8.9 per cent year-on-year, reaching E21.7 billion in September 2025.

"The steady expansion in private-sector lending reflects continued business and household borrowing, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, trade, and real estate," states the report in part.

The increase indicates growing credit demand and activity in the economy. The Bank said the private-sector credit performance contributes to overall financial sector stability and supports on-going recovery in various industries. It is further reported that Eswatini's broad money supply, known as M2, rose slightly by 0.2 per cent month-on-month and 10.3 per cent year-on-year to close at E26 billion in September 2025.

"The rise in money supply suggests a modest increase in liquidity within the banking system during the period under review," stated the report.

Furthermore, the report shows that despite the moderate monthly gain, the annual growth in M2 remains strong, reflecting continued expansion in deposits and savings held by individuals and businesses.

According to the report the steady growth of broad money is important for supporting lending activity and economic transactions throughout the financial system.

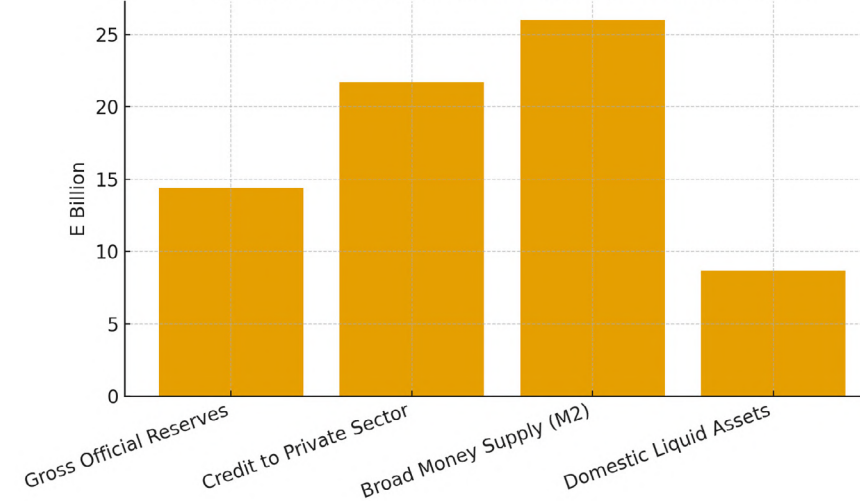
Meanwhile domestic liquid assets were recorded at E8.7 billion in September 2025, representing a 3 per cent decline from the previous month. However, on a year-on-year basis, domestic liquid assets grew by 9.1 per cent.

CBE explained that liquid assets measure the immediate funds available to commercial banks and other financial institutions to meet short-term obligations.

Annual Percentage Change (%) - October 2025



Key Financial Indicators (E Billion) - October 2025



Noting that, the slight monthly drop indicates some drawdowns in cash balances or short-term placements, while the annual increase points to stronger overall liquidity compared with the previous year.

Meanwhile the Bank maintained both the discount rate and the prime lending rate during the reporting period. The discount rate remained at 6.75 per cent, while the prime lending rate was steady at 10.25 per cent in October 2025. The decision to keep rates unchanged reflects a balanced approach by the CBE in supporting economic activity while maintaining price stability.

The current rates influence the cost of borrowing for businesses and households and help determine lending conditions across the financial sector. Worth noting is, the October report presents a generally positive picture for Eswatini's monetary indicators. The sharp growth in official reserves and the steady increase in private-sector credit indicate resilience in the financial system.

The reserves' import cover improvement from 2.5 months to 3.4 months suggests a stronger external buffer.

Analysts note that import cover above three months is typically viewed as a sign of adequate foreign-exchange strength.

Meanwhile, the 8.9 per cent annual growth in private-sector credit and 10.3 per cent increase in money supply show that domestic financial activity continues to expand, even amid moderate global economic pressures.

In addition the mild contraction in liquid assets is not seen as a major concern, given the overall year-on-year growth and sustained availability of funds in the banking sector.

Worth mentioning is the CBE's latest data come as Eswatini continues to pursue policies aimed at stabilising its economy and enhancing fiscal discipline.

The government and the central bank have prioritised maintaining foreign-exchange stability, improving investment confidence, and ensuring that inflation remains under control.

The report also highlights the role of the central bank in monitoring financial and liquidity trends to ensure that sufficient reserves and domestic credit are available to support economic growth.

With gross official reserves now at E14.4 billion, Eswatini is in a stronger position to manage external shocks and maintain currency stability. The year-on-year increases across most key indicators suggest that the financial system remains healthy and responsive to both public and private-sector demand.

CBE Governor
Phil Mnisi.



By Delisa Magagula

OVER E856 million worth of transactions have been processed through the Eswatini Payment Switch (EPS) since its launch less than a year ago, signalling a major advance in the country's digital financial inclusion efforts.

The figures were revealed by Brian Sihlongonyane, Deputy Head of Information Technology at the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), during the unveiling of the 2025 State of Inclusive and Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) Report in Ezulwini.

The event is being hosted by the CBE in partnership with the AfricaNenda Foundation, which leads Africa's research on real-time and inclusive payments.

Sihlongonyane reported that the EPS has successfully processed 194 000 transactions, representing more than USD 46 million (E856 million) in value since its introduction on December 11, 2024.

The platform allows instant money transfers between banks and mobile money service providers, a first for Eswatini's financial landscape.

"Eight financial institutions have now joined the national payment switch: First National Bank (FNB), Eswatini Building Society, Eswatini Bank, and Standard Bank. The mobile money providers include E-mali, MTN Mobile Money (MoMo), and Insta-Cash," presented Sihlongonyane.

In addition, he confirmed that Nedbank

E856mln processed through Eswatini Payment Switch

Eswatini will officially connect to the EPS on November 15, 2025, following its licence approval on October 27, 2025.

"The Eswatini Payment Switch connects all participating institutions under one secure network, enabling customers to transfer funds instantly across banks and mobile wallets," he said.

Worth noting the EPS is designed to simplify real-time, low-cost transfers between different financial platforms, reducing delays and improving access for consumers and small businesses.

"The EPS forms part of the Central Bank's broader strategy to modernise the national payment system and expand financial access across all population groups. Sihlongonyane said the switch has remained stable and secure since going live, maintaining strong performance and regulatory oversight," said Sihlongonyane.

"Every transaction is processed instantly, with full security and traceability. This has strengthened public confidence in digital payments," he added.

He further mentioned that plans are underway to extend the switch to include microfinance institutions, utility companies, and public-sector services, creating a fully connected payment environment.



▲ Brian Sihlongonyane, Deputy Head of Information Technology at the Central Bank of Eswatini.



▲ Co-Develop Senior Principal of Investment, Desire Kachenje making her presentation during the workshop.

Eswatini hosts SIIPS report launch

By Delisa Magagula

ALONGSIDE the report launch, the State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) 2025 Media Workshop was hosted at the CBE Complex in Ezulwini.

Both local and international journalists gathered for an interactive learning session focused on financial inclusion and digital finance reporting.

In hindsight, the workshop programme is designed to deepen journalists' understanding of the evolving payment ecosystem and their role in communicating it to the public.

Sessions included an in-depth look at Eswatini's national payment switch, exploring the policy and regulatory lessons it offers for achieving interoperability and harmonisa-

tion across financial institutions.

Another component, the Data-to-Story Challenge, provides practical newsroom exercises aimed at helping reporters translate complex financial data into clear and engaging media narratives.

Participants were also guided through the key findings of the SIIPS 2025 Report, with experts outlining expectations for the next phase of inclusive payment systems across the continent.

Later in the day, a journalist-led panel discussed the opportunities and challenges of reporting on digital inclusion, focusing on access, gender, consumer protection, and cross-border payments.

This is all set against the backdrop of Africa's growing digital finance landscape, where instant and inclusive payment systems are rapidly transforming how individuals and businesses interact with money.

Across the continent, digital public infrastructure spanning identity systems, nation-



▲ Bery Dieye, Communications Director for AfricaNenda Foundation.



▲ International journalists on arrival.

al switches, and mobile payment platforms is strengthening connectivity between formal and informal economies.

Meanwhile, the SIIPS 2025 Report tracks the expansion of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (IIPS) across the continent platforms that make real-time, affordable transactions possible for individuals and businesses alike.

This year's report introduces Africa's first fully mature IIPS, a landmark in the continent's financial development. It highlights how countries are building Digital Public In-

frastructure (DPI) to link identity systems, payment rails, and secure data frameworks that enable inclusive growth.

The AfricaNenda Foundation commended Eswatini for its leadership in implementing the EPS, describing the system as an example of how small economies can achieve full interoperability within a short period.

Countries with similar systems, the report notes, are seeing measurable increases in financial access, growth in small-business activity, and wider adoption of digital commerce.

By Amanda Cooper

Stocks rise as US shutdown nears end



▲A man walks past a brokerage house, as an electronic board displays stock index information graph, in the CBD in Beijing, China.

LONDON — Global shares edged up on Tuesday, nudged by a sense of relief at the imminent end of the U.S. government shutdown, though gains were tempered by nagging worries about valuations in the technology sector, while the dollar held firm.

European shares rose for a second day, fuelled in part by gains in London's FTSE 100. It hit record highs as the pound fell following British employment data that gave investors more confidence in the chances of a growth-boosting rate cut from the Bank of England next month.

The U.S. Senate passed a deal on Monday that would restore federal funding after the longest shutdown on record.

It will also release a raft of economic data on anything from jobs to industrial production, which could inject some volatility into markets.

Data deluge incoming

“Obviously, the shutdown isn't completely sorted yet. The House has got to get it through, but given the arithmetic of the House, that seems pretty certain,” Investec chief economist Philip Shaw said, referring to the Republican majority in the House of Representatives.

“The data deluge is going to be essentially a huge market event. One question is whether the data and the analysis by the Fed are consistent with each other.”

The Federal Reserve cut interest rates at its most recent meeting, but Chair Jerome Powell cautioned against assuming another cut in December is a given, not least because of the uncertainty over what key data on

employment and inflation might show.

The STOXX 600 was up 0.6 per cent on Tuesday, defying a 0.2-0.3 per cent drop in S&P 500 and Nasdaq futures . The FTSE 100 rose 0.8 per cent.

Shutdown compromise clears senate

The deal on the shutdown now heads to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson has said he would like to pass it as soon as Wednesday and send it on to President Donald Trump to sign into law.

Prediction markets, such as the online

Polymarket, have nearly fully priced in the reopening of the U.S. government for the end of the week.

The nearly six-week shutdown will have likely already knocked somewhere between 0.4 and 1 percentage points from fourth-quarter gross domestic product, said UBP economist Carlos Casanova in Hong Kong.

“However, if you look at previous instances, typically what happens is in the quarter after the activity bounces back ... So, I think what the market is doing is looking ahead one quarter and repricing that rebound.”

On Wall Street the S&P 500 closed up 1.54 per cent on Monday for its biggest one-day percentage gain since mid-October, while the Nasdaq notched its largest daily gain since May.

Also on Monday, a basket of the biggest AI-linked U.S. tech stocks staged its largest one-day rally since May, rising 2.8 per cent . Some of that enthusiasm could be tempered by news that Japan's SoftBank Group, in its results, said it had sold its entire stake in Nvidia for \$5.83 billion in October. Nvidia shares fell 1.6 per cent in premarket trading. (Reuters)

Oil stable as investors balance sanctions risks against oversupply

By Robert Harvey

LONDON — Oil prices were stable on Tuesday, as oversupply concerns balanced uncertainty over the impact of the latest U.S. sanctions on Russian oil.

Brent crude futures were up 39 cents, or 0.61 per cent, to \$64.45 a barrel at 1254 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$60.46 a barrel, up 33 cents, or 0.55 per cent.

Investors continue to assess the fallout from the U.S. sanctions on Russia, and their impact on both crude oil and refined fuel markets.

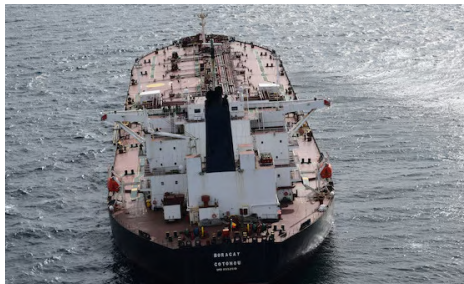
Lukoil declared force majeure at an Iraqi oilfield it operates, sources told Reuters on Monday, marking the biggest fallout yet from the sanctions imposed last month.

Restricted fuel exports as a result of the sanctions are propping up oil prices in the face of a crude oil glut, PVM analyst Tamas Varga said.

“Fresh U.S. sanctions on major Russian oil producers and exporters are weighing on product exports. As a result, heating oil/gasoil and RBOB gasoline are moving in a different direction from crude,” he said.

European diesel futures' premium to Brent crude was at a 21-month high of over \$31.50 per barrel on Tuesday, while European gasoline profit margins were at their highest in 18 months at almost \$21 per barrel on Monday.

Worries about crude oversupply are keeping a lid on oil prices.



▲An aerial view shows the oil tanker named Boracay.

Earlier this month, OPEC+ agreed to increase December output targets by 137,000 barrels per day, but also agreed to a pause in increases in the first quarter of next year.

“The oil market is also facing a considerable oversupply in the coming year, which is why prices are likely to remain under pressure. The main cause of the oversupply is the significant expansion of supply by OPEC+,” Commerzbank analysts said in a note.

OPEC+ has added 2 million bpd of output since April, and a willingness within the group to reverse voluntary production cuts further after the first quarter pause could add an extra 1 million bpd in the coming year, Commerzbank said.

Additionally, the volume of oil stored on board ships in Asian waters has doubled in recent weeks after tightening Western sanctions hit exports to China and India, analysts said.

Otherwise, wider markets saw support as the longest government shutdown in U.S. history could end this week after the Senate approved a compromise that would restore federal funding. (Reuters)



▲U.S. dollar banknotes.

Dollar steadies against yen, falls vs euro as focus turns to US data

By Stefano Rebaudo

THE U.S. dollar edged up versus the safe-haven yen and dropped against the euro on Tuesday as investors were uncertain about the U.S. economic outlook while awaiting a strong run of data once the U.S. government shutdown ends.

Growth-sensitive currencies such as the Australian dollar and British pound have strengthened recently, while safe-havens like the yen have weakened amid optimism that the U.S. government shutdown will end quickly, averting significant economic damage.

In early Asian trade, the yen touched its weakest level since February, while the Australian dollar held firm against the greenback.

Market participants expect the U.S. closure to end in the next few days after the Senate on Monday approved a compromise that would restore funding for federal agencies and would stall President Donald

Trump's campaign to downsize the federal workforce.

The deal to end the shutdown now heads to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson has said he would like to pass it as soon as Wednesday and send it on to Trump to sign into law.

“There will be little sense of direction in the coming days: reopening prospects allow markets to price out the negative growth impact, but a resumption of data releases in the U.S. does carry non-negligible downside risks to the dollar,” said Francesco Pesole, forex strategist at ING.

“We think markets are underestimating the downside risks for the labour market, U.S. front-end rates and, by extension, the dollar into year-end,” he added.

The euro was up 0.15 per cent at \$1.1572.

The single currency is supported by a firmly-anchored outlook for European Central Bank policy, with its key rate expected to stay unchanged through 2027, while the Fed is seen easing policy.

Risks to euro zone inflation are balanced and growth is stronger than once expected, two ECB policymakers said on Tuesday. (Reuters)

A packed field of parties is contesting Egypt's parliamentary election but those set to dominate the chamber agree on most issues of substance, including their staunch support for President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Voting in Egypt began on Monday, nearly two years after Sisi was elected to a third, six-year term, the final term he is allowed under Egypt's current constitution. Polling is held over several phases and continues for more than five weeks.

Campaign banners hanging on streetsides and traffic circles featured a dozen logos – on paper as crowded a field as at practically any time since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising ended decades of one-party rule.

Unlike those days, however – when Islamists, liberals, socialists and regime loyalists waged hardscrabble campaigns for hearts and minds – the parties are now broadly aligned as they try to drum up enthusiasm among a disengaged electorate.

SEATS ALLOCATED TO CLOSED PARTY LIST

They are also running together under a hybrid voting system that allocates a little under half of seats to closed party lists.

This year only one list made the ballot – one that gives the lion's share of seats to three pro-government parties, meaning many lawmakers were effectively guaranteed a win before the first vote was cast.

Several opposition figures were barred from competing as individual candidates, including both ultraconservative Islamists and leftists, based on a new interpretation of a military service requirement. Campaign costs and medical screening kept others out.

Critics say such moves have left many voters apathetic, especially after being worn down by years of economic hardship. Turnout in a vote for parliament's advisory upper house this summer was just above 17%.

At one polling station in Giza, a 58-year-old electrician who gave his name as Amgad said people working for the candidates had bussed him in to vote, but he wasn't sure who those candidates were, since "all the

Many pro-Sisi parties but little competition as Egypt votes for new parliament



▲ A man votes at a school used as a polling station, during the first round of Egypt's parliamentary elections, in Giza, Egypt.

deflegates work together.” Defenders of the system say the party lists include a diversity of views and interests and help secure better representation for women and minorities. They deny voter manipulation.

The State Information Service, which liaises with foreign media in Egypt, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

NEW PARTY PRESENTED AS ‘UNIFYING ENTITY’

Under former president Hosni Mubarak, who was ousted in 2011, lawmaking was dominated by the National Democratic Party, in which businessmen and Mubarak's son held prominent roles.

By contrast, Sisi has never joined a party. The group most closely associated with his agenda, the Nation's Future party, will likely lose ground based on the upper chamber results.

One of the biggest gainers in that vote was the National Front Party, founded late last year and now fielding businessmen and former ministers.

The party – which needed just 5,000 endorsements to be established but said it gathered over half a million – is “neither loyalist nor opposition, nor is it a single school of thought,” its co-founder Daa Rashwan, who also heads the State Information Service, said in a TV interview early this year.

It is instead a “unifying entity”, he added.

Others on the list are Nation's Future and the Homeland Defenders, a party founded by former military officers in 2013 which also made gains in the upper house vote.

Homeland Defenders seek to fulfill “a long-term developmental vision aligned with the state's leadership,” spokesperson Amr Suleiman told Reuters.

The election involved “strong competition among parties and independents for individual seats,” he said.

OPPOSITION IN A BIND

Timothy Kaldas, an analyst at the U.S.-based Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, said the proliferation of pro-government parties helps centralise authority by preventing rival power centres from coalescing.

“Going from the Nation's Future Party dominating parliament to a bunch of loyalist parties is a way to further weaken all of them, and also a way to reward new loyalists,” he said.

Opposition figures have been left with a dilemma: join the list or risk being shut out.

The Social Democratic Party decided to add its name. “We still feel there's room to influence politics in the house, so we're not going to waste it,” said Maha Abdel Nasser, a parliamentarian with the party who is running again.

The Constitution Party – founded in 2012 by Nobel laureate Mohamed ElBaradei – took the opposite tack, teaming up with the Conservative Party to contest individual seats.

The campaign was an uphill battle against “political money” and voter indifference, said Mariam Farouk, the bloc's spokesperson.

(Reuters)

Sudan relief operations are ‘on the brink of collapse,’ UN migration agency warns

THE U.N. migration agency warned on Tuesday that humanitarian efforts in Sudan's war-torn North Darfur region might come to a complete halt unless immediate funding and safe delivery of relief supplies are ensured.

“Despite the rising need, humanitarian operations are now on the brink of collapse,” the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a statement. It added: “Warehouses are nearly empty, aid convoys face significant insecurity, and access restrictions continue to prevent the delivery of sufficient aid.”

The IOM said more funding is needed to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the war between the Sudanese army and its rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The agency warned of “an even greater catastrophe” if its appeal went unheeded.

“Our teams are responding, but insecurity and depleted supplies mean we are only reaching a fraction of those in need,” IOM Director General Amy Pope said in a statement.

The RSF's recent capture of North Darfur's capital, el-Fasher, left hundreds dead and forced tens of thousands of people to flee reports of atrocities by the paramilitary force, according to aid groups and U.N. officials. The IOM said nearly 90,000 people have left el-Fasher and surrounding villages, undertaking a perilous journey through unsafe routes where they have no access to food, water or medical assistance.

Tens of thousands of people have arrived at overcrowded displacement camps in



Tawila, about 70 kilometers (43 miles) from el-Fasher. In the camps, the displaced find themselves in barren areas with few tents and insufficient food and medical supplies.

“We have been getting little food from community kitchens here; we only get lunch meals,” Sohaiba Omar, 20, told The Associated Press from a shelter in Diba Nayra camp in Tawila.

“We also need a nearby source of water and toilets. Disposing of our wastes in the open can make us fall sick and catch diseases

like Cholera,” she added.

Batoul Mohamed, a 25-year-old volunteer at the camp, said: “The displaced are too many; they are also hungry. It is very difficult to have people come up to us saying that they could not eat because there was not enough food.”

The violence has spread to other parts of Sudan including Western Darfur and the Kordofan region, forcing more people to flee their homes. Nearly 39,000 people fled the conflict in the North Kordofan from Oct. 26

and Nov. 9, according to the IOM.

The war between the RSF and the military began in 2023 when tensions erupted between the two former allies that were meant to oversee a democratic transition after a 2019 uprising. The fighting has killed at least 40,000 people, according to the World Health Organization, and displaced 12 million. However, aid groups say the true death toll could be many times higher.

(Reuters)

Trump re-nominates Musk ally and private astronaut Jared Isaacman as NASA chief

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he was re-nominating Jared Isaacman, the private astronaut and ally of fellow billionaire and SpaceX founder Elon Musk, for the post of NASA administrator, five months after Isaacman's original nomination was withdrawn.

Isaacman, an e-commerce mogul who flew to orbit twice on all-private astronaut missions as a customer and collaborator with SpaceX, was removed from consideration to lead the space agency in late May amid a high-profile falling-out between Trump and Musk. Sean Duffy, the head of the U.S. Department of Transportation, was named interim NASA chief in July.

At the time, NASA's workforce of 18,000 and the space industry at large were being whipsawed by looming layoffs and proposed budget cuts threatening cancellation of dozens of U.S. science programs. Nearly 4,000 NASA employees took buyouts the Trump administration offered in January and April, according to a union that represents about 8,000 space agency personnel.

The return of Isaacman as Trump's nominee to fill the NASA vacancy on a permanent basis came about two weeks after Duffy said he was inviting other companies to compete with SpaceX for the agency's marquee lunar landing contracting, leading to a public spat between Duffy and Musk over who should be leading the space agency.

Responding to reports that Duffy was looking to fold NASA into the Transportation Department, Musk wrote online last month, "The person responsible for America's space program can't have a 2 digit IQ."

In a Fox News appearance a day earlier, Duffy said SpaceX's development of its next-generation moon rocket, Starship, was falling behind schedule and could undermine NASA's goal of returning humans to



▲ Commander Jared Isaacman of Polaris Dawn, a private human spaceflight mission, speaks at a press conference at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S.

the lunar surface under the agency's Artemis program, an effort rivaling China's lunar ambitions.

By then, the agency had confirmed that Duffy and Isaacman were engaged in talks about possibly resurrecting Isaacman's NASA nomination.

"This evening, I am pleased to nominate Jared Isaacman, an accomplished business leader, philanthropist, pilot, and astronaut, as Administrator of NASA," Trump said on social media. The role requires confirmation by the Senate, where Trump's Republican

Party holds a 53-47 majority.

the SpaceX chief executive officer who had been an influential adviser to the president and sought to more closely align the U.S. space program with his goal of flying missions to Mars.

Isaacman, a billionaire investor and amateur jet pilot with thousands of hours of flight time under his belt, then spent months navigating the Senate confirmation process, balancing the desire of Musk and the Trump administration to focus on Mars with NASA's multibillion-dollar strategy to return as-

tronauts to the moon by 2027, ahead of China in a geopolitical race to the lunar surface.

"Jared's passion for Space, astronaut experience, and dedication to pushing the boundaries of exploration, unlocking the mysteries of the universe, and advancing the new Space economy, make him ideally suited to lead NASA into a bold new Era," Trump wrote in his post.

Isaacman, founder and CEO of the financial transactions service Shift4 Payments (FOUR.N), opens new tab, was the commander and chief benefactor of the first all-private space crew to reach Earth orbit in 2021. He led a four-member team of civilian rookie astronauts aboard a SpaceX rocket vessel on a three-day mission dubbed Inspiration4.

He returned to orbit in September 2024 with a follow-up commercial voyage that he again bankrolled, leading another quartet of private astronauts on a mission dubbed Polaris Dawn, in which he joined a SpaceX engineer in conducting the world's first private spacewalk.

Hours before Trump announced his re-nomination, Isaacman restated on X some of the priorities that he said he had outlined during previous Senate testimony, including an emphasis on putting "more astronauts in space with greater frequency."

Isaacman said he embraced the goal of returning American astronauts to the moon under the Artemis program to "determine the scientific, economic and national security reasons to support an enduring lunar presence," before eventually shifting resources toward "the near-impossible that no one else will work on like nuclear electric propulsion."

He also said he supported "maximizing the remaining life" of the International Space Station as part of a longer-term effort to build an "orbital economy" with various commercial interests. (Reuters)

OpenAI used song lyrics in violation of copyright laws



OPENAI'S chatbot ChatGPT violated German copyright laws by reproducing lyrics from songs by best-selling musician Herbert Groenemeyer and others, a court ruled on Tuesday, in a closely watched case against the U.S. firm over its use of lyrics to train its language models.

The regional court in Munich found that the company trained its AI on protected content from nine German songs, including Groenemeyer's hits "Maenner" and "Bochum".

The case was brought by German music rights society GEMA, whose members include composers, lyricists and publishers, in another sign of artists around the world fighting back against data scraping by AI.

Presiding judge Elke Schwager ordered OpenAI to pay damages for the use of copyrighted material, without disclosing a figure.

GEMA legal advisor Kai Welp said GEMA hoped discussions could now take place with OpenAI on how copyright holders can be remunerated.

COPYRIGHT INFRINGED

OpenAI had argued that its language models did not store or copy specific training data but, rather, reflected what they had learned based on the entire training data set.

Since the output would only be generated as a result of user inputs known as prompts, it was not the defendants, but the respective user who would be liable for it, OpenAI had

argued.

However, the court found that both the memorisation in the language models and the reproduction of the song lyrics in the chatbot's outputs constitute infringements of copyright exploitation rights, according to a statement on the ruling.

POTENTIAL PRECEDENT

The outcome of the case could set a precedent in Europe for how AI companies use copyrighted materials.

"The internet is not a self-service store, and human creative achievements are not free templates," said GEMA CEO Tobias Holzmüller. "Today, we have set a precedent that protects and clarifies the rights of authors: even operators of AI tools such as ChatGPT must comply with copyright law."

The decision can be appealed.

"We disagree with the ruling and are considering next steps," a spokesperson for OpenAI said. "The decision is for a limited set of lyrics and does not impact the millions of people, businesses and developers in Germany that use our technology every day."

Earlier this year, leading Bollywood music labels asked a New Delhi court to join a copyright lawsuit against OpenAI over alleged unauthorised use of sound recordings to train AI models, underscoring global concerns about AI and music rights.

(Reuters)

▲ Microsoft, OpenAI reach new deal valuing OpenAI at \$500 billion.

Venezuelan military preparing guerrilla response in case of US attack

VENEZUELA is deploying weapons, including decades-old Russian-made equipment, and is planning to mount a guerrilla-style resistance or sow chaos in the event of a U.S. air or ground attack, according to sources with knowledge of the efforts and planning documents seen by Reuters.

The approach is a tacit admission of the South American country's shortage of personnel and equipment.

U.S. President Donald Trump has suggested the possibility of ground operations in Venezuela, saying "the land is going to be next" following multiple strikes on alleged drug-trafficking vessels in the Caribbean and a large U.S. military build-up in the region. He later denied he was considering strikes inside Venezuela.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, in power since 2013, says Trump is seeking to oust him and that Venezuelan citizens and the military will resist any such attempt.

The U.S. military dwarfs Venezuela's, which is debilitated by a lack of training, low wages and deteriorating equipment, six sources familiar with Venezuela's military capabilities said.

Some unit commanders have even been forced to negotiate with local food producers to feed their troops because government supplies fall short, two sources with knowledge of state security forces told Reuters.

That reality has led Maduro's government to bet on two potential strategies - including a guerrilla-style response referenced publicly, though without details, by high-ranking officials, and another which officials have not acknowledged.

CREATING ANARCHY ON STREETS

The guerrilla-style defense, which the government has termed "prolonged resistance" and mentioned in broadcasts on state television, would involve small military units at more than 280 locations carrying out acts



of sabotage and other guerrilla tactics, according to the sources and several years old planning documents for the tactic seen by Reuters.

The second strategy, called "anarchization," would use the intelligence services and armed ruling-party supporters to create disorder on the streets of capital Caracas and make Venezuela ungovernable for foreign forces, said one source with knowledge of defense efforts and another source close to the opposition.

It was unclear when the government might deploy each of the tactics, which sources said are complementary, in case of U.S. attack.

Any resistance strategy faces long odds of success, the sources acknowledged.

"We wouldn't last two hours in a conventional war," said a source close to the government.

Another source with knowledge of defense

and security inside Venezuela said that the country was not "prepared or professionalized for a conflict," despite government assertions to the contrary. "We're not ready to face one of the world's most powerful and well-trained armies," the source said.

The communications ministry, which handles media inquiries on behalf of the Venezuelan government, did not respond to questions.

Government officials publicly have been dismissive of a U.S. military threat, though they have called for peace. "They think that with a bombing they'll end everything. Here in this country?" scoffed Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello on state television in early November, while Maduro has repeatedly praised the "soldiers of the homeland" as heirs of independence hero Simon Bolivar.

"The aggression will be responded to with national unity," Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino said on Tuesday, amid renewed mil-

itary exercises around the country. "We are ready here, we don't want war."

SOLDIER SALARIES ARE LOW

Maduro has enjoyed strong military loyalty by following the strategy of his predecessor Hugo Chavez, who placed officers in government roles as ministers or heads of state-run companies to ensure allegiance.

Military leadership backed Maduro's victory in the 2024 election, despite evidence, backed by many international observers, that the opposition candidate had resoundingly won.

Venezuelan troops, however, have to deal with poor working conditions and there could be desertions in the event of an attack, the sources said.

Rank-and-file soldiers earn roughly \$100 a month in local currency - far short of the estimated \$500 monthly cost of a basic food basket, according to April data from the Venezuelan Teachers Federation's Center for Documentation and Social Analysis.

In recent years, their primary experience has been confronting unarmed civilians during street protests, the source close to the opposition said.

Maduro has said there are 8 million civilians training in militias to defend Venezuela, and some civilians have told Reuters in recent months that they are ready and willing to die to defend their homeland against a foreign force.

But a source with defense and security knowledge estimated that in an anarchization scenario, just 5,000 to 7,000 people would participate, including intelligence personnel, armed ruling-party supporters and militia members.

Meanwhile, there are some 60,000 members of the Army and National Guard that the government would deploy for its guerrilla-style "war of resistance," the source said. (Reuters)

US Senate passes bill to end government shutdown, sends to House

THE U.S. Senate on Monday approved a compromise that would end the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, breaking a weeks-long stalemate that has disrupted food benefits for millions, left hundreds of thousands of federal workers unpaid and snarled air traffic.

The 60-40 vote passed with the support of nearly all of the chamber's Republicans and eight Democrats, who unsuccessfully sought to tie government funding to health subsidies that are due to expire at the end of the year. While the agreement sets up a December vote on those subsidies, which benefit 24 million Americans, it does not guarantee they will continue.

The deal would restore funding for federal agencies that lawmakers allowed to expire on October 1 and would stall President Donald Trump's campaign to downsize the federal workforce, preventing any layoffs until January 30.

It next heads to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, where Speaker Mike Johnson has said he would like to pass it as soon as Wednesday and send it on to Trump to sign into law. Trump has called the deal to reopen the government "very good."

The deal would extend funding through January 30, leaving the federal government for now on a path to keep adding about \$1.8 trillion a year to its \$38 trillion in debt.

Coming a week after Democrats won



▲ The U.S. Capitol building is illuminated the night the Senate passed a short-term government funding bill, more than a month into the longest U.S. government shutdown, on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., U.S.

high-profile elections in New Jersey, Virginia and elected a democratic socialist as the next mayor of New York City, the deal has provoked anger among many Democrats who note there is no guarantee that the Republican-controlled Senate or House would agree to extend the health insurance subsidies.

"We wish we could do more," said Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, the chamber's No. 2

Democrat. "The government shutting down seemed to be an opportunity to lead us to better policy. It didn't work."

A late October Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 50% of Americans blamed Republicans for the shutdown, while 43% blamed Democrats.

U.S. stocks rose on Monday, buoyed by news of progress on a deal to reopen the government.

Trump has unilaterally cancelled billions of dollars in spending and trimmed federal payrolls by hundreds of thousands of workers, intruding on Congress's constitutional authority over fiscal matters. Those actions have violated past spending laws passed by Congress, and some Democrats have questioned why they would vote for any such spending deals going forward.

(Reuters)

Babalwa M returns to IF's Lounge for Make-Up Show

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI music fans are eagerly anticipating a special event as Babalwa M, the celebrated “queen of Amapiano,” prepares to take the stage at IF's Lounge for a highly awaited make-up show.

This performance, set for November 28, 2025, comes after the artist missed her originally scheduled appearance at IF's Lounge's Spring Bash on October 25, 2025, leaving many fans disappointed. The event's founder, Thulani Ntsangase, honoured his promise to deliver a make-up show, ensuring that Babalwa M's loyal followers will not be left wanting.

The announcement of the make-up show was made through IF's Lounge social media channels, where excitement quickly built among fans. The post read, “As promised,

the queen Babalwa M is pulling up on 28th November 2025 for the Make Up show you've been waiting for. Details drop soon, but for now, clear your plans, charge your phones, and get ready to witness history. It's about to go down.” This message not only confirmed the date but also set the tone for what promises to be an unforgettable night of music and celebration. Babalwa M's rise in the South African music scene has been nothing short of remarkable. Known for her platinum-selling singles such as ‘Sukakude’ and ‘Izono,’ she has become a defining voice within the Amapiano genre, a style that has taken the country and the world by storm. Her collaborations with some of the industry's top producers, including Kelvin Momo, Mas Musiq, Sam Deep, and Musa Keys, have consistently pushed the boundaries of the genre, blending deep house rhythms with soulful melodies to create a sound that is uniquely hers. Born and raised in Protea Glen, Soweto, Babalwa M's musical journey began in the church choir, where she honed

her vocal skills and developed a passion for music. Her early influences included Afro-soul and house music, which she seamlessly fused into her Amapiano productions, resulting in a dynamic and versatile style that appeals to a broad audience. This blend of genres has helped her stand out in a crowded industry, earning her both critical acclaim and commercial success.

“As promised, the queen Babalwa M is pulling up on 28th November 2025 for the Make Up show you've been waiting for. Details drop soon, but for now, clear your plans, charge your phones, and get ready to witness history”



▲ Amapiano artist Babalwa M.

Sisonkhe Kollektiv makes ‘Jazz Meet Opera’

IN what promises to be one of the most enchanting evenings of the year, seven members of the Sisonkhe Kollektiv are set to headline the ‘Jazz Meets Opera.’

On Thursday, November 13, 2025, The Jazz Gallery, in collaboration with Into Music Society, will host ‘Jazz Meets Opera,’ a groundbreaking concert that fuses two seemingly disparate musical worlds into one harmonious celebration.

Headlined by seven accomplished members of the Sisonkhe Kollektiv, this event is poised to captivate audiences with its innovative blend of jazz improvisation and operatic grandeur, marking a significant milestone in the region's cultural landscape.

The Sisonkhe Kollektiv, known for its versatility and artistic excellence, brings together a stellar lineup for this concert. The ensemble features Aliselihle Tfwala, whose jazz vocals provide soulful depth; Celumusa Mkhathshwa and Tengesihle Gwebu, both adept at navigating the nuances of opera and jazz; Mongezi Simelane, whose dual talents on opera vocals and cello add rich texture;

Daniel Chulu on bass laying down the rhythmic foundation; Mwesigwa Kisaakye on drums driving the dynamic beats; and Ndumiso Dlamini on keys weaving melodic intricacies.

Together, they embody a rare synthesis of skill and creativity that promises to deliver a night of unforgettable music. Tickets are priced at E400 and are available exclusively in advance, with no sales at the door. This strategic decision underscores the event's exclusivity and the organisers' confidence in attracting a full house of discerning listeners eager for fresh and sophisticated live music experiences.

Driving this visionary project is Nelisa Lawton, the director of both Into Music Society and The Jazz Gallery. She describes it as a boundary-pushing celebration of artistry that transcends genres and connects diverse audiences. “We are excited to merge the realms of jazz and opera in a night that will linger in memory,” Lawton said. “Join us for an evening of soul-stirring harmonies and culinary delights.”



▲ Sisonkhe Kollektiv.

Sarnilo for Karaoke Night

ESWATINI's music landscape is poised for an electrifying boost this week as the acclaimed local artist Sarnilo is set to headline the highly anticipated Karaoke Nights event.

Set to take place this Wednesday at IF's Lounge, the evening is set to be an exceptional fusion of music, laughter, and community spirit, running from 6 pm well into the night. The spotlight will shine brightly on Lomasoul, a powerhouse in Eswatini's music scene, known for her dynamic stage presence and impressive vocal abilities. Her participation is expected to elevate the night, drawing her devoted fans and new listeners alike. Complementing her performance will be the skilled Resident DJs, with Thando taking on the role of Master of Ceremonies.

In an exclusive interview, Mistosoul, the Entertainment Manager at IF's Lounge, expressed his excitement about the growing popularity of Karaoke Nights, now entering its third month. He revealed that the event's success stems from a deep passion for music and a commitment to nurturing local talent. “We have been receiving massive support for this mid-week

concept,” Mistosoul said. “Our love for music and commitment to supporting local artists and musicians in the country drives us to create this platform. This event is another opportunity for us to uplift local musicians while providing our patrons with an entertaining and laid-back atmosphere where live musicians can mesmerise the audience.”

Mistosoul also highlighted the event's unique theme, which goes beyond a simple dress code. The denim and white theme are designed to foster a sense of unity and style among attendees, transforming the night into a celebration of community and culture. “The denim and white theme add a fashionable touch to the evening, making it not just a night of music but also a celebration of community and culture,” he explained. He further emphasised the warm hospitality that IF's Lounge is renowned for, assuring that every guest and performer will feel welcomed and appreciated. “We pride ourselves on delivering the best experience for our guests, and we want every musician and DJ to shine on that night,” he added.

A standout feature of Karaoke Nights is its inclusivity and accessibility. Participation is completely free for both artists and patrons, removing financial barriers and encouraging a diverse array of musicians to take the stage. This open-door policy creates a vibrant melting pot of talent, from seasoned performers to emerging artists eager to share their voices. “We believe in creating an environment where everyone can participate and enjoy music together,” Mistosoul stated.



▲ Acclaimed local artist Sarnilo.

Leehleza confirms Ocean Cuisine show

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
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ACCLAIMED South African artist Leehleza has confirmed that he is set to headline a vibrant show at Ocean Cuisine. Scheduled for November 30, 2025, this event promises an electrifying night featuring not only Leehleza but also the dynamic Sbu De Drum DJ, Sgitha Demin, and the White Party, all converging to deliver an unforgettable experience. Tickets for this much-anticipated gathering are priced at E100, offering fans an accessible opportunity to witness some of the finest talents in the South African music scene. The upcoming event at Ocean Cuisine is expected to be more than just a concert; it is poised to be a celebration of South African culture and music. With the inclusion of Sbu De Drum DJ and Sgitha Demin, the night will feature a diverse lineup that highlights the rich tapestry of sounds that define modern South African music.

Niche

Leehleza, born Lindelihle Gladwell, has carved a significant niche for himself in the South African music industry, particularly within the Amapiano genre. His vocal contributions have been integral to several chart-topping hits by the legendary Kabza De Small, including popular tracks like 'Umshove,' 'Bamba La,' and 'Amabele Shaya.' These collaborations have not only solidified Leehleza's reputation as a gifted vocalist but also as a key figure in the evolution of contemporary South African music. The journey of Leehleza into the music world began in 2007, initially as a disc jockey. His early influences included prominent artists such as DJ Fresh, Vinny da Vinci, and Mbuso, whose styles helped shape his musical sensibilities. By 2009, Leehleza was already making waves in local DJ battles, showcasing his skills and



▲ Amapiano artist Leehleza.

gaining recognition within his community. However, it was his fortuitous meeting with Kabza De Small, often hailed as the King of Amapiano, that marked a turning point in his

career. This partnership propelled Leehleza into the spotlight, enabling him to reach a broader audience and contribute significantly to the genre's growing popularity.

Mduduzi Ncube takes tour to Espinho Lounge

SOUTH African singer-songwriter Mduduzi Ncube is set to take centre stage as the headliner for the highly anticipated 'Nhliziyo Ngise' tour. The event is slated for November 22, 2025, at Espinho Lounge in Siteki. The concert will feature an impressive roster of supporting acts, including DJ Njebza, Moon-Elo, DJ Maye, and Mfundo, all renowned for their ability to energise crowds and keep the party alive. Bayanda will serve as the master of ceremonies, guiding the audience through an unforgettable evening. Doors open at 3 pm, with festivities continuing late into the night, ensuring ample time for music lovers to immerse themselves in the experience. Ticket pricing has been structured to accommodate early attendees and latecomers alike. Presale tickets are available for E50, gate entry is set at E80, while those arriving after 10 pm will pay E100. The organisers have also implemented a dress code, requesting guests to refrain from

wearing flops, hats, and vests, aiming to maintain a stylish and vibrant ambience throughout the event. Mduduzi Ncube's rise to prominence is a compelling story of talent and perseverance. Best known for his breakout hit single 'Isiginci,' Ncube's music resonates deeply with fans due to its authentic storytelling and emotional depth. The song touches on themes of love, struggle, and resilience, drawing heavily from his own life experiences, which have earned him a loyal following across Southern Africa. A pivotal moment in Ncube's musical journey occurred in 2017 when he received a guitar as a gift. This seemingly simple act reignited a dormant passion for music, providing him with a powerful outlet for self-expression. Mduduzi Ncube's breakthrough came in 2019 when he was discovered by the influential DJ Tira, a key figure in the South African music industry known for nurturing emerging talent. Under DJ Tira's mentorship, Ncube recorded two songs, one of which featured the acclaimed singer Berita.



▲ Mduduzi Ncube.

Celumusa drops new song 'Sophumelela'

ESWATINI musical talent Celumusa has released his latest single titled 'Sophumelela,' a heartfelt hustle anthem that reflects the struggles and triumphs of life. The song, which blends Afro Pop and soul influences, offers a raw and authentic narrative about overcoming adversity on the path to success. Celumusa explained that 'Sophumelela' is deeply personal, inspired by his own challenging upbringing. "I wrote this song because my upbringing wasn't easy, but I always looked up to success," he shared. The track will resonate with anyone who has faced difficulties growing up or experienced hardships at home, making it a relatable and motivational piece for a wide audience. The creative process behind 'Sophumelela' was anything but simple. Unlike many contemporary tracks that rely heavily on digital production, Celumusa chose to record the song live, adding a rich and organic texture to the music. To achieve this, he enlisted the talents of several accomplished musicians: Phumla Dlamini played keys and bass, Sisa Sambo took the lead guitar, and Taribo handled the drums. Celumusa revealed that coordinating and paying these musicians was a significant investment. "It wasn't easy because I had to pay the guys serious money, which is why many artists find it difficult to record live music," he explained. This commitment to quality and authenticity sets 'Sophumelela' apart from many other releases in the local music scene. The production phase also presented challenges. Celumusa's producer, DJ Navie, who is more accustomed to working with digital platforms like Fruity Loops, found it difficult to master a live-recorded track. Despite these hurdles, the team persevered to ensure the final product met their high standards.

Sophumelela promises to be a powerful addition to Celumusa's growing discography, showcasing his dedication to storytelling and musical craftsmanship. The song's message of resilience and hope is expected to inspire many, particularly young people navigating their own journeys toward success.



▲ Eswatini musical talent Celumusa.

DJ Zinhle responds to Seemah's comment about her husband

DJ Zinhle has spoken out after Seemah, co-host of the "Spreading Humours" podcast, called her husband, Bongani "Mörda" Mohosana, a "dog" during a recent episode.

This comes after social media blogger Musa Khawula accused Mörda of cheating on DJ Zinhle with a 22-year-old woman named Kimberly, who reportedly works at a Johannesburg club.

The rumour has been circulating online for days, sparking mixed reactions from fans.

On Monday's episode of "Spreading Humours", Seemah shared her thoughts on the allegations, saying she once believed Mörda was a decent man before adding, "You look at him and you think Zinhle won kanti yinja (he's a dog)."

DJ Zinhle, who has largely avoided addressing the drama until recently, took to TikTok to express her disappointment over Seemah's comment.

Speaking to her followers, she said she had been trying to ignore all the negativity on social media but felt deeply hurt this time.

"I've actually been trying to ignore all the stuff that's been happening on social media, the disrespect that comes with it. But let me tell you, nothing hit me harder than someone calling my husbandinja," she said. The DJ and entrepreneur added that what hurt her the most was knowing Seemah personally.

"I think the thing that punished me the most about that statement was because I know the lady. I talk to her quite often on DM sometimes. I've bought from her business, so she could have reached out to me



▲ DJ Zinhle has spoken out after Seemah, co-host of the "Spreading Humours" podcast, called her husband, Bongani "Mörda" Mohosana, a "dog" during a recent episode.

if she was concerned, but she went straight to TikTok to call my husband a dog," she explained.

Before this, fans believed the "Woza" hit-maker had already responded to the cheating rumours through a video she posted online, where she spoke about choosing peace and not wanting to react to negativity. However, that clip was not a response to the allegations as many assumed. The video was from October, weeks before the cheating claims surfaced. In that earlier video, DJ Zinhle said she wanted to let things go and avoid public conflict. "I don't want to fight. I don't want conflict. I don't want to explain myself. I just want an easy life," she said.

Before Zinhle's recent TikTok video, both she and Mörda subtly responded to the allegations by sharing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) video on social media. The video showed Khawula singing along to DJ Zinhle's hit song "Sorry". The post was seen as their way of addressing the rumours without words. The DJ later apologised to her supporters, saying her first reaction to the situation shouldn't have been something negative.

"I want to apologise to you. I don't take your support and love for granted, and I want to say thank you. You're the only people that deserve my attention," she said.

(IOL)

Lynn Forbes: 'I can't breathe' as AKA suspects arrive

LYNN Forbes is feeling heavy-hearted today as the two men accused of killing her award-winning rapper son, Kiernan "AKA" Forbes, have arrived in Durban, South Africa, to face murder charges.

The tragic shooting took place in February 2023, when AKA and his friend, Tebelo "Tibz" Motsoane, were shot outside the Wish restaurant on Florida Road.

Brothers Siyabonga and Malusi Ndimande were arrested by the Eswatini Royal Police earlier this year and have now been brought back to South Africa to face the music.

Earlier today, police spokesperson Colonel Athlenda Mathe confirmed that a special Interpol team had left South Africa to retrieve the brothers. "I can confirm that a high-risk team has left South Africa ... Only upon arrival at King Shaka International Airport will our Interpol officers hand them over to the lead investigator in the case, who will then execute a J50 warrant of arrest," said Mathe.

The Ndimande brothers are facing 23 other charges in addition to AKA and Tibz's murder allegations.

The brothers will be taken to a police station for further processing and are expected to appear in court soon after.

For Lynn, this day is filled with mixed emotions. Responding to the news of the brothers' landing in South Africa, she posted



▲ Lynn Forbes is feeling heavy-hearted today as the two men accused of killing her award-winning rapper son, Kiernan "AKA" Forbes, have arrived in Durban, South Africa, to face murder charges.

on Instagram: "If you were the one coming home today ... that would be justice for me. Everything else is just process.

"This South African air is suffocating today ... I cannot breathe ." Meanwhile, AKA's father, Tony Forbes, was reported to be "relieved" that the two suspects had finally arrived back in the country to face justice.

"I'm very ... excitement is probably not the right word, but I am pleased that they have arrived on this day. It's been a long time coming, but for me, I feel satisfied now that

when the trial starts, all seven will be on trial.

"I hope all seven will be on trial together. In particular, the (Ndimande) brother that pulled the trigger.

"It has taken a long time, but for me, the investigating team, along with the NPA (National Prosecuting Authority), kept me abreast over the last two and a half years ... Today it is happening, so I am very pleased with that," said Tony.

(IOL)

Sho Madjozi: 'Let's embrace motherhood without shame'

AWARD-WINNING artist and cultural trailblazer Sho Madjozi, real name Maya Christinah Xichavo Wegerif, has sparked a national conversation following her heartfelt appearance on Nandi Madida's podcast, The Motherhood Network.

In the deeply personal interview, Sho Madjozi opens up about embracing motherhood by choice, making her one of the public figures bringing visibility to the growing community of women choosing to become mothers independently and intentionally.

Sho Madjozi describes herself as a "choice mom", a woman who becomes a mother not because of marriage, pressure, or circumstance, but purely out of love, readiness, and purpose. "A choice mom means I chose to be a mom. It wasn't because I was married or because of a relationship; it was because I truly wanted to become a mother.

"As women, we should be allowed to embrace motherhood on our terms, free from shame or societal expectation," she said. Desire to offer emotional safety

Her candour has ignited widespread reaction online, with many women describing her story as affirming, liberating, and overdue in a society that still polices women's life choices.

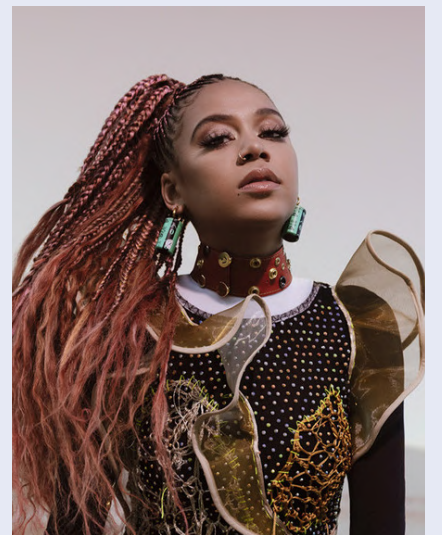
Sho Madjozi shared that her decision was influenced by her desire to offer her child stability, softness, and emotional safety, something she says she learned to value deeply through her upbringing, shaped by movement and cultural transition.

"I wanted love that felt safe. I wanted to give my child the kind of grounding I didn't always have growing up," she said.

She also stressed the role of community, explaining that, like many African children, her baby is being raised by a circle of loving women and elders.

"I grew up in a village of women. My child is also being raised in a community. I'm not doing this alone; I'm doing it differently." While Sho Madjozi has historically been private about her personal life, she says motherhood has grounded her more than it has changed her.

"Motherhood hasn't slowed me down; it has centred me," she said, hinting at returning to music soon, but with new clarity, new grounding, and a new voice. (Sunday World)



▲ Award-winning artist and cultural trailblazer Sho Madjozi.



IF you have health conditions associated with a leaky gut, avoiding processed foods and instead eating foods that promote the healthy growth of gut bacteria may help reduce digestive symptoms.

The term “leaky gut” has gained a lot of attention in recent years.

Also known as increased intestinal permeability, it’s a condition in which gaps in your intestinal walls start to loosen. This makes it easier for larger substances, such as bacteria, toxins, and undigested food particles, to pass across the intestinal walls into your bloodstream.

Studies have associated increased intestinal permeability with several chronic and autoimmune diseases, including type 1 diabetes and celiac disease.

This article takes a close look at leaky gut and its causes. It also includes a list of foods that aid digestive health and a 1-week sample meal plan.

What is leaky gut syndrome?

Leaky gut syndrome is a proposed condition caused by increased intestinal permeability.

The digestive system consists of many organs that collectively break down food, absorb nutrients and water, and remove waste products. Your intestinal lining acts as a barrier between your gut and bloodstream to prevent potentially harmful substances from entering your body.

Nutrient and water absorption mostly occurs in your intestines. Your intestines have tight junctions, or small gaps, that allow nutrients and water to pass into your bloodstream. How easily substances pass across the intestinal walls is known as intestinal permeability.

Certain health conditions cause these tight junctions to loosen, potentially allowing harmful substances like bacteria, toxins, and undigested food particles to enter your bloodstream.

Alternative health practitioners claim that leaky gut triggers widespread inflammation and stimulates an immune reaction, causing various health problems that are collectively known as leaky gut syndrome.

They believe leaky gut leads to various conditions, including autoimmune diseases, migraines, autism, food sensitivities, skin conditions, brain fog, and chronic fatigue.

Yet, there is little evidence to prove that leaky gut syndrome exists. As a result, mainstream physicians do not recognize it as a medical diagnosis.

Although increased intestinal permeability exists and occurs alongside many diseases, it’s not clear if it’s a symptom or underlying cause of chronic disease.

What causes leaky gut?

The exact cause of leaky gut is a mystery. However, increased intestinal permeability is well known and occurs alongside several chronic diseases, including celiac disease and type 1 diabetes.

Zonulin is a protein that regulates tight junctions. Research has shown that higher levels of this protein may loosen tight junctions and increase intestinal permeability.

Two factors are known to stimulate higher zonulin levels in certain individuals — bacteria and gluten.

There is consistent evidence that gluten increases intestinal permeability in people with celiac disease.



The leaky gut diet plan:

... What to eat, what to avoid

aid the growth of beneficial gut bacteria. An unhealthy collection of gut bacteria has been linked to poor health outcomes, including chronic inflammation, cancers, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

- **The following foods are great options for improving your digestive health:**
- **Vegetables:** broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, arugula, carrots, kale, beetroot, Swiss chard, spinach, ginger, mushrooms, and zucchini
- **Roots and tubers:** potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, carrots, squash, and turnips
- **Fermented vegetables:** kimchi, sauerkraut, tempeh, and miso
- **Fruit:** coconut, grapes, bananas, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, kiwi, pineapple, oranges, mandarin, lemon, limes, passionfruit, and papaya
- **Sprouted seeds:** chia seeds, flax seeds, sunflower seeds, and more
- **Gluten-free grains:** buckwheat, amaranth, rice (brown and white), sorghum, teff, and gluten-free oats
- **Healthy fats:** avocado, avocado oil, and extra virgin olive oil
- **Fish:** salmon, tuna, herring, and other omega-3-rich fish
- **Meats and eggs:** lean cuts of chicken, beef, lamb, turkey, and eggs
- **Herbs and spices:** all herbs and spices
- **Cultured dairy products:** kefir, yogurt, Greek yogurt, and traditional buttermilk
- **Beverages:** bone broth, teas, coconut milk, nut milk, water, and kombucha
- **Nuts:** raw nuts, including peanuts, almonds, and nut-based products, such as nut milks

Foods to avoid

- Avoiding certain foods is equally important for improving your gut health.



- Some foods have been shown to cause inflammation in your body, which may promote the growth of unhealthy gut bacteria that are linked to many chronic diseases.

The following list contains foods that may harm healthy gut bacteria, as well as some that are believed to trigger digestive symptoms, such as bloating, constipation, and diarrhea:

- **Wheat-based products:** bread, pasta, cereals, wheat flour, couscous, etc.
- **Gluten-containing grains:** barley, rye, bulgur, seitan, triticale, and oats
- **Processed meats:** cold cuts, deli meats, bacon, hot dogs, etc.

- **Baked goods:** cakes, muffins, cookies, pies, pastries, and pizza
- **Snack foods:** crackers, muesli bars, popcorn, pretzels, etc.
- **Junk food:** fast foods, potato chips, sugary cereals, candy bars, etc.
- **Dairy products:** milk, cheeses, and ice cream
- **Refined oils:** canola, sunflower, soybean, and safflower oils
- **Artificial sweeteners:** aspartame, sucralose, and saccharin
- **Sauces:** salad dressings, as well as soy, teriyaki, and hoisin sauce
- **Beverages:** alcohol, carbonated beverages, and other sugary drinks. (Healthline)



SIGNIFICANT events in life tend to linger in your memory.

Some might spark happiness when you recall them.

Others might involve less pleasant emotions.

You might make a conscious effort to avoid thinking about these memories. Repressed memories, on the other hand, are those you unconsciously forget. These memories generally involve some kind of trauma or a deeply distressing event.

Maury Joseph, a clinical psychologist in Washington, D.C., explains that when your brain registers something too distressing, “it drops the memory into a ‘nonconscious’ zone, a realm of the mind you don’t think about.”

It sounds simple enough, but the concept of memory repression is a controversial one that experts have long debated.

Where did the idea come from?

The idea of memory repression dates back to Sigmund Freud in the late 1800s. He began developing the theory after his teacher, Dr. Joseph Breuer, told him about a patient, Anna O.

She experienced many unexplained symptoms. During treatment for these symptoms, she started remembering upsetting events from the past she previously had no memory of. After regaining these memories and talking about them, her symptoms began to improve.

Freud believed that memory repression served as a defense mechanism against traumatic events. Symptoms that couldn’t be traced to a clear cause, he concluded, stemmed from repressed memories. You can’t remember what happened, but you feel it in your body, anyway.

The concept of memory repression had a resurgence in popularity in the 1990s when an increasing number of adults started reporting memories of child abuse they hadn’t been aware of previously.

Why is it controversial?

Some mental health professionals believe the brain can repress memories and offer therapy to help people recover hidden memories. Others agree repression could theoretically be possible, even though there’s no concrete proof.

But the majority of practicing psychologists, researchers, and other experts in the field question the whole concept of repressed memories. Even Freud later discovered many of the things his clients “remembered” during psychoanalysis sessions weren’t real memories.

Finally, there’s the fact that we’ll likely never know a whole lot about repressed memories because they’re so hard to study and evaluate. To run an objective, high-quality study, you’d need to expose participants to trauma, which is unethical.

What is repressed memory therapy?

Despite the controversy surrounding repressed memories, some people offer repressed memory therapy. It’s designed to access and recover repressed memories in an effort to relieve unexplained symptoms.

Practitioners often use hypnosis, guided imagery, or age regression techniques to help people access memories.

Some specific approaches include:

- brainspotting

What’s the deal with repressed memories?



- somatic transformation therapy
- primal therapy
- sensorimotor psychotherapy
- neurolinguistic programming
- internal family systems therapy

Scientific evidence generally doesn’t support the effectiveness of these approaches.

Repressed memory therapy can also have some serious unintended consequences, namely false memories. These are memories created through suggestion and coaching.

They can have a negative impact on both the person experiencing them and anyone who might be implicated in them, such as a family member suspected of abuse based on a false memory.

What else might explain the phenomenon?

So, what’s behind the countless reports of people forgetting major events, especially those that took place early in life? There are a few theories that might explain why this happens.

Dissociation: People often cope with severe trauma by dissociating, or detaching from what’s happening. This detachment can blur, alter, or block the memory of the event.

Some experts believe children who experience abuse or other trauma may not be able to create or access memories in the usual way. They have the memories of the event, but they may not recall them until they’re older and better equipped to deal with the distress.

Denial: When you deny an event, Joseph says, it may never register in your

consciousness.

“Denial might occur when something is so traumatic and upsetting your mind doesn’t let a picture form,” he adds.

Maury offers the example of a child who witnesses domestic violence between their parents. They might temporarily check out mentally. As a result, they might not have a “picture” of what happened in their memory. Still, they get tense when watching a fight scene in a movie.

Forgetting: You may not remember an event until something later in life triggers your recollection.

But it’s not really possible to know whether your brain unconsciously repressed the memory or you consciously buried it, or simply forgot.

New information

Joseph suggests old memories you’re already aware of might take on different meanings and make more sense later in life. These new meanings may emerge during therapy or simply as you get older and gain life experience.

When you realize the significance of a memory you didn’t previously consider traumatic, you might then become extremely distressed by it.

What if I feel like I have some kind of repressed memory?

Both memory and trauma are complicated topics that researchers are still working to understand. Leading experts in both fields continue to explore links between the two.

If you feel like you’re having trouble recalling an early memory or don’t remember a traumatic event people have

told you about, consider reaching out to a licensed therapist.

The American Psychological Association (APA) recommends looking for one trained to treat specific symptoms, such as:

- anxiety
- somatic (physical) symptoms
- depression

A good therapist will help you explore memories and feelings without leading you in any particular direction.

Keep in mind a therapist should never coach you through memory recollection. They shouldn’t suggest you experienced abuse or guide you to “repressed” memories based on their beliefs about what happened.

They should also be unbiased. An ethical therapist won’t immediately suggest your symptoms are the result of abuse, but they also won’t completely write off the possibility without taking time to consider it in therapy. ([Healthline](#))

Some mental health professionals believe the brain can repress memories and offer therapy to help people recover hidden memories. Others agree repression could theoretically be possible, even though there’s no concrete proof.

Around the world in pictures



▲ An airport staff member helps a traveler at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, more than a month into the ongoing U.S. government shutdown, in Arlington, Virginia.



▲ People ride a motorbike with a sidecar as it wades through a flooded road following flooding brought by high tide and Super Typhoon Fung-wong, in Macabebe town, Pampanga province, Philippines.



▲ Britain's Queen Camilla and Kate, Princess of Wales, attend the Remembrance Sunday Service



▲ A supporter reacts while listening to Republican candidate for New Jersey governor Jack Ciattarelli concede at his election night rally in Bridgewater, New Jersey.



▲ A drone view of the Dream Sculpture surrounded by trees displaying their Autumn colors near Saint Helens, Britain.



▲ A cruise ship passes a Blue Origin New Glenn rocket carrying NASA's EscaPADE mission of two satellites to orbit Mars as it stands at LC-36 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station before the launch was scrubbed due to weather concerns in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Cristiano Ronaldo says 2026 World Cup ‘definitely’ his last

PORTUGUESE superstar Cristiano Ronaldo on Tuesday said next year’s World Cup would be his last as he winds down one of the all-time great careers.

The 40-year-old forward, with more than 950 club and international goals, also said he would retire from football in “one or two years”.

“Definitely, yes,” he told a Saudi forum by video link, when asked if 2026 would be his World Cup swansong. “I’m gonna be 41 years old and I think it will be the moment.”

Ronaldo, who began a lucrative stint at Saudi Arabia’s Al Nassr in 2023, also elaborated on comments last week when he said he would retire “soon”.

“Let’s be honest, when I mean soon, it’s probably one or two years I’ll still be at the game,” he said.

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner is targeting a sixth World Cup next year. He came closest to lifting the trophy in 2006, when Portugal lost



▲ Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo, to France in the semifinals.

Portugal have yet to qualify for the 2026 tournament in the USA, Canada and Mexico, but can secure their spot if they beat Ireland on Thursday.

Ronaldo joined Al Nassr after leaving Manchester United for a second time in late 2022, a move that

heralded an influx of late-career stars to the oil-rich kingdom.

Saudi Arabia, which is spending big on sports and entertainment as part of its economic diversification plan, was named as host of the 2034 World Cup last December.

(Supersport)

Perez targets podium return with new team Cadillac

RACE winner Sergio Perez reckons he can get back onto the Formula One podium with Cadillac, even if the sport’s newest team will likely also be the slowest when they debut next season.

The Mexican and his Finnish teammate Valtteri Bottas are not short of experience, with a combined 527 starts and 16 grand prix victories, but at 36 both will be returning from an involuntary year on the sidelines.

Perez, dropped as Max Verstappen’s Red Bull teammate at the end of 2023, has 39 career podiums and sees no reason why he cannot take his tally to 40 before he finally calls it a day.

“Yes, I think so. I really believe it,” the former Sauber, McLaren and Force India/Racing Point driver told Reuters from Cadillac’s Silverstone factory, where he was having a seat-fit for the team’s 2026 car.

“I think I’ve been on the podium with all the teams I drove for, except McLaren,” he added.

“I think we’re going to start at the back, progressively move forward. But ultimately, in the near future, that (the podium) is a target.

“It doesn’t matter who gets there, as long as it’s Cadillac.”

TEST RUN IN 2023 FERRARI

Backed by General Motors, the US-owned team are well-funded and staffed, recruiting several familiar names from other established teams and with more than 400 people on board already and a target of about 600.

Preparations are on schedule and Perez will drive a 2023 Ferrari at Imola this month to shake off some cobwebs and give the team a chance to gel, even if many of the faces are already familiar.

“I’m curious, you know, to find out how many laps my neck will do before it gets de-

stroyed,” said the Mexican, already flexing his muscles on the video call.

“But it’s great, you know. It’s a great test and a great way to finish the year before getting back in the car next year.”

The 2026 Cadillac will have a Ferrari engine, but has yet to be built, with testing scheduled for the end of January in Barcelona.

Instead, Perez will get behind the wheel of one of Ferrari’s red cars for the first time since he was in the Italian team’s young driver academy and raced for Sauber in 2011.

“It’s basically just a time for us to be able to get together with the engineers, mechanics, start working all together, you know, start talking the same language,” he explained.

Perez said he was already enjoying the atmosphere and was excited to be part of the first all-new team on the grid since Haas a decade ago.

“Normally the new teams that have come in the past, they’ve always been struggling financially,” he said. “And this is a team that is coming for real and it’s coming to do things in the best way and to win.

“Cadillac are here for big things, and it doesn’t really matter for me where we start; it’s how quickly we are able to develop and how quickly we are able to move forward. How the team is working weekend after weekend.”

Perez said when he was announced as a Cadillac driver in August, that he had nothing to prove and just wanted to enjoy racing again.

His legion of fans are excited already; plenty of Cadillac shirts and flags were evident at the races in Texas and Mexico City last month.

“Yeah, they’ve got more kit than we have at the moment,” joked the Mexican.

(Supersport)

PUMA and CAF unveil AFCON 2025 official match ball

PUMA, the leading global sports brand, in partnership with the Confédération Africaine de Football (‘CAF’) have unveiled the official match ball for the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) Morocco 2025.

Named ITRI, the ball draws inspiration from Morocco’s centuries-old zellij art form - renowned for its intricate geometric mosaics - while symbolising the unity and passion of African football across the continent.

The name also pays tribute to the star featured on the Moroccan flag and reflects the star patterns that hold significance in traditional zellij craftsmanship.

PUMA marked the official launch by releasing a reveal video showcasing the ITRI ball, marking a key milestone in the lead-up to the tournament. The ITRI ball will make its debut in the opening match of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Morocco 2025

Design and cultural significance Runner’s World request

The ball’s striking design incorporates traditional Moroccan zellij geometric patterns, characterised by central star geometry, floral petal outlines and circular symmetry. Each design element carries cultural significance:

- Star geometry symbolises ambition, light, and the pursuit of excellence on Africa’s biggest footballing stage
- Petal shapes represent celebration, growth and the festive spirit that defines AFCON
- Circular symmetry reflects the unity of the 24 nations coming together for the tournament



▲ PUMA, the leading global sports brand, in partnership with the Confédération Africaine de Football.

The unique design also features ‘Flow of Movement’ patterns that capture the distinctive rhythm and dynamic playing style of African football. The ball’s red and green colour palette expresses passion, hope and pride while also paying homage to Morocco’s national identity.

Mohamed Ghonemi, Creative Development Manager at CAF: “Created for the rhythm of African football, the AFCON 2025 ball brings together art, motion, and a design shaped by African spirit and Moroccan craftsmanship. It’s been a privilege to collaborate with PUMA on something that unites every nation at the tournament through a shared sense of connection.”

From tradition to innovation

The design process began shortly after Morocco was confirmed as host nation and progressed through several stages of cultural research, creative explorations, performance testing and refinement. The collaboration brought together CAF’s creative development team and PUMA’s global design unit to ensure the ball

authentically reflects Moroccan artistry while resonating across the continent.

Built on PUMA’s advanced Orbital 6 technology, the ball seamlessly blends heritage with innovation, delivering the performance standards required for elite-level competition while celebrating African culture.

Peter Dangel, Director EEMEA Distribution at PUMA: “We’re proud to unveil the ITRI ball the official match ball of AFCON 2025 and a true symbol of African football’s spirit.

“Combining Moroccan artistry with advanced performance technology, ITRI celebrates both the host nation’s heritage and the unity of the continent. Our collaboration with CAF reflects PUMA’s lasting commitment to African football and the communities that bring it to life.”

The AFCON 2025 tournament kicks off on 21 December 2025 in Morocco, bringing together the continent’s best footballing nations for African football’s most prestigious competition. (Supersport)



▲ Sergio Perez.

Mitchell hits back at Bafana coach Broos over Links comments

BAFANA Bafana coach Hugo Broos has come under fire from Gift Links' representative, Paul Mitchell, after publicly stating that the Danish-based winger is "not at the level" required for the national team.

Broos' comments have caused a stir both in South Africa and Denmark, where Links is a key player for Aarhus GF (AGF).

The 27-year-old has been one of AGF's standout performers this season, helping the club climb to third place in the Danish Superliga after 15 matches.

When asked why Links continues to be overlooked for national selection, Broos told the media: "I don't think Links has the level that we need at Bafana."

That statement didn't sit well with Mitchell, the Managing Director of Siyavuma Sports Group Africa, who represents the former Cape Town City midfielder.

Speaking on Radio 2000 with Thabiso Mosia, Mitchell expressed disappointment at the national coach's choice of words.

"Normally, I wouldn't comment on this sort of thing because it's the coach's prerogative to pick who he feels fit for his squad, but I've been inundated by the Danish media on this story because it's blown up in Denmark," said Mitchell.

"From Gift's side, he's upset and rightfully so. The comments were uncalled for. Gift has never gone public or complained about not being in the squad. He's been in Denmark for six years now, he moved there for €850,000 (around R16.8 million) and he's turned down very good offers to move on. We feel it's about



▲ Gift Links during Bafana Bafana's training at Dobsonville Stadium. time someone addressed these comments."

Links has been one of AGF's most consistent performers, contributing two goals and three assists in 15 league games. He has also helped his side reach the quarter-finals of the Danish Cup (Oddset Pokalen) with a goal and an assist in two matches.

According to Mitchell, Broos' comments have sparked amusement in Denmark, where Links is highly regarded.

"The Danish media are actually laughing because Hugo Broos has come out to say that Gift doesn't have the level to play for Bafana but he's quoted as being the left wing-back in the Danish Super League,"

he added.

"If we're saying the Danish Super League is lower level than the South African PSL then we've got a problem. Gift is not somebody who will be knocking on the door asking why [not being selected] and neither are we as representatives because his performances speak for themselves.

"He has been in the team of the week five times this season and he was in the team of the season in the Danish Super League last season and I think he was the only foreign player on it and his performances have been outstanding."

(The Citizen)

Bafana coach Broos not fazed by 'ridiculous' comments

BAFANA Bafana coach Hugo Broos responded to social media criticism against him over his team selection.

The Belgian mentor has faced criticism over his Bafana squad selection.

And recently he came under more criticism when he announced the squad that will play Zambia in an international friendly at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium on Saturday.

This was after he omitted on-form Wydad Casablanca attacking midfielder Theminkosi Lorch from the squad.

Speaking ahead of Saturday's clash, Broos said some of the things said on social media are "nonsense and ridiculous".

"Well, I have to thank you for saying that, because I didn't know. You know how I feel and think about social media, I don't follow that at all," said Broos.

"If I read those things, I will laugh because those are people who think they are important. They are on social media and think they can say whatever they want.

"It is really nonsense and ridiculous and it doesn't affect me at all."

Meanwhile, as this is the final friendly for Bafana before the AFCON in Morocco next month, Broos says the match against Zambia will give him an opportunity to have a closer look at other players as he continues to fine-tune his squad.

"So, it wouldn't be a good thing if we lost the game on Saturday. I will ask every player to focus and concentrate the same way they do during the qualifiers. Even if it's not a qualifier, I will not accept players taking this game as a little holiday.

(The Citizen)



▲ Bafana Bafana coach Hugo Broos.

Sinner dominates injury-hit Auger-Aliassime in ATP Finals opener

ITALY'S Jannik Sinner got his title defence off to a solid start with a dominant straight-sets win over ailing Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime at the ATP Finals on Monday in Turin.

Nine days after their duel in the final of the Paris Masters, Sinner was again the strongest, winning 7-5, 6-1.

But fellow Italian Lorenzo Musetti was earlier outclassed 6-3, 6-4 by American Taylor Fritz.

After a tight first set, Sinner swept aside Auger-Aliassime, who had been hampered by a left calf injury by breaking serve to rush to a 3-0 lead.

He broke him a second time to close out the match with an ace after one hour 41 minutes.

"Obviously winning the first match is very important in this competition and this format," said 24-year-old Sinner.

"It was a very tough match until 6-5. I had some chances to break. He served very well, only once I missed a return, but it can happen. He played some very aggressive tennis, so I'm happy to overcome a very tough test today.

"I hope it's nothing too serious," Sinner added of his rival. "I wish him obviously a very speedy recovery and hopefully he is back to 100 per cent physically."

Sinner notched his 27th consecutive victory on his preferred indoor hard courts surface and took the lead in the Bjorn Borg Group, which will also see the world number



▲ Jannik Sinner

two face Germany's Alexander Zverev and American Ben Shelton.

The native of South Tyrol, the German-speaking region of northeastern Italy, won the 2024 edition of the tournament which brings together the eight best players of the year, by stringing together five wins without dropping a single set.

The 2025 edition could allow him to finish

the season as world number one, currently held by his great Spanish rival Carlos Alcaraz, who has beaten him four times this year.

'FIRED UP' FRITZ

Earlier, Fritz got his bid for a first ATP Finals crown off to the best possible start with a comprehensive win over Musetti.

The 28-year-old American, who lost to Sinner in last year's final, was out of the

blocks quickly in the Jimmy Connors group match, taking an early break and holding on to pocket the first set.

The crowd did their best to lift a visibly fatigued Musetti, who was a late addition to the line-up.

He only qualified for the Finals on Saturday after Novak Djokovic pulled out with injury, shortly after beating the Italian in the final of the Athens event.

Winning 84 per cent of his first serves and giving away just four break-point chances, none of which were taken, Fritz continued to control the match.

The American broke to go 3-1 up and served cleanly all the way to the line.

"I am really happy. I thought I did a lot of things really well," Fritz said.

"I did a great job early on in the match to serve my way out of trouble and save some break points. The whole second set I played well and had a lot of chances to break that I didn't get.

"I am really happy I was able to serve it out there and it didn't come back to ruin it."

Fritz qualified sixth for the Finals and after finishing runner-up last year is gearing up for another tilt at the title.

"Every time I come here, I like the conditions and it is very easy to get motivated and fired up," said Fritz.

"You can lock in, it is the last tournament of the year and it is the ATP Finals, it's a big deal."

(Supersport)

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE PICK OF THE WEEK

By Chris Dlamini

WE are moving on to matchday 6, and already, some teams are feeling the heat they want people out. Come on, Manzini Wanderers, it's still early for you to bounce back and compete - the league leaders have 10 points to your two in five matches.

Just put your house in order and work towards positive results as a unit, not the ongoing infighting. Ubombo Sugar FC is next for Liweseli or the team others love to call Waza Waza and a tricky fixture it is.

It will be interesting as well to see how giants Mbabane Swallows respond to their 1-0 defeat last weekend to Ezulwini United when they take on a blazing hot Rangers on Friday, while an unpredictable Moneni Pirates clash head-on with a fired up Manzini Sea Birds. We highlight a few things ahead of these clashes, which come as our PICK OF THE WEEK for various reasons.

Time to step up for Wanderers

Ubombo Sugar FC vs. Manzini Wanderers
Date: Thursday, November 14, 2025
Venue: Mayaluka Stadium, Big Bend
Kick-off: 3.30pm

Surely, hub giants Manzini Wanderers have a very tough outing against a stubborn Ubombo Sugar FC. The sugar belt outfit has not had it any easier either but they know panic is not the solution as yet - its only matchweek 6 and they host a struggling Manzini Wanderers at Mayaluka Stadium, their own backyard where they will hope to get the maximum three points after having managed just one win and a draw out of five matches.

That Wanderers is coming to their home and entangled by infighting and an on-field winless streak, will be a motivation for Bafana Bashukela as Ubombo is fondly known. Both sides need to start showing they are not here just to add numbers and fight relegation all season. Ubombo is on 14th with just four points, two better than LiWeseli, who sit below them on position 15 after five matches. Interestingly, Ubombo Sugar just lost their head coach Gcina Dlamini to their visitors a fortnight ago and this will feel like a reunion but one in which it will not matter as it is the maximum points that count most.

Dlamini is leading his very wounded troops to Mayaluka, hoping they can put the 4-0 humbling defeat to city rivals Manzini Sea Birds behind them. So, Bafana Shuke-

Step up, Waza



While blazing hot Rangers welcome 'Birds', 'Sea Robbers' welcome Sea Birds in hub mini derby.

la know what to expect from Wanderers so long as its Dlamini at the helm.

LOG POSITION:
U. Sugar FC - 14th (4 points)
M. Wanderers - 15th (2 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:
Ubombo Sugar FC
D W L L L
M. Wanderers
L D L D L

Rangers for 'Bullseye' at 'Birds'

Rangers vs. Mbabane Swallows
Date: Friday, November 15, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 3.30pm

Rangers is in no compromising mood no matter the size of the opponent - Bolova just mean business like they know very well that the early bird catches the fattest worm. They have worked their way up to the summit with 10 points in five games. That is three wins, one draw and one defeat.

Rangers will be home away from home at Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini, but that is one of their best slaughter venues after the King Sobhuza II Stadium in Nhlanga-

no, their home ground. Fresh from a 1-all draw against Moneni Pirates, coach Mthunzi 'Lomphofu' Ginindza, definite coach of the month if the league had that award, knows this game is another tough battle especially because Swallows lost 1-0 to minnows Ezulwini United last week.

The Beautiful Birds will not allow yet another minnows team to have the better of them, which presents a very interesting tie. The league's joint top scorer now, Hleliso Gamedze with five goals is the man to watch in the Rangers team as he seems to be scoring in every game so far - will Tinyoni (Swallows) end his blistering run? You better be there to see for yourself. Rangers will seek to retain the top spot, and that means not losing and winning the match. Swallows also want it, so a win may hand them just that - the top spot, depending on how Thursday's fixtures go.

LOG POSITION:
Rangers - 1st (10 points)
M. Swallows - 6th (9 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:
Rangers
W L W W D

M. Swallows
L W W W L

Mwase must 'Meck-e it' happen

Moneni Pirates vs. Manzini Sea Birds
Date: Friday, November 15, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 8.15pm

It is a hub derby, a mini derby indeed. Looking back to previous meetings between these two hub sides, fireworks are what the fans can expect and it is quite interesting that Sea Birds seem to have found their rhythm, going three consecutive without defeat but wins only.

Inyoni Zolwandle, as Sea Birds is affectionately known, rose from two opening defeats, but since then, they have been gaining strength and showing signs of a solid unit that is ready to cause any rival sleepless nights.

This is how Moneni Pirates' Malawian gaffer Meck Mwase has to see Sea Birds - as a tough rival with so much quality in their squad including one of the country's most priced assets in attacking midfielder Philani Mkhonto. He is not only just valued at E1.4 million by Transfermarkt, but he is also currently among the top goal scorers in the country, continuing where he left off last season where raked up eight league goals.

Mkhonto currently has four, one less than joint leaders Hleliso Gamedze and Malangeni Dlamini of Rangers and Tabankulu Celtics. Should Moneni let him loose, he will cause them damage and put the coach, Mwase, under a lot of pressure. Some sectors of the club already feel their team is lacking something they had before - that cutting edge which saw them play two knockout finals last season. Sea Birds just ambushed Manzini Wanderers 4-0 while Mwase's Sea Robbers shared the spoils with leaders Rangers following a 1-1 margin.

Pirates conceded late, just when winning was looking ever so close. Against Sea Birds, who boast several capable goal scoring machines, they need to be as watertight in defence. If it's not Mkhonto scoring, it is Joseph Kibonge, Muzi Tsabedze, among others.

LOG POSITIONS:
M. Pirates - 10th (7 points)
M. Sea Birds - 3rd (9 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:
M. Pirates
W L L W D
M. Sea Birds
L L W W W



By Sibusiso Masilela
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Mhlume MP pumps in E180k for Lubombo Northwest Knockout

MHLUME Member of Parliament (MP) Sifiso Magagula has pumped in E180 000 in a five-year sponsorship package for the Lubombo Northwest Zone Knockout tournament.

The sponsorship, which started two years ago, with each edition carrying a package of E30 000, has now seen an increase to E40 000 for the next three years.

Magagula announced that following the success of the two previous editions, he has seen it worthy to increase the package to E40 000 running the next three years during a presentation held at Vuvulane.

“The tournament has been a success and thank you very much to all the stakeholders who played a crucial role. As I have been sponsoring with E30 000 in the previous editions, I am now committing to put an increased E40 000 going forward,”he said.

Magagula further emphasized the significance of this tournament, which is to keep every youth active and stay away from illegal activities.

“May I take this opportunity to congratulate the champions and those individuals’ awardees. However, let me emphasize that the biggest winners are everyone who played a role in this tournament, because our aim is to keep everyone active and busy while



▲Mhlume MP Sifiso Magagula making remarks during the sponsorship launch of the Lubombo North West league held in Vuvulane.



▲LRFA Executive Member Sifiso Dlamini and Samampela FC Zwelithini Ndzimandze following proceedings.

improving the standard of the sport by producing talent in the process. In that way, the youth will not lie idle but will be kept together on weekends and stay away from illegal activities,” Magagula added.

The MP Magagula Knockout tournament

comprises of all eight teams campaigning in the RES Siyakha 1800 Lubombo Northwest League.

In its second edition, Super League-bound Motivators FC were crowned champions after beating Rio Academy in the finals.

The event was by Lubombo Regional Football Association (LRFA) Executive Committee members led by its Chairman, Lucky Dlamini, Dvokodweni MP, Sifiso ‘Haiso’ Shabalala, who doubles as an LRFA executive member, team representatives and players.



▲A Motivators FC official identified as Mabuya receiving his prize from the sponsor Mhlume MP Sifiso Magagula and LRFA Chairman Lucky Dlamini.

Motivators sweep MP Magagula KO awards

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MP Magagula Lubombo Northwest Knockout tournament champions Motivators FC swept the boards in awards.

The champions produced three winners in the individual awards sections during the prize presentation held at Vuvulane.

Motivators head-coach Mzwakhile Hlatshwako won the best coach award and walked away with E550 plus a trophy.

Motivators striker Colani Magagula scooped the top goal scorer award which carries E350 plus trophy. Meanwhile, the best player came from the same team, with Zizwe Tembe taking home the E650 plus trophy af-

ter he was announced the winner.

Motivators walked away with E8000 first prize and trophy, while their runners-up up Rio Academy, received E5000.

Third-placed Mhlume Community took home E3000 while Equator, who finished 4th, walked away with E2000.

The awards list

Champions: Motivators FC - 8000 plus trophy

Runners Up: Rio Academy - E5000

Third place : Mhlume Community - E3000

Fourth place : Equator- E2000

Player of the tournament: Zizwe Tembe - E650 plus trophy

Top Goal scorer: Colani Magagula - E350

Coach of the tournament: Mzwakhile Hlatshwako - E550 plus trophy

Best Referees (E200 each) : Sibusiso Dube, Sibusiso Magaya, Bongsi Mkhwanazi and Vusi Sambo

LRFA applauds MP Magagula’s contribution

By Sibusiso Masilela
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LUBOMBO Regional Football Association (LRFA) has applauded Mhlume Member of Parliament (MP) Sifiso Magagula for his relentless contribution towards developing football in the region through sponsorship of the Northwest Knockout tournament.

LRFA Chairman Lucky Dlamini expressed appreciation to the legislator for what he termed an immense contribution towards improving the standard of the game.

“First and foremost, on behalf of my

executive committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank MP Magagula for the sponsorship because what he is doing helps improve the standard of football. Thank you for trusting us as an association, and we promise to take care of the sponsorship,” Dlamini said.

Dlamini further thanked the teams for a violent-free tournament, which he said is what attracts sponsors.

“We are happy that there were no cases reported to us, which means the tournament was run properly through the Competitions Committee of Northwest. The teams/players were well behaved. This is the kind of spirit we encourage, and I believe that even the MP is happy that he finds it worthy to increase the package,” he added.



▲Teams’ representatatives during the event.

Stories By **Sibusiso Masilela**
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GOOD news for fans from Pigg’s Peak and the Northern Hhohho corridor. The Premier League of Eswatini has promised to bring more matches to Killarney Stadium following the successful hosting of a recent match between Malanti Chiefs and Mbabane Highlanders.

The top-flight football entity Chief Executive Officer Pat Vilakati confirmed the latest news when contacted.

Commitment

“We will bring more games to the Killarney Stadium as part of our commitment to promote the sport to the four corners of the country. We commend the good behaviour from fans during the Malanti/ Highlander’s match,” he said. A gross total of E45 000 was collected during the Malanti/ Highlander’s match after 1500 tickets were sold at E30.

The spectators included Premier League of Eswatini executive members led by Chairman Polycarp Dlamini, the two club directors, Dumisani Gumede and Shauwn Mkhize, among others.

The black and gold ensemble will host defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs on November 19, 2025 at the same venue.

More league games at Killarney Stadium



▲ Mbabane Highlanders players warming up before the match against Malanti Chiefs.



▲ October Premier League of the month Hleliso Gamedze of Rangers FC receiving his E7 000 cheque from PLE Brand manager Lindokuhle Mthupha and MTN's Phumla Motsa.

Rangers eyeing top six spot – Hleliso

RANGERS Striker Hleliso Gamedze says they are targeting a top six finish in the current MTN Premier League campaign.

Gamedze said this after he was winning the October MTN Premier League player of the month, where he took home E7 000 on Tuesday at Mahlalekhukhwini House.

“I am happy with the award, and this has motivated us to continue working hard to attain our top six finish in the league,” he said.

He also dedicated the award to the entire Rangers family.

“I would like to thank the entire Rangers family for their continued support, which

has resulted in our current good run,” he said.

Gamedze has netted five goals in the league.

The event was attended by MTN’s Phumla Motsa and Premier League of Eswatini Brand Manager Lindokuhle Mthupha.

Motsa and Mthupha both congratulated the player for his achievement.

The Mthunzi Ginindza-led side is currently sitting at position six with nine points in the current MTN Premier League log standings.

They will take on capital city giants Mbabane Swallows in their next league outing on Friday at King Sobhuza I Stadium.

Muzi Mabuza off to Korea Republic

ATHLETICS track national team coach Muzi Mabuza is off to Korea Republic. The veteran mentor is attending the 2025 International Athletics workshop between November 11-22, 2025.

He left the country on November 10, 2025, for a one-week course under the auspices of World Athletics.

Athletics Eswatini confirmed the latest news through a press statement.

“This significant opportunity represents another great leap forward in Eswatini’s coaching development pathway. The programme, running from the 11th until the 22nd of November, focuses on Middle & Long Distance and Sprints/Hurdles, featuring a High-Level Athletics Seminar followed by a CECS Level 3 Coaching Course,” the association said.

The association further wished Mabuza the best of luck during the course.

“We wish Coach Mabuza all the very best and great success as he proudly represents the Kingdom of Eswatini,” the association said. The ongoing workshop includes an overview of AIC and an introduction to the



▲ Athletics national team coach Muzi Mabuza. future, lectures on basic coaching skills, practical training on coaching eyes and technical models, and demonstration skills including interpersonal evaluation.

Mabuza recently led the junior’s national team to the 2025 African junior championships, which were held in Nigeria.

He is the second local coach to attend an international course after Siyabonga Ngwenya, who recently travelled to Kenya.

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GOOD NEWS FOR FANS FROM PIGG'S PEAK AND NORTHERN HHOHHO CORRIDOR

More league games at Killarney Stadium

● The Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) has promised to bring more matches to Killarney stadium in Hhohho region. **Page 23**