



Heavy rains cause  
widespread  
damage as govt  
issues safety



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# Eswatini first in Africa to receive injectable Prep

By Delisa Magagula

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## NATCOM urges vigilance as festive season scammers target year-end savings

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## Nothando Hlophe's "Methodist Medley" garners 2.5 million views

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# Eswatini first in Africa to receive injectable Prep

Stories By Delisa Magagula

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The consignment was officially received by Minister for Housing and Urban Development Apollo Maphalala, representing the Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula. Maphalala confirmed that the national rollout will begin on December 1 at Hhukwini Inkhundla.

Lenacapavir, developed by Gilead Sciences, has shown near-total protection in clinical studies. The injection is administered once every six months and forms part of a wider prevention programme supported by PEPFAR and the Global Fund. Ten high-risk African countries have been identified for the first-phase rollout.

Daniel O'Day, the chair and CEO of Gilead Sciences, speaking on international news said the Eswatini rollout was significant because it is the first time in history that



▲ Eswatini on Tuesday became the first African country to receive lenacapavir, the world's first twice-yearly HIV prevention injection. The shipment, delivered to the Matsapha Central Medical Stores, marks a milestone for the country. The consignment was officially received by Minister for Housing and Urban Development Apollo Maphalala, representing the Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula.

a new HIV medicine is reaching a country in sub-Saharan Africa in the same year as approval in the United States. The U.S. authorised the drug in June.

"The first phase will target populations defined in the National HIV Strategic Framework, including adolescent girls and young women, women aged 25 to

34, pregnant and breastfeeding women, key populations, high-risk men and HIV-negative individuals seeking a long-acting HIV prevention option," said Maphalala when receiving the jabs

Noteworthy HIV remains one of Eswatini's leading public health challenges. National data shows adult HIV prevalence

remains above 25 per cent, while adolescent girls and young women continue to face the highest risk of new infections. PrEP uptake has grown in recent years, with more than 40,000 people having initiated oral PrEP, but adherence challenges persist.

CANGO, which is coordinating civil society participation in the rollout, said the arrival of the injection strengthens the prevention toolkit.

"This development comes at an important time for populations that experience difficulties using daily medication," said CANGO management.

The Global Fund, the main financier of the programme, commended Eswatini for its readiness during recent oversight visits. Delegates highlighted collaboration between the Ministry of Health, NERCHA, CANGO and implementing partners as exemplary.

"With twice-yearly dosing, lenacapavir provides an option that reduces adherence challenges for priority groups," said Global Fund Executive Director Peter Sands during the handover of the jabs in Matsapha.

The Ministry said additional health worker training is underway to ensure smooth implementation. Further consignments are expected in the coming months as Eswatini expands access to more facilities.

## E11.1 million worth of vials expected next year

ESWATINI is expected to receive a significantly larger consignment of lenacapavir early next year, with sources indicating that they will be worth E11.1 million scheduled to arrive in January 2026.

The upcoming delivery follows Tuesday's initial batch, which made Eswatini the first African country to receive the twice-yearly HIV prevention injection.

Health officials familiar with the rollout said preparations are already underway to accommodate the larger shipment.

The Ministry of Health is finalising expansion plans that will see the medicine distributed to more facilities across the four regions.

The rollout forms part of a programme supported by PEPFAR and the Global Fund, targeting ten African countries with high HIV incidence.

Zambia also received its first consignment on Tuesday, joining Eswatini in the initial phase. Regulatory processes are at various stages in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Global partners estimate that the broader African programme will reach at least two million people by 2027. The U.S. had initially projected distributing 250,000 doses during the first year of the programme.

Eswatini's high HIV burden remains a key factor in its prioritisation. The country continues to report one of the highest adult HIV prevalence

rates globally, with adolescent girls, young women and key populations most affected. Oral PrEP uptake has expanded, but data shows that many users discontinue within the first year.

Worth noting, Lenacapavir is administered every six months and is designed to address adherence challenges associated with daily pills. It is currently approved for adults and adolescents weighing at least 35 kilograms.

NERCHA and the Ministry of Health said that the upcoming 2026 consignment will allow wider distribution among high-risk groups identified in the National HIV Strategic Framework. CANGO will continue to coordinate community mobilisation efforts to support demand creation.

Across the region, Zambia's rollout is expected to proceed in phases, targeting mining communities, border areas and key populations. Other participating countries are preparing regulatory submissions and programme designs to align with Global Fund and PEPFAR requirements.

The arrival of the January consignment is expected to accelerate Eswatini's aim of reducing new HIV infections and increasing access to modern prevention technologies. Health workers will undergo further training ahead of the nationwide expansion.

## SA lags behind as Eswatini, Zambia begin rollout

SOUTH Africa, which became the first country on the continent to formally register lenacapavir, remains unable to roll out the injection as funding delays linked to U.S. foreign aid cuts continue to affect its HIV programmes.

The country had been expected to participate in the first-phase distribution supported by PEPFAR and the Global Fund, but U.S. budget reductions introduced under President Donald Trump resulted in

significant shortfalls across HIV and TB interventions.

Programme officials said these reductions have affected procurement planning and delayed the availability of new prevention options. Eswatini and Zambia received their first shipments on Tuesday, marking the start of rollout activities in the two countries. Both were prioritised due to high HIV incidence and preparedness assessments conducted earlier in the year. South African public

health bodies have indicated that local rollout will only commence once funding channels stabilise and operational plans are updated.

The country remains one of the world's largest HIV treatment programmes, with more than five million people on antiretroviral therapy, but faces ongoing resource pressures.

Regional health partners said they expect South Africa to join the programme once financing gaps are resolved.



▲ Ministry of Health officials during the awards launch.

## ... 35kg weight requirement limits lenacapavir use

LENACAPAVIR, administered twice annually, is currently approved for individuals weighing at least 35 kilograms. Health providers say the requirement is expected to limit access for younger adolescents who fall below the weight threshold.

Clinical guidance indicates that the minimum weight is necessary to ensure correct dosing and treatment safety. Health workers have been instructed to conduct weight assessments before initiation.

The Ministry of Health said alternative HIV prevention options, including oral PrEP, remain available for individuals not eligible for the

injection.

Eswatini's HIV data shows that new infections remain highest among adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24.

The 35-kilogram minimum weight requirement for Lenacapavir will be factored into Eswatini's national rollout to ensure safe dosing, officials say.

Those below the threshold will continue to access other HIV prevention options, including daily oral PrEP.

"It's important that we follow the weight guideline to ensure the medicine works effectively and safely for each person," said Dr. Sipho Khumalo, HIV specialist at Mbabane.

Community members welcomed the new injection as an additional prevention option saying it was a new innovation they were open to.

"I like that there is something that only needs two shots a year. It will be easier than taking pills every day," said Thandi Maseko, a 22-year-old student in Manzini.

"It makes me feel safer knowing there is another way to protect myself from HIV," added Sibusiso Dlamini, a 28-year-old factory worker.

"I hope this will reach everyone who needs it, especially young women who often face the highest risk," said Nokuthula Zulu, a community volunteer in Hhukwini.



# Heavy rains cause widespread damage

## ... govt issues safety warning

By Thokozi Mazibuko

THE Government of Eswatini has urged the nation to remain on high alert after days of heavy rainfall and strong winds caused extensive disruptions across the country. Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla confirmed that the storms, which began on Saturday, have damaged homes, flooded low-lying communities and disrupted key services including transportation and electricity. In a statement issued on Monday, the DPM said the government is working through the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) to assess the full extent of the damage. NDMA rapid assessment teams are already deployed in affected areas, gathering data and coordinating with local authorities and humanitarian partners to organise emergency assistance. According to the DPM, relief efforts will be rolled out as soon as it is safe for response teams to access impacted commu-

nities. Some areas remain difficult to reach due to flooding, fallen trees and damaged infrastructure. She urged communities to remain vigilant and to support those most affected, especially vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and persons living with disabilities. The public has also been encouraged to report flooding, structural damage or other incidents to NDMA for a faster and coordinated national response. Dladla warned that water levels in rivers, streams and major dams have risen sharply due to continuous rainfall. She issued a strong caution against attempting to cross flooded rivers or submerged bridges, whether on foot or in a vehicle, noting the extreme risk of drowning. “The safety of emaSwati remains our priority,” she said, adding that government agencies will continue to monitor weather conditions and provide updates as necessary. For reporting and emergency assistance, the public may contact NDMA via WhatsApp at 7900 0112 or call 112 or 2409 5500.



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▲ The World Health Organization (WHO) has strengthened Eswatini's palliative care services with the donation of two pre-owned vehicles to Hospice at Home and Hope House.



▲ Princess Temtsimba getting on one of the donated vehicles.

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has strengthened Eswatini's palliative care services with the donation of two pre-owned vehicles to Hospice at Home and Hope House, two key organisations providing compassionate care to emaSwati living with life-limiting illnesses. The handover ceremony, marked by a spirit of partnership and shared commitment, took place in the presence of dignitaries from the health sector and the royal family. The donated vehicles were received on behalf of Hospice at Home by HRH Princess Temtsimba, standing in for the organisation's patron, HRH Inkhosikati LaNgangaza, while Father Sandile Mswane accepted the keys for Hope House. Ministry of Health Under Secretary Anthony Masilela also attended the event, underscoring the government's support for palliative care initiatives. In her remarks, Dr Susan Tembo, WHO Representative to Eswatini, emphasised that

## WHO donates vehicles to boost palliative care services in Eswatini

palliative care is an essential component of Universal Health Coverage, not merely an optional service. She highlighted the critical role palliative care plays for patients with cancer, advanced HIV, heart disease, and other chronic conditions that require ongoing symptom management and psychosocial support. “Palliative care must reach people where they are,” Dr Tembo stated. “Hospice at Home's model depends on reliable transport to connect nurses and social workers with patients in their communities. Without vehicles, vital visits can be missed, medicines delayed, and families left feeling abandoned when support is most needed. Transport challenges also restrict the expansion of services to new areas.” The donation of a vehicle to Hospice at Home, she explained, aims to ensure more consistent and safer access to patients across Eswatini. “Our intention is simple: to help you reach more patients, more consistently and more safely.”

Turning to Hope House, Dr Tembo described the vehicle as more than just a mode of transport. “We are supporting the ‘wheels of compassion’ that carry patients from hospital to hospice, from hospice back home, and often from despair to renewed hope. We envision this vehicle helping to bring patients safely to and from Hope House so that distance is no longer a barrier.” The WHO Representative concluded by underscoring the collaborative nature of health service delivery in Eswatini. “WHO does not deliver services directly to communities but works through governments and partners like these two organisations symbolise the kind of partnership we need more of in Eswatini, government, faith-based organisations, communities, and international agencies each bringing their strengths so that no one is left behind.” This donation arrives at a crucial time as Eswatini continues to enhance its health in-

frastructure and expand access to palliative care, a service increasingly recognised as vital to improving quality of life for patients with chronic and terminal illnesses. By enabling Hospice at Home and Hope House to extend their reach, the WHO and Ministry of Health are helping to ensure that compassionate care is delivered where it matters most, at the patient's bedside and within their community. The vehicles will play a pivotal role in overcoming logistical barriers that have historically limited the scope of palliative care in Eswatini. They will facilitate timely home visits, improve the delivery of medications and supplies, and provide safe transport for patients requiring hospice services, thereby strengthening the continuum of care. This initiative exemplifies how strategic partnerships and targeted support can transform health outcomes by addressing practical challenges on the ground.





▲ Ndumiso Dlamini (23) won the Mhlambanyatsi Inkhundla army recruitment race.



▲ Phiwayinkhosi Dlamini (26) came second in the army recruitment race.



▲ Spar employee Colile Shiba won the ladies category at Mhlambanyatsi Inkhundla.

# Young people shine at Mhlambanyatsi Army race

Stories by Thokozi Mazibuko

DETERMINATION, faith and raw athletic power lit up the Mhlambanyatsi Inkhundla recruitment race as hundreds of hopefuls battled for a coveted place in the next phase of the army intake.

But three young stars rose above the pack, delivering standout performances that left the crowds buzzing.

For 23-year-old Ndumiso Dlamini, the morning was a declaration of belief and grit. Crossing the finish line first among the

men, he confidently told reporters, “There is nothing impossible if you work hard.” His triumph made him the first male runner to secure a spot in the next stage, earning applause from fellow competitors and residents who witnessed his commanding finish.

Hot on his heels was 26-year-old Phiwayinkhosi Dlamini of Lundzi, who clinched the runner-up position. Grateful and visibly emotional, he credited both the army and his faith for his strong showing. “I thank God for guiding and protecting me throughout my preparations,” he said. “This opportunity means a lot, and I’m honoured to have been able to showcase my abilities.”

In the women’s category, park runner Xolile Shiba (26) of Mlindazwe delivered a powerful and confident performance, storming ahead of the field to become the first female to cross the finish line. Her controlled pace and impressive endurance earned her a well-deserved place in the next phase of the recruitment process.

Spectators described the event as one of the most competitive races in recent weeks, with hopefuls pushing themselves to the limit for a chance to serve the nation.

As the army recruitment drive continues across the country, Mhlambanyatsi has set the tone showcasing discipline, determination and the unbreakable spirit of Eswatini’s youth.

## Eswatini charts bold path into 4IR and 5IR Era

ESWATINI has taken a decisive step toward shaping its digital future as the Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology convened a consultative workshop to develop the combined national strategy for the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions and review the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy.

Principal Secretary Prince Mshishimba Andreas Dlamini described the gathering at the Tums George Hotel on Tuesday as a critical milestone in the country’s ambition to join the ranks of fully industrialized and modern economies.

In his remarks, the Principal Secretary emphasised that Eswatini’s participation in the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions cannot be accidental. He noted that digital transformation requires intentional planning, robust policies and strong national coordination. He stated that global leaders such as Singapore, South Korea and Germany successfully embraced these shifts through deliberate, long-term strategies. Their success, he added, did not come from chance but from vision, research and persistence. This global context set the tone for the urgency of Eswatini’s mission.

According to the Principal Secretary, the country must shift its people and industries from low value activities into high value, technology-driven opportunities. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, automa-



▲ Stakeholders who attended the Consultative workshop at the Tum’s George Hotel in Manzini.

tion and the Internet of Things are expected to drive economic growth, create better paying jobs and increase competitiveness. He reminded the stakeholders that this transition is not only about acquiring new tools but also about reshaping national systems. He said that technology must be harnessed to create an economy that is more productive, inclusive and globally connected.

A cornerstone of the government’s digital agenda is the ongoing Government in Your Hand initiative. The Principal Secretary underlined its importance as a practical example of inclusive digitalisation. The initiative aims to make government services accessible on digital platforms so that citizens can access them without long queues, paperwork or delays. He said the Ministry has already migrated many high demand public services to a central platform and will continue expanding digital access. For the Ministry, this

work goes beyond convenience. It is part of restoring the dignity of citizens by ensuring that public service delivery keeps pace with modern expectations.

The digital transformation envisioned by government extends into every key sector of the economy. The Principal Secretary highlighted planned advancements in health where digital systems are expected to make quality care accessible even in remote areas. He described the future of education as centred around digital learning supported by Education 5.0, which prepares graduates for new and emerging professions. Agriculture is expected to be enhanced by artificial intelligence tools that improve crop yields and promote food security. Water and electricity management will be supported by smart grid technologies while e commerce platforms will widen global market access for small businesses.

### PS calls for national unity in building Eswatini’s digital future

THE national strategy for the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions moved a step forward as the Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology convened stakeholders for a consultative workshop aimed at preparing Eswatini for the modern digital economy.

Principal Secretary Prince Mshishimba Andreas Dlamini used the platform to issue a firm call for unity, urging ministries, private institutions, researchers and citizens to work together to deliver the country’s long term digital vision.

The Principal Secretary emphasised that the digital transformation of Eswatini cannot be carried by government alone. He argued that the scale of the technological shift requires a unified national effort. He stressed that every sector has a critical responsibility. Ministries such as health, education, agriculture, trade and youth affairs must align their plans with the national digital agenda. The private sector must innovate and develop home-grown solutions. Communities must embrace new knowledge. Researchers must advance scientific understanding. He said that only with total unity can Eswatini claim its place among nations shaping the latest industrial era.

His remarks highlighted the interconnected nature of digital development. He explained that a national strategy means little if institutions work in isolation. For instance, digital skills cannot expand without updated education systems. Innovation cannot flourish without research funding. Agriculture cannot become smart without investment in technology. Health data cannot be safely stored without strong laws. He described digitalisation as a shared responsibility and urged every stakeholder to fully recognise their role.

However, these ambitions require strong foundations in research and innovation. The Principal Secretary said that true technological progress stems from pure discovery and that the country must invest in scientific exploration. For this reason, government considers the formation of a National Research Council to be crucial. The Council will guide research funding and promote new knowledge that can support future innovations and commercial solutions.

As technology expands, so do risks. The Principal Secretary acknowledged that cyber threats are a growing reality. He assured the participants that Eswatini has reinforced its legal framework through the Computer Crime and Cybercrime Act of 2022 and the Data Protection Act of 2022. These instruments provide protection for citizens and support national security in the digital landscape.

He added that the Fourth Industrial Revolution produces massive amounts of data which must be properly governed. Issues of data sovereignty, ethical data use, taxation of digital trade and fair competition for local businesses all require firm policy direction. He urged stakeholders to pay attention to these areas as they formulate the national strategy.

Ultimately, he stressed that the success of the strategy relies on the technical capacity of the people. Digital skills must be strengthened across communities, schools and training institutions.



By Thokozi Mazibuko

POLICE in Sihlutshe have arrested a man of Tibondzeni, who was wanted in connection with the alleged kidnapping and brutal murder of eight-year-old Tifezile Gwebu of Siguduma in the Jericho area.

The man (his name has been withheld for ethical reasons) was apprehended early this morning at around 06:30 at his homestead after community members spotted him walking towards his residence and alerted authorities.

The suspect had been on the run since May 21, 2025, the day Tifezile was abducted while returning from a local shop with friends. Her disappearance prompted an intensive search, which ended in tragedy when her mutilated body was discovered days later at the suspect's homestead. The incident sent shockwaves throughout the community and triggered a wide-scale manhunt.

According to the Royal Eswatini Police Service statement, officers from the Jericho Police Post responded swiftly after receiving the tip-off from a vigilant resident. Working closely with members of the Tibondzeni community, police organised a coordinated operation that led to the successful arrest of the suspect without incident. The man is currently in police custody and due processes, including further investigations and court preparations, are underway.

The police have commended the Tibo-

# Man arrested in alleged kidnapping, murder of 8-year-old



▲ Deputy PICO Nosipho Mnguni.

ndzeni community for their alertness and cooperation, stating that the arrest demonstrates the power of partnership policing. They emphasised that combating crime requires close collaboration between law enforcement and the public, as communities play a crucial role in providing timely information that can help prevent or solve serious offences.



## FNB Eswatini, REPS collaborate to sensitise staff on fraud

By Gift Maartyn

FNB Eswatini and the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) yesterday hosted a collaborative workshop to sensitise the bank's staff on fraud scams and security ahead of the festive season.

The workshop was held at the FNB Eswatini Head Office in Ezulwini and forms part of the bank's wider Fraud Awareness Campaign, targeting both employees and customers. During the workshop, the bank's employees were sensitised on current fraud trends, detection and prevention methods. REPS facilitators further emphasised the need for FNB employees to adequately protect their homes through investing in home security measures such as fencing, removing bushes and installing cameras, alarm systems, among others.

FNB's Chief Risk Officer (CRO) Gugu Matiwane said, by investing in its staff, the bank was also helping safeguard its customers. "It is important for us that, firstly, our employees know about fraud and are protected. Furthermore, when our people know about fraud and have been well capacitated, they are in a better position to also adequately advise our customers, spot threats and ensure that we stop fraudsters.

We are grateful to the Royal Eswatini Police Service for their continued support of our fraud awareness initiatives," she said.

Meanwhile, Director of the Fraud and Commercial Crimes Unit in the REPS Nicholas Jele lauded FNB for investing in such workshops for its employees. "We were here to raise fraud awareness as we usher into the festive season. We know that this is a period when scammers try their luck with defrauding people. During the session, we also en-



▲ The workshop was held at the FNB Eswatini Head Office in Ezulwini and forms part of the bank's wider Fraud Awareness Campaign, targeting both employees and customers.

couraged detection and reporting of fraudulent activities. This workshop is a strong indicator of the solid relationship that exists between REPS and FNB Eswatini," he said.

Matiwane then urged FNB customers to stay alert against fraudsters particularly as the festive season approaches. "If you have any doubts, about the authenticity of communication you are receiving regarding your bank account, immediately call our toll-free number on 800 6100," she added.

REPS representatives present during the session also included Assistant Inspector Bheka Masilela, Sergeant Mlungisi Malinga and Constable Badelisa Magagula.

**FNB Eswatini Fraud Safety tips:**

- FNB will never do the following:
- Call you on WhatsApp
- Ask you to transfer money from your account to yourself or a third party
- Ask you to share your card number or PIN

- Ask you to share your OTP for withdrawing eWallets
- If you suspect your account details are compromised, contact FNB where an FNB consultant can:
- Help you block your card via the app
- Place a hold on the account to avoid any funds being moved from it by you or another party
- Delink any devices linked to account



Stories by Thokozi Mazibuko

AS the festive season approaches, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has issued a strong warning to the public and business community to remain vigilant when transacting and managing their finances, particularly their hard-earned year-end savings.

National Commissioner of Police, Manoma Vusie Masango, sounded the alarm on the rising incidents of fraud and digital crime that historically peak during the December period.

Masango encouraged Emaswati to be proactive and extra cautious when sending money to relatives, friends, savings groups, and business partners, noting that the shift to digital platforms has made life easier—but also opened new avenues for criminal exploitation. He advised the public to make maximum use of secure, verified digital platforms when transferring funds to avoid falling victim to cyber-enabled scams that tend to flourish during the festive rush.

“With the festive season drawing near, we urge members of the public to utilize digital platforms for sharing their yearly savings,” said Masango. “This is the time when scammers intensify their activities, taking advantage of the increased financial movements. Vigilance is key to ensuring that families do not lose what they have worked so hard for throughout the year.”

The Commissioner highlighted that December is traditionally a high-risk period for fraud, theft, phishing schemes, SIM-swap scams, and other deceptive practices aimed at swindling unsuspecting citizens. He said many criminal syndicates operate under the guise of investment opportunities, donation drives, or urgent financial requests.

“We have noted a disturbing trend of criminals posing as relatives, friends, or even financial institutions to trick people into sending money,” he explained. “Some circulate fake SMS messages or use cloned profiles on social media to impersonate people you trust. The public must verify every request before sending money. When in doubt, call the person directly.”

#### Zero tolerance for fraudsters

# NatCom warns of festive season savings scams



Masango stressed that the REPS will adopt a zero-tolerance stance on anyone found participating in or facilitating any form of financial fraud. He warned that perpetrators can expect swift arrest and prosecution, as these crimes continue to destabilize families and undermine economic security.

“Anyone caught orchestrating or participating in fraudulent acts will face immediate arrest,” he declared. “We want to make it absolutely clear that fraud is a serious criminal offense. It destroys livelihoods and disrupts community trust. The police will not hesitate to bring offenders to justice.”

The Commissioner further encouraged communities to play an active role in combating scams by promptly reporting suspicious activities to their nearest police station. He emphasized that early reporting greatly improves the police’s ability to trace digital footprints, recover funds, and apprehend suspects.

#### Businesses urged to use formal channels

Beyond individual consumers, Masango issued a strong advisory to business owners particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to avoid informal, unsecured trans-

action methods. He noted that many businesses continue to lose thousands of emalangeni due to reliance on undocumented cash dealings or agreements that cannot be verified.

“For business owners, it is important to avoid informal or unsecured transaction methods that leave your money vulnerable,” he cautioned. “We advise businesses to use established banking channels for all transactions. These channels provide a secure, traceable, and reliable way to conduct business while protecting your assets.”

He pointed out that formal banking processes help limit the risk of counterfeit money, fraudulent payments, and disputes that often arise when business deals are conducted through unregulated means. Digital banking platforms, he added, offer transparency, accountability, and the ability to track financial trails important tools in protecting both customers and enterprises.

#### Community role in safety

Masango encouraged Emaswati to adopt a culture of caution by embracing basic safety habits such as safeguarding personal identification numbers (PINs), avoiding public Wi-Fi for financial transactions, creating strong passwords, and never sharing authen-



▲ National Commissioner of Police, Manoma Vusie Masango.

tification codes with anyone. He also urged savings groups to conduct year-end payouts in secure environments and to prioritize electronic transfers over physical cash disbursements.

“Your safety begins with the choices you make. Be aware, be alert, and always double-check before you transact,” he said.

As Eswatini prepares for a bustling festive season, the Police Commissioner reiterated the police service’s commitment to ensuring public safety. He promised increased surveillance, improved digital crime monitoring, and coordinated efforts with banking institutions to curb fraudulent activities.

“We remain dedicated to protecting the public, but we also need your cooperation. Together, we can reduce crime and ensure that everyone enjoys a safe and peaceful festive period.”

## ‘Dagga cultivation still a crime’

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service has reaffirmed its uncompromising stance against the cultivation, sale and trafficking of dagga, warning communities that the illicit drug remains illegal and continues to fuel violent criminal activities across the country.

National Commissioner of Police Vusi Manoma Masango issued the strong warning following a series of police operations that uncovered extensive dagga fields in several regions.

Speaking firmly on the matter, the National Commissioner said the issue requires collective responsibility and cooperation from the public. “Dagga cultivation and trafficking remain a criminal offence and will not be tolerated,” Masango emphasised. “The police will continue to take decisive action in combating dagga cultivation through the destruction of dagga fields and by holding all perpetrators accountable.”

According to Masango, the police have intensified their intelligence-led operations,

targeting not only growers and traffickers but also the networks that support the illegal trade. Recent operations, he said, revealed that some communities still harbour individuals who are heavily invested in dagga production, using it as a source of income despite the clear legal consequences and the associated dangers.

Masango noted that the proliferation of the drug trade does not occur in isolation. He explained that dagga trafficking often intersects with other serious crimes, including violence and in some cases the unlawful possession of firearms. “Moreover, the trade of this illicit drug fuels crimes such as murder, which pose a significant threat to community safety,” he said. “We cannot ignore the reality that drug money and drug-linked disputes frequently escalate into violent confrontations.”

Community involvement, he stressed, remains a vital component of successful policing.





BRIEFS

Akzo Nobel, Axalta to merge

DULUX paint maker AkzoNobel said on Tuesday that it plans to merge with paintmaker Axalta Coating Systems in a deal that will create a combined company with an enterprise value of \$25 billion.

Under the merger, AkzoNobel shareholders will receive a \$2.5 billion dividend payout and are expected to own 55% of the new group, with Axalta investors owning the remaining 45%.

‘Keep African development banks as preferred creditors’

AFRICAN development banks should retain the same legal protections as global lenders like the International Monetary Fund when governments restructure debt, the head of Africa Finance Corporation said, as debate grows over their preferred creditor status. With countries including Ghana and Zambia recently working through debt restructurings, some private creditors have argued that African lenders like Afreximbank and Trade and Development Bank should share in losses rather than keep the exemptions long enjoyed by multilateral institutions.

Pick n Pay’s founders sell 64 million shares

PICK n Pay’s founding Ackerman family has sold about 64 million shares, the South African retailer said on Tuesday, more than a year after pledging to cede control of the struggling grocer.

In May 2024, the Ackerman family said it will relinquish control of Pick n Pay as part of a revamp aimed at stemming losses, cutting debt and regaining market share. (Reuters)

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash

	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.8341	17.2996
G.B. Pound	22.1027	22.7768
EURO	19.5259	20.1340
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	

£

\$

Inflation shows uneven impact across households

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI’S inflation picture in October shows that while the overall rate remains relatively low, the impact on households is not uniform.

The latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) report released by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development shows distinct differences in how goods and services are priced across the economy, shaping how consumers experience the cost of living.

“Headline inflation stood at 2.9% in October 2025, slightly higher than the 2.8% recorded in September. The rate is still below the 3.3% recorded in October 2024, but behind the topline figure are contrasting trends between goods, services, and specific consumer categories,” reads the report in part.

The CPI report further shows that goods inflation was recorded at 3.3 per cent significantly higher than services inflation at 2.3 per cent. This gap illustrates a shift in price pressures that largely affect households depending on what they consume most.

According to the report goods such as food items, clothing, household products, alcohol, and other commodities tend to react faster to global and seasonal price changes. Services, on the other hand, such as accommodation, health care, and transport-related services, often adjust more gradually.

The report explains further that the widening gap means consumers who spend more on goods than services are experiencing a sharper rise in their living costs.

The single largest contributor to the 2.9 per cent inflation rate remains housing and utilities, accounting for 1.2 percentage points of the total.

This category includes electricity, rent, water, and other household-related expenses. Its weight in the CPI means changes within this area heavily influence the overall rate.

The October figures suggest that the upward pressure from this category continues to shape household expenses, especially for families facing rising utility costs or landlords adjusting rental prices.

One of the most notable movements in the report is the sharp increase in alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics, which rose 13.8 per cent year-on-year.

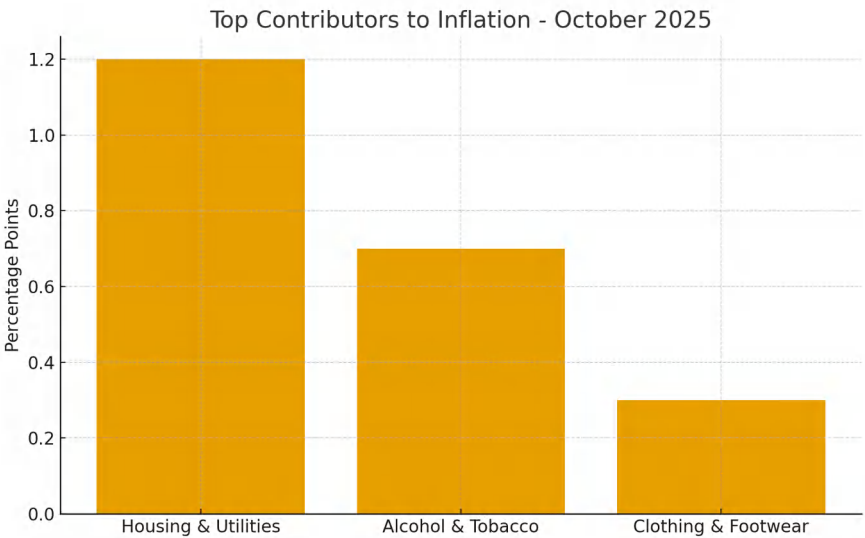
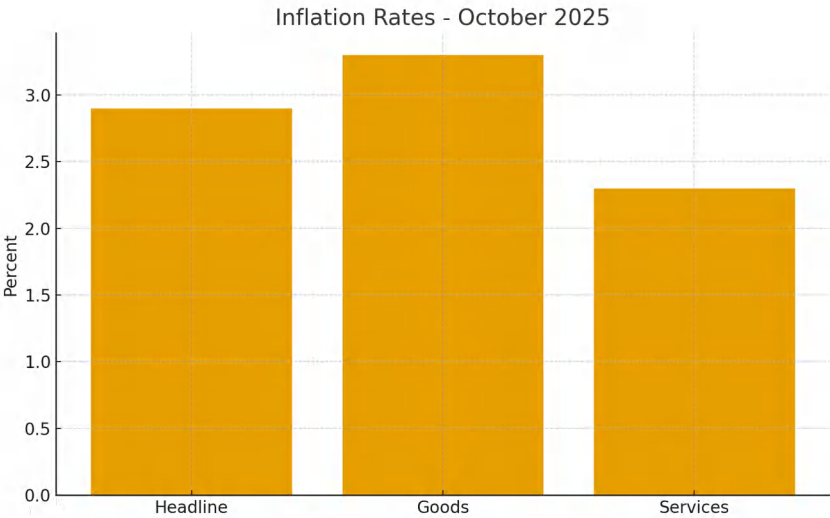
This category contributed 0.7 percentage points to the headline rate, making it the second-largest driver of inflation in October.

The CSO notes that the increase is mainly due to higher prices for spirits and beer. While this does not affect all households equally, the rise has a clear impact on consumers who purchase these products regularly, as well as businesses in the hospitality sector.

“The clothing and footwear category increased by 5.7 per cent year-on-year, contributing 0.3 percentage points to overall inflation. This rise is notable heading into the festive season, when clothing sales typically increase and households begin preparing for year-end events and school-related purchases.

In contrast to the increases in other

... inflation shoots up by 2.9%



categories, the restaurants and hotels sector recorded a 4.2 per cent decline compared to the previous year. According to the CSO, the drop is tied to lower accommodation costs.

This decline suggests softer demand or price adjustments within the tourism and hospitality sector, which may reflect broader economic conditions affecting travel, leisure spending, or competition among accommodation providers.

Highlights

The Health category recorded a 3.5 per cent increase, but the report highlights that the rise is slower than in previous periods.

The moderation is attributed to a slower rise in the cost of medical services and medicines.

For households with ongoing medical needs, this slower increase provides some relief, although health-related expenses remain a significant and often unavoidable part of monthly budgets.

The month-to-month change in prices was +0.4 per cent, a clear shift from the 0.0 per cent movement recorded in September. This indicates fresh price adjustments heading into the final quarter of the year, often influenced by supply changes, seasonal demand, and broader economic activity.

While the overall inflation rate remains below

3 per cent, the distribution of price increases means households feel the impact differently.

Lower-income households, which allocate a larger share of their budgets to goods such as clothing, food, and alcohol, experience sharper inflation due to the higher goods inflation rate of 3.3 per cent

Middle-income households are more affected by utility and housing costs, given the strong influence of housing and utilities on the overall rate.

Consumers relying heavily on services such as accommodation or certain medical services may experience slightly slower cost increases because services inflation sits below goods inflation.

Worth mentioning these differing pressures paint a more detailed picture of the cost of living than the headline number alone.

Meanwhile the upcoming CPI releases are slated for December 15, 2025 January 15, 2025 and February 16, 2026

The full October 2025 CPI report is available on the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development’s official website.



By Delisa Magagula

# Tax collections reach E7.7 billion in mid-term review



▲ Minister of Finance Neal rijkenberg delivered the update during his weekly finance in focus blog update, following the tabling of the mid-term budget review in Parliament.

MINISTER of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, says government revenue collection reached E7.7 billion by the end of September, marking an increase from E7 billion in the same period last year. He delivered the update during his weekly finance in focus blog update, following the tabling of the mid-term budget review in Parliament, noting that collections remain on track despite slow performance in the first half of the financial year.

Rijkenberg said tax collections traditionally improve in the second half of the year and projected the shortfall seen earlier would close.

He added that the country is expected to collect E2 billion more in tax revenue this financial year compared to last year. According to him, the improvement is driven by a broader tax base and compliance efforts by the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), rather than changes in tax rates.

While revenue performance has been encouraging, expenditure pressure has intensified. The minister noted that government's cashflow became strained after the implementation of the civil service salary review.

"As we sit now, our cashflow is constrained," he said, adding that the situation should ease once two approved loans are disbursed. Rijkenberg noted that Parliament has approved loan bills from the OPEC Fund and the African Development Bank, and both have been signed and gazetted. He said the Ministry of Finance is finalising loan agreements, and funds are expected within two to three weeks. The minister said the incoming funds would allow government to clear all outstanding ERS supplier payments.

Despite this relief, Rijkenberg warned that the remainder of the financial year will be marked by tight spending controls. He said

government is already over its budgeted expenditure for the year, and ministries will undergo significant budget cuts to remain within the approved spending ceiling by the end of March.

"The Mid-Term Review also highlighted progress on IFMAS, the Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System being introduced across government. The system developed with support from Rwanda is intended to replace paper-based processes with a digital, transparent workflow that tracks each stage from budgeting to payment," Rijkenberg confirmed.

He further noted that next year's national budget will be prepared on IFMAS and that the entire government will operate on the system from April 1, 2026.

He said the shift to IFMAS and the move toward accrual accounting are expected to improve accountability and streamline processing times for procurement, payments and audits.

The minister added that the budget process for the 2025/26 financial year has begun. A budget call circular has been issued to all ministries, but he cautioned that next year's budget will have limited flexibility due to the

salary review's cost.

He said ministries should expect a tight allocation cycle with little room for new spending proposals. Rijkenberg stated that the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Public Service will assess ministry submissions through the usual stages of the Public Budget Committee before forwarding a draft to Cabinet, Parliament and, ultimately, His Majesty for approval before the end of March.

He said the ministry will continue providing weekly updates on the progress of the national budget and government finances.

## Eswatini launches E200 million government bond auction

THE Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has announced the launch of E200 million in Government Bonds, opening a new investment window for institutional and individual investors ahead of the November 25, 2025 auction.

The bonds, issued on behalf of the Government, will be available at fixed coupon rates of 10.50 percent, 11.00 per cent, 11.50 per cent and 12.00 per cent.

The CBE said the offer is part of government's ongoing effort to support domestic capital market development and mobilise funding through stable, long-term instruments.

According to the Central Bank, investors can participate through all commercial banks or directly via the CBE's Financial Markets Department.

The department can be contacted through the dedicated email address **CBE\_Domestic\_Markets@centralbank.org.sz** or by telephone at 2408 2000. The Bank encouraged interested participants to register and complete all required documentation ahead of the auction date.

Noteworthy the issuance forms part of the Bank's regular securities programme, which provides government with an organised platform to raise funds while offering investors attractive returns supported by sovereign risk.

The fixed-rate structure across the four instruments provides a range of options for investors seeking predictable interest income.

The CBE noted that government securities



▲ The CBE is auctioning bonds for the Government.

continue to play a critical role in strengthening the domestic financial market by improving liquidity, providing benchmarks for pricing, and promoting investment diversification across the banking and non-banking sectors.

Meanwhile, previous auctions have attracted strong demand, with commercial banks, pension funds, asset managers and retail investors showing growing interest in medium- to long-term government paper.

Market participants say the interest rate levels spanning from 10.50 per cent to 12.00 per cent are expected to appeal to investors looking to lock in yields amid an environment

of cautious but steady economic activity.

Government bonds remain a preferred investment class due to their low risk profile and the Central Bank's established auction framework.

The Central Bank reiterated its commitment to maintaining transparency and fairness throughout the auction process. All bids will be submitted electronically through approved channels, and results will be communicated immediately after the auction concludes on 25 November 2025.

The Bank reminded investors that government securities are also eligible for

secondary market trading, offering liquidity for those who may wish to rebalance their portfolios after the primary issuance. This flexibility, combined with competitive fixed coupon rates, is expected to support active participation in the auction.

The CBE added that the successful uptake of these bonds contributes to strengthening public finance management by ensuring government has access to stable and predictable funding for its programmes.

The auction will take place on November 25, 2025, and the Central Bank encouraged all eligible investors to participate through their preferred channels.

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**The CBE said the offer is part of government's ongoing effort to support domestic capital market development and mobilise funding through stable, long-term instruments. According to the Central Bank, investors can participate through all commercial banks or directly via the CBE's Financial Markets Department**

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# Akzo Nobel, Axalta to merge creating \$25 billion paint giant



▲ Cans of Dulux paint, an AkzoNobel brand, are seen on the shelf of a DIY retail store in Manchester, Britain.

DULUX paint maker AkzoNobel said on Tuesday that it plans to merge with paintmaker Axalta Coating Systems in a deal that will create a combined company with an enterprise value of \$25 billion. Under the merger, AkzoNobel shareholders will receive a \$2.5 billion dividend payout and are expected to own 55% of the new group, with Axalta investors owning the remaining 45%.

“This is a no premium merger with a company that’s being valued at eight times EBITDA and it has a better portfolio, very comparable, but better portfolio than BASF <BASF.DE> Coatings,” AkzoNobel CEO Greg Poux-Guillaume told Reuters.

The combined company will be initially dual-listed in Amsterdam and New York before moving to a single NYSE listing, and maintaining dual headquarters in Amsterdam and Philadelphia. It will be led by current AkzoNobel chief executive Greg Poux-Guillaume as CEO.

### Profitable

“If you look at Axalta, what really stands out is that they’re very profitable,” Poux-Guillaume told Reuters.

“More than the growth, it’s the profitability. And if you take the combined profitability of the two businesses put together, including the synergies, you’re talking best in the market.”

The new company expects annual revenues of \$17 billion, an annual adjusted core earnings (EBITDA) of \$3.3 billion, and \$1.5 billion in adjusted free cash flow.

It expects to deliver annual cost savings

of \$600 million, 90% of which are expected within the first three years following the

close of the transaction.

Completion of the merger is expected to

close late 2026 to early 2027.

(Rueters)



▲ Customers push trolleys as they shop at a Pick n Pay store at the Trade Route Mall, in Lenasia outside Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Pick n Pay’s founders sell 64 million shares, lose majority control

PICK n Pay’s founding Ackerman family has sold about 64 million shares, the South African retailer said on Tuesday, more than a year after pledging to cede control of the struggling grocer. In May 2024, the Ackerman family said it will relinquish control of Pick n Pay as part of a revamp aimed at stemming losses, cutting debt and regaining market share. Gareth Ackerman, who had been with the company for four decades, said he will retire as chairman after 14 years in the job. The placement shares, representing an 8.5% of Pick n Pay’s total issued ordinary shares, were sold at 25.50 rand apiece in an

accelerated book-build, a 6.4% discount to the company’s closing price on Monday. It raised about 1.6 billion rand (\$93.06 million) in proceeds. The Ackerman Family’s voting interest in the company will shrink to 36.8% from 49% following the sale, as it gives up majority control but retains the role as the anchor shareholder to support the retailer’s turnaround efforts. Following the placement, the Ackerman family will continue to hold 135.4 million ordinary shares in Pick n Pay. (Rueters)

## Keep African development banks as preferred creditors – AFC head

AFRICAN development banks should retain the same legal protections as global lenders like the International Monetary Fund when governments restructure debt, the head of Africa Finance Corporation said, as debate grows over their preferred creditor status. With countries including Ghana and Zambia recently working through debt restructurings, some private creditors have argued that African lenders like Afreximbank and Trade and Development Bank should share in losses rather than keep the exemptions long enjoyed by multilateral institutions. “Preferred creditor status is awarded by countries. And typically, countries make it a law of their country,” AFC CEO Samaila Zubairu said on the sidelines of G20 business

meetings in South Africa. “The African countries have insisted - the African Union actually has a position on this - they’ve insisted that the preferred status of African institutions must be maintained, and that it’s in the interest of African economies to ensure they strengthen, not weaken, the financial institutions which they set up for themselves,” he said. Preferred creditors are typically repaid ahead of other lenders and enjoy legal immunities, enabling multilateral development banks to lend to high-risk markets at lower costs. AFC is a multilateral lender whose shareholders include African governments and central banks, along with private financial institutions. (Rueters)



▲ African Development Bank.



# Nvidia earnings put AI boom under the microscope

By Arsheeya Bajwa and Aditya Soni

THE fate of Wall Street’s staggering bets on artificial intelligence will rest squarely on Nvidia on Wednesday when the chipmaker reports results, with investors seeking signs that bubble worries are overblown.

Three years after ChatGPT’s debut, investors are increasingly uneasy that the AI boom has outrun fundamentals. Some business leaders have noted that circular deals - where one partner props up another’s revenue - add to the bubble risk.

A few large investors have dumped some of their AI holdings, stoking fears that a market selloff is imminent. Tech billionaire Peter Thiel’s hedge fund sold its entire stake in Nvidia in the third quarter, as has SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son, although he has plowed those returns into a massive bet on OpenAI.

Doubts have pushed Nvidia shares down 7.9 per cent so far in November, after a 1,200 per cent surge in the past three years. The broader market has declined 2.5 per cent this month.

“With every quarter that goes by, Nvidia earnings become more important in terms of clarification on where AI is moving and how much spending is being done,” said Brian Stutland, chief investment officer of Nvidia investor Equity Armor Investments.

Notwithstanding bubble fears, demand for Nvidia’s chips remains strong, with cloud giants including Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab investing billions in AI data centers.

## Chip demand is strong, but value is depreciating

Nvidia is likely to report a more than 56 per cent jump in its fiscal August-October quarter revenue to \$54.92 billion, according to data compiled by LSEG, a far cry from the triple-digit growth it witnessed for many



▲An NVIDIA logo.

quarters as it faces tougher comparisons. The company has surpassed expectations for the past 12 quarters, though the delta has shrunk.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said last month the company has \$500 billion in bookings for its advanced chips through 2026.

“The old Wall Street adage ‘one stock does not a market make’ - that would be incorrect here,” said Neil Azous, portfolio manager of the actively managed Monopoly ETF that holds Nvidia shares. “Nvidia has the ability to make a market.”

But Nvidia’s chips are central to “Big Short” investor Michael Burry’s bet against the company. Burry, who recently shut his hedge fund, argued that large cloud providers were artificially boosting earnings by extending the depreciable life of AI compute gear, such as Nvidia’s chips.

Nvidia now updates chips annually, making older models appear obsolete faster, even as the resale market thrives.

## More complex processes, margin pressure

For now, Nvidia is struggling to supply enough chips.

While contract chipmaker TSMC is adding advanced-packaging capacity to overcome a

key bottleneck and plans to keep expanding through 2026, Nvidia is also rolling out more complex and larger systems that bundle graphics processors, central processing units, networking gear and a range of cooling options.

That, in addition to the ongoing ramp-up of its top-of-the-line Blackwell chips and upcoming Rubin processors, has burdened margins.

Nvidia is expected to report that its adjusted gross margin shrunk nearly 2 percentage points from the year-ago period to 73.6 per cent in the third quarter. Net income likely grew 53 per cent to \$29.54 billion.

Investors are watching to see how big AI deals including Nvidia’s \$100 billion investment in OpenAI and \$5 billion stake in chipmaker Intel will affect its balance sheet. Nvidia had cash and cash equivalents of \$11.64 billion as of July 27.

China is another overhang. Nvidia cannot ship its most advanced chips there under U.S. export curbs and Huang has said there are “no active discussions” on selling Blackwell in the market despite speculation of a possible deal for a scaled-down version.

Nvidia stripped China from its forecast for advanced processors last quarter. (Reuters)



▲Representation of Bitcoin coin cryptocurrency.

## Bitcoin slides below \$90 000

By Rae Wee and Elizabeth Howcroft

SINGAPORE/LONDON — Bitcoin fell below \$90,000 for the first time in seven months on Tuesday in the latest sign that investor appetite for risk is drying up across financial markets.

The risk-sensitive cryptocurrency has lost all this year’s gains and is now nearly 30% below a peak above \$126,000 in October. It was down 0.5% at \$91,338.47 during European trading hours, after slipping as low as \$89,286.75.

About \$1.2 trillion has been wiped off the total market value of all cryptocurrencies in the past six weeks, according to market tracker CoinGecko.

Market participants said that a combination of doubts around future U.S. interest rate cuts and the risk-averse mood in broader markets, which have wobbled after a long rally, was dragging down crypto.

## ‘Confidence can erode with remarkable speed’

“The cascading selloff is amplified by listed companies and institutions exiting their positions after piling in during the rally, compounding contagion risks across the market,” said Joshua Chu, co-chair of the Hong Kong Web3 Association.

“When support thins and macro uncertainty rises, confidence can erode with remarkable speed.”

Speculators who had put money into crypto in the hopes of supportive U.S. regulation have started to pull back, causing steady outflows from ETFs and similar instruments in recent weeks, said Joseph Edwards at Enigma Securities.

“The sell pressure here isn’t extraordinary, but it’s coming at a relative weak point on the buy side ... a lot of retail buyers were stung during the flash crash last month,” he said, referring to an October crash in which there were \$19 billion in liquidations across leveraged positions.

Crypto stockpilers such as Strategy miners such Riot Platforms and Mara Holdings (, and exchange Coinbase have all slid with the souring mood.

There has been a boom in public crypto treasury companies this year, with small companies in unrelated sectors becoming crypto-proxies by announcing plans to buy and hold cryptocurrencies on their balance sheets.

But Standard Chartered has estimated that a drop below \$90,000 for bitcoin could leave half of these companies’ bitcoin holdings “underwater” - a term which typically refers to holding assets worth less than what was paid for them. (Reuters)

# Cloudflare outage easing after impacting thousands of internet users

A GLOBAL outage at web-infrastructure firm Cloudflare began to ease on Tuesday after preventing thousands from accessing major internet platforms, including X and ChatGPT.

Cloudflare, whose network handles around a fifth of web traffic, said it started to investigate the internal service degradation around 6:40 a.m. ET.

It has deployed a fix but some customers might still be impacted as it recovers service.

The incident marked the latest hit to major online services. An outage of Amazon’s cloud service last month caused global turmoil as thousands of popular websites and apps, including Snapchat and Reddit were inaccessible due to the disruption.

Cloudflare - whose shares were down about 5% in premarket trading - runs one of the world’s largest networks that helps websites and apps load faster and stay online by protecting them from traffic surges and cyberattacks.

The latest outage prevented thousands of users from accessing platforms such as Canva, X, Grindr and ChatGPT, prompting users to log outage reports with Downtdetector.

Reports about issues with Cloudflare had, however, come down to about 600 by 8 a.m. ET from a peak of nearly 5,000, the outage-tracking tool showed.

Downtdetector tracks outages by collating status reports from a number of sources. Since the numbers are based on user-submitted reports, the actual number of affected users may vary.

“We saw a spike in unusual traffic to one of Cloudflare’s services beginning at 11:20 UTC. That caused some traffic passing through Cloudflare’s network to experience errors,” the company said in an emailed statement. “We are all hands on deck to make sure all traffic is served without errors.”

X and ChatGPT-creator OpenAI did not immediately respond to requests for comment. (Reuters)



▲The X app icon on a smartphone.



By Duncan Miriri and  
Colleen Goko

JOHANNESBURG — The Group of 20 major economies should team up with the International Monetary Fund and others to launch a new debt refinancing plan for low-income countries hit by heavy debt repayments, a panel of Africa experts said on Tuesday.

“This proposal would focus on refinancing rather than rescheduling debt obligations,” the panel said in a report released in Johannesburg on Tuesday ahead of the G20 summit in South Africa this weekend.

The expert group, including a former South African finance minister and a former Kenyan central banker, said many countries now need immediate debt relief.

The mechanism could be implemented through the creation of a special fund, or the use of debt swaps that would use more affordable financing to buy back countries’ most expensive debt.

#### Tap special drawing rights and IMF’s gold

Funding could come from the use of special drawing rights at the IMF, the panel said, or the sale of the IMF’s gold, if G20 shareholders in the Washington-based Fund offer their support.

The African Union is also pushing for the creation of a debt refinancing mechanism but it is not yet clear if and when the facility will start operations.

South Africa set up the expert panel in March to examine what needs to be done to help heavily-indebted nations, especially in Africa.

During its G20 presidency, South Africa has tried to keep critical issues for poor countries like debt and climate change on the agenda, but it has faced stiff resistance from the U.S., which has said it will not be attending the summit.

#### Formation of a borrowers’ club

Debtor nations should also form a borrowers’ club, the panel said, to boost collective advocacy in global finance.

# Africa expert panel proposes a new G20 debt refinancing initiative



▲ People walk in front a G20 banner, as the country prepares to host the G20 Summit on November 22-23, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

“Its primary mandate would be to strengthen debtors’ voices in negotiations on reforms to the international financial and debt architecture,” it said.

Africa should also partner with the G20 to recommend changes to the IMF to “effectively perform its role in the global financial system, with a particular focus on Africa.”

Over time, the G20 and other parties should revamp sovereign debt resolution mechanisms. The G20 launched its ‘Common Framework’ initiative in the wake of the Covid pandemic in 2020 to speed up debt restructurings but has seen early test cases in the likes of Ghana and Zambia take years to make progress.

Renewed debt concerns for countries like Senegal and Mozambique have put the issue

back in the spotlight in recent months.

A new framework should better differentiate between liquidity and solvency issues, the panel said, and consider all forms of domestic and external debt.

“Sovereign debt has once again emerged as a critical obstacle to development in Africa,” the panel said.

#### Africa experts call for greater oversight of ratings agencies in G20 report

A panel of Africa experts on Tuesday urged the Group of 20 major economies to step up oversight of credit rating agencies, which they accused of using flawed and opaque methodologies that increase borrowing costs for African governments.

The panel, established under South Africa’s G20 presidency, said in a report to the group that rating agencies exhibit “perception biases”, often assessing African risk as higher than other regions with comparable economic fundamentals.

Ahead of a G20 summit this weekend, the panel called on the group to impose stricter oversight of rating agencies, mandating greater disclosure of the data and models underpinning their decisions.

It also recommended updating rating frameworks to better capture the diversity of African economies such as their growth potential and natural resources, and avoiding knee-jerk rating cuts that can exacerbate financial strains.

S&P Global Ratings, Moody’s and Fitch have rejected accusations of regional bias, saying their sovereign ratings are based on globally applied, publicly available criteria and that the same methodologies are used for all countries.

The African Union, meanwhile, is working on an African Credit Rating Agency, which it plans to launch in the second half of 2025 to offer an Africa-based assessment of credit risk. The panel said that the perception bias inherent in ratings methodologies inflated the cost of raising capital for African governments and companies in global financial markets.

“The rating agencies’ methodologies remain flawed,” its report said, adding that the agencies made it difficult to scrutinise or challenge their conclusions.

The panel was chaired by South Africa’s former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and its members include Nobel laureate economist Esther Duflo and former African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka. (Reuters)

# ‘Saudi Prince to press Trump to intervene to end Sudan war’

By Alexander Cornwell  
and Timour Azhari

TEL AVIV/RIYDAH — Saudi Arabia’s defacto ruler Mohammed bin Salman is set to press U.S. President Donald Trump to personally intervene to help end the war in Sudan during talks in Washington on Tuesday, five people familiar with the matter said.

The sources -- two Arab diplomats and three western diplomats -- said the Saudi Crown Prince believed Trump’s direct pressure was needed to break a logjam in talks to end more than two and a half years of war, pointing to his work to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza last month.

The conflict erupted in 2023 amid a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule.

It has caused ethnically-charged bloodletting, widespread destruction and mass displacement, drawing in foreign powers and threatening to split Sudan.

Both the RSF and the army have increasingly relied on drone strikes in recent months, leading to heavy civilian casualties.

In raising the issue with Trump, Saudi Arabia is seeking to appeal to the U.S. president’s view of himself as a peacemaker, the sources said, with Trump having said repeatedly that he was seeking a Nobel Peace Prize for his work to address global conflicts.

The Saudi government’s media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Saudi plan to discuss Sudan with Trump was earlier reported by the Middle East Eye website.

The U.S., the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are members of a group formed to resolve the conflict and informally known as the Quad, though few tangible steps to ending the war have resulted.

For Saudi Arabia, a resolution to the conflict is linked to national security, with hundreds of kilometres of Sudanese coastline lying opposite the kingdom’s Red Sea coast.

Regional rivalry between oil-rich Gulf kingdoms is also at play.



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

#### ‘We need actionable results,’ Rubio says

The UAE has been widely accused of backing the RSF, which has faced allegations of genocide for its conduct, most recently during its takeover of the Darfur city of al-Fashir. The UAE has denied backing the RSF, but some U.N. experts and U.S. lawmakers have found the accusation credible, citing evidence in reports by human rights organisations on the supply of weapons.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt are seen as being closer to the Sudanese army.

Asked last week about the UAE’s role in the conflict, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio voiced frustration with the Quad

process, though he stopped short of holding any side responsible.

“This needs to stop ... We’re not going to let the Quad process that we’ve set up be a shield that people hide behind and say, ‘Well, we’re involved with the Quad. We’re trying to solve it.’ We need actionable results, and they need to happen very quickly,” he said.

The RSF earlier this month accepted a U.S.-backed humanitarian ceasefire proposal after an international outcry over accounts that it had killed large groups of civilians as it overran al-Fashir. The army has not agreed to the ceasefire, which could provide a window for more deliveries of desperately needed humanitarian aid. (Reuters)



By Kate Abnett, Lisandra Paraguassu and Sudarshan Varadhan

BELEM, Brazil — Brazil is hoping to land an early agreement on some of the most contentious issues at the COP30 climate summit after unveiling a bold negotiation strategy that had delegates working into the early hours of Tuesday morning.

The two-week summit in the Amazon city of Belem has brought together governments from across the world to strengthen the complex U.N. framework that underpins global action to halt rising temperatures and cope with the damage they cause.

Host nation Brazil wants a deal agreed in two stages: one package on Wednesday, including items that were a week ago deemed too thorny to even include on the formal agenda, and another wrapping up any outstanding issues by Friday.

At the outset of COP30, it was unclear whether there would be an attempt to negotiate a final agreement for the end of the summit.

“I think it’s a daring move. It could work, although it’s also a risk because why would parties move if they know there still is time,” said one European negotiator.

Guterres returns  
To meet Lula

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres returned to Belem on Tuesday and will meet Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

# COP30 slow shuffle climate negotiation turns into sprint



▲Brazil’s COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago and Vice President Geraldo Alckmin attend a press conference during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), in Belem, Brazil.

on Wednesday.

Lula said the meeting was designed to “strengthen climate governance and multilateralism.”

The toughest topics include pinning down how rich countries will provide finance to poorer countries to switch to clean energy, and what must be done about a gap between promised emissions cuts and those needed

Monday he had the support of attendees to push hard for an early outcome.

Talks ran past midnight and were scheduled to run late again on Tuesday.

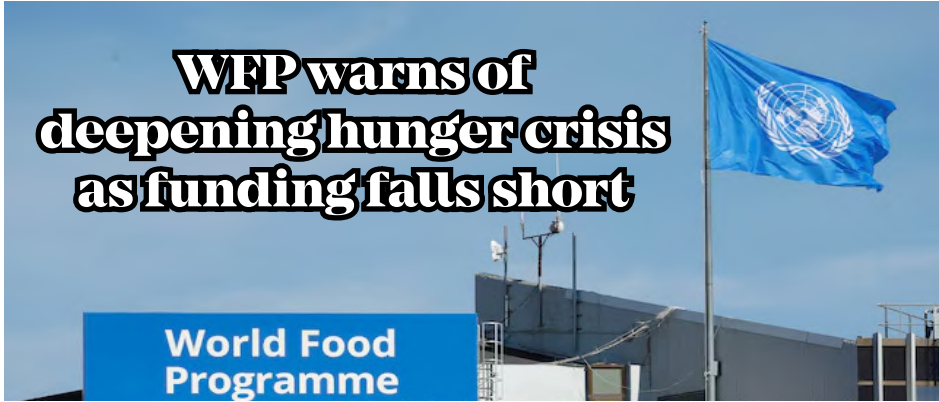
**Differences remain unbridged**

Two negotiators and two third-party observers, who are permitted to sit in on the talks, separately described to Reuters a broad range of disagreements that were yet to be resolved.

Issues like the provision of finance have long pitted developed countries, many of which are juggling tight public finances and competing domestic priorities including security, against the most vulnerable nations, like small island states under existential threat from rising seas.

Some of these differences were captured in a draft text published by the COP30 presidency, which presented a wide range of options for the final wording on the key issues, giving little sign where a final deal would land. One observer told Reuters that delegates were struggling to advance towards deals.

“They have boxed all the lightning rod issues in one room, and every time a discussion gained momentum, someone else steered it away by bringing up something else,” they said. (Reuters)



ROME/GENEVA — The world is facing a deepening hunger crisis with resources falling far short of needs, the United Nations World Food Programme warned on Tuesday, citing sharp declines in humanitarian funding.

In its 2026 Global Outlook, the Rome-based WFP said 318 million people were expected to face crisis levels of hunger or worse next year, more than double the number in 2019. But shrinking humanitarian funding means the WFP only plans to assist about 110 million of the most vulnerable people in 2026, at a cost of \$13 billion, the agency said. Current forecasts suggest it may receive only about half that amount.

“The world is grappling with simultaneous famines, in Gaza and parts of Sudan. This is completely unacceptable in the 21st century,” WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain said in a statement.

“Hunger is becoming more entrenched. We know early, effective solutions save lives, but we desperately need more support.”

**Foreign aid cuts**

The WFP’s biggest donor, the United States, has slashed its foreign aid under President Donald Trump, and other major nations have also made or announced cuts in assistance. The WFP said last month that it expected to receive 40% less funding year-

on-year for 2025, resulting in a projected budget of \$6.4 billion, down from \$10 billion in 2024.

Conflict, extreme weather and economic instability are expected to drive severe food insecurity, WFP said. In 2025, its famine prevention efforts pulled communities back from the brink of starvation, but the overall crisis shows no sign of easing.

In Afghanistan, where food programmes have been scaled back substantially this year, around nine out of 10 people including women and children arriving on foot at nutrition centres are being turned away, WFP Director Jean-Martin Bauer told a Geneva press briefing when asked about the impact of less funding. He said that leaving so many without access to support might contribute to conflict or migration.

“There could be impacts at the regional level for countries that have nothing to do with this problem, but who are exposed to the consequences of out-of-control hunger in a country nearby.”

The agency said it would deliver emergency food and nutrition aid, help communities build resilience to food shocks, and provide technical support to strengthen national systems, while leveraging technology to improve efficiency. WFP urged governments and donors to invest in proven solutions to curb hunger and move closer to the goal of zero hunger. (Reuters)

## MI5 warns UK lawmakers Chinese spies posing as headhunters

LONDON — Britain’s MI5 security service issued a new warning to lawmakers on Tuesday about attempts by Chinese agents to collect information and influence activity, its latest accusation that Beijing was trying to spy on the nation’s parliament.

Lawmakers were told Chinese spies were targeting them by posing as headhunters or companies to make contact, with two individuals reaching out on LinkedIn to “conduct outreach at scale on behalf” of the Chinese government.

The speakers of the lower and upper houses of parliament said MI5 had said the Chinese Ministry of State Security was “actively reaching out to individuals in our community”.

Britain’s Security Minister Dan Jarvis told parliament the alert revealed “a covert and calculated attempt” by Beijing to interfere in UK politics and said the government would launch a counterespionage plan to address the threat.

“MI5 have stated that this activity is being carried out by a group of Chinese intelligence officers, often masked through the use of cover companies or external headhunters,” he said.

The Chinese embassy in London did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

**Spying case collapsed in September**

The latest warning came after MI5 said in October Chinese spies were creating fake job adverts to try to lure British professionals into handing over information, with thousands of suspicious postings placed on online recruitment platforms.

Prosecutors in September abandoned a



▲The Elizabeth Tower, more commonly known as Big Ben in London, Britain

case against two British men charged with spying on members of parliament for China, saying the British government had not provided clear evidence to show that Beijing was a threat to its national security.

The collapse of the case had led to accusations from opposition politicians that Prime Minister Keir Starmer was prioritising better relations with Beijing over national security. The government denies that.

It also comes just weeks before the government must decide whether to approve a massive, new Chinese embassy in London which critics say will pose a security risk.

Jarvis told parliament that the foreign secretary had spoken to her Chinese counterpart on November 6 to say any activity which sought to undermine Britain’s national security would not be tolerated.

He said in response to the threat from China and others there would be new funding for security programmes, security briefings for political parties and election candidates, plans to tighten rules on political donations, and the removal of Chinese-made surveillance equipment from sensitive sites. (Reuters)



# ‘Methodist Medley’ garners 2.5 mln views

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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NOTHANDO Hlophe’s “Methodist Medley” has achieved a remarkable milestone, surpassing 2.5 million views on YouTube.

This achievement highlights the powerful connection between traditional faith expressions and contemporary worship styles that Nothando masterfully blends in her music. Featured on her latest album, “A New Dawn,” “Methodist Medley” stands out as a heartfelt tribute to the hymns that shaped Nothando’s spiritual foundation within the Methodist Church.

The album, launched at a vibrant live event on June 7, 2025, at the Mavuso Trade Centre, marks a significant chapter in her artistic and spiritual journey. It showcases her evolution as a gospel artist who honours her roots while embracing modern sounds that appeal to a broad audience. The album itself is a rich tapestry of worship and gospel rhythms, with “Methodist Medley” serving as a centrepiece that bridges the past and present. Alongside this track, songs like “Sithumela Wena” have also captured listeners’ hearts, amassing over 700,000 views on YouTube. What makes “Methodist Medley” particularly special is its intimate homage to the traditional hymns that were an integral part of Nothando’s early faith life. The medley artfully combines these cherished hymns with contemporary gospel arrangements, creating a sound that is both nostalgic and fresh.

In a recent interview, Nothando shared



▲ Nothando Hlophe.

the profound personal significance behind the medley. She described the hymns as more than mere songs; they reflect her identity and a portal to treasured childhood memories.

### Hymns

“These hymns carry the essence of my faith journey,” she said. “They remind me of God’s faithfulness throughout my life and the comfort that comes from His presence.”

The lyrics of “Methodist Medley” focus

on themes of divine protection, guidance, and the reassurance of God’s presence amid life’s uncertainties. The song resonates with a universal human experience, the search for comfort and strength during challenging times. Nothando emphasised this message, saying, “We all go through seasons of uncertainty, but His presence is our constant shelter. I want this song to remind people that they are never alone, God is with them, always.”

## Eswatini stars to rock IF’s Lounge’s jam session

ESWATINI’S rising music sensations Nelly Noll, Celumusa, Samton and DJ Expo are set to captivate audiences with live performances at IF’s Lounge.

Eswatini’s vibrant music scene is set to shine brighter with the upcoming “Good Vibes Only” Jam session, scheduled for November 23, 2025, at the popular IF’s Lounge in Mbabane. The jam session will also feature a band including Taribo, Phile, Majaha, Cage, and Joseph, each bringing their unique sound and flair to the stage. Attendees are encouraged to embrace the event’s smart casual dress code, perfectly complementing the lounge’s chic and inviting ambience.

The “Good Vibes Only” Jam is the result of a creative collaboration between IF’s Lounge Mbabane and the Good Vibes Band, a partnership born out of a shared vision to breathe new life into Eswatini’s live music scene. Mistosoul, the entertainment manager at IF’s Lounge, shed light on the motivation behind this initiative. He explained, “This event is about bridging gaps in our entertainment industry and bringing live music performances closer to our community. We want to revitalise the local music scene by showcasing homegrown talent and creating memorable experiences that foster cultural pride and inspire further artistic collaborations.”

More than just a concert, the event is designed as a cultural gathering where music enthusiasts can immerse themselves



▲ Nelly Noll to rock IF’s Lounge’s jam session.

in a rich blend of classic hits, fresh original compositions, and crowd-pleasing covers. Mistosoul described the expected atmosphere, “Set against the cosy and vibrant backdrop of IF’s Lounge Balcony, the night will be filled with soulful melodies and upbeat rhythms delivered by both the Good Vibes Band and our main guest artists.

“We’ll offer great drinks, light bites, and plenty of space to dance and connect, no

stuffy crowds, just pure enjoyment.”

This jam session reflects a growing movement within Eswatini’s entertainment industry focused on fostering collaboration, supporting local artists, and cultivating a thriving live music culture. By uniting diverse talents and audiences in an intimate setting, “Good Vibes Only” aims to strengthen community bonds and elevate the country’s musical landscape.



▲ Zee Nxumalo.

## Zee Nxumalo claims four Ukhozi FM Song of the Year nominations

ESWATINI-born Amapiano star Zee Nxumalo is making waves in South Africa’s music scene as she closes out 2025 with an extraordinary achievement of four nominations for Ukhozi FM’s prestigious Song of the Year awards.

Her hit songs “Mamma,” “Mali,” “Ngisakuthanda,” and “Amandla” have each secured a place among the top tracks of the year, cementing her status as a leading figure in the amapiano genre. At just 22 years old, Zee has had a breakthrough year that marks a defining chapter in her career.

She recently headlined the Brutal Fruit tour, performing in three major cities with a live band for the first time, demonstrating her evolution as a dynamic live performer. Her streaming numbers are impressive, having become the Most-Streamed South African Female Artist on Spotify. Notably, her single “Ngisakuthanda” reached the number one spot across all genres on Apple Music South Africa, an exceptional accomplishment for a young artist in today’s competitive market.

### Partnership

Zee’s influence extends beyond music. She secured a significant partnership with Nickelodeon Africa, releasing an amapiano-inspired version of the SpongeBob track titled “US’ponge” and hosting the 2025 Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. Additionally, her collaboration with Nivea led to a guest role on ETV’s popular show House of Zwide, where she was crowned the “Queen of Amapiano.”

Her accolades continued at the 2025 Basadi in Music Awards, where she received four nominations and won the Sofnfree Artist of the Year award, a moment she described as “shocking, humbling, and life changing.”

As fans await the results of the Ukhozi FM Song of the Year, the competition is fierce. Last year’s winner, “Gucci” by Mthandeni SK and MaWhoo, set a high bar with over 926,000 votes, showcasing the passionate support for South African music.



## Lusanda confirms appearance at Bongekile’s Live Recording

THE gospel music scene in Eswatini is set to be electrified as Lusanda Beja, a renowned gospel artist, has confirmed his participation in the live recording of Bongekile Nxumalo’s debut album, ‘In Spirit and In Truth.’

This highly anticipated event, scheduled for December 6, 2025, at the TLC Events Centre, is set to be an unforgettable evening of worship, praise, and spiritual reflection. Lusanda Beja, known for his powerful voice and dynamic performances, shared his excitement in a recent video announcement, “I am coming to Eswatini for the ‘In Spirit and In Truth,’ Live Recording. Make sure you join us. We will have an incredible time in the presence of the Lord. I will be performing your favourite songs.”

Bongekile Nxumalo, the rising gospel star behind the inspiring hit “Uthando,” is poised to make a lasting impact with this live recording. The event is not merely a musical performance but a spiritual milestone that reflects Nxumalo’s deep dedication to her divine calling. In an exclusive interview, she revealed the heart behind the album and the live event, emphasising the importance of stewardship of the



▲ Lusanda Beja.

ministry God has entrusted to her.

“The main aim is appreciating the ministry God has placed in my life,” Nxumalo shared with heartfelt conviction. She draws inspiration from the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), which underscores

faithfulness and obedience in serving God. “I pray that when Christ comes back, He says, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant,’ for being obedient to His call,” she added.

The album’s title, ‘In Spirit and In Truth,’ directly references John 4:23, where Jesus speaks about worshipping God authentically and sincerely. Nxumalo explained that the album is a “cry for living purely even when no one sees us,” addressing the challenge of maintaining holiness in the competitive and often demanding music industry. “It’s encouraging that we live a holy life even in the music industry where holiness matters more than talent,” she noted.

Attendees of the live recording event can anticipate an atmosphere charged with spirit-filled worship and heartfelt praise. Nxumalo promises that the songs will uplift hearts and glorify God, creating a communal space where truth and unity prevail. “I encourage that they come expectant from God,” she urged.

The event is inclusive and welcomes everyone, regardless of faith background, reflecting Nxumalo’s vision of unity through worship. Tickets are available now, with general admission priced at E200 and VIP tickets at E400. Due to high anticipated demand, Nxumalo stresses the importance of securing tickets early. “Everyone is invited, saved or not, and tickets are already available. I must emphasise that they are very limited, so run while you still can get them,” she advised.



## Emagagu pays tribute to Uncle Waffles with ‘Ema-Neighbour’

THE African Trap music scene is buzzing with excitement as the dynamic trio Emagagu prepares to release their latest single, “Ema-Neighbour,” on November 21, 2025.

This highly anticipated track promises to make waves across all major digital streaming platforms, marking a significant moment for Eswatini’s burgeoning music industry. ‘Ema-Neighbour’ is more than just a song; it is a powerful homage to Uncle Waffles, the trailblazing DJ and cultural icon whose meteoric rise has put Eswatini on the global music map. Known for her infectious energy and boundary-breaking style, Uncle Waffles has become a symbol of pride for the nation, inspiring countless young creatives not only in Eswatini but across the African continent.

Emagagu’s new single masterfully blends hard-hitting African Trap beats with authentic African rhythms, capturing the essence of contemporary African youth culture, bold, creative, and unstoppable. The track celebrates the spirit of unity and cultural pride, highlighting the new wave of Swati artists who are redefining African music and taking it to unprecedented global heights.

### Gratitude

In a statement, Emagagu expressed their admiration and gratitude for Uncle Waffles’ influence. “Uncle Waffles opened the door, and now we’re walking through it with fire. This track is our way of saying thank you and representing the sound of a new generation.”

Fans can expect “Ema-Neighbour” to deliver the energy, attitude, and authenticity that have become Emagagu’s signature. The trio’s unique sound and compelling storytelling position them as one of the most exciting acts in the African Trap scene today, ready to captivate audiences both locally and internationally.

The release of “Ema-Neighbour” arrives at a pivotal time for Eswatini’s music industry, which is experiencing a renaissance fueled by young artists eager to showcase their talents on the world stage. Emagagu’s tribute not only honours a national icon but also signals a collective momentum among Swati creatives determined to elevate their culture and stories through music.

### #WOMENFORCHANGE

## Amanda du Pont donates E100 000 to movement

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI-born actress and entrepreneur Amanda du Pont has donated E100,000 to Women for Change, a prominent organisation dedicated to combating gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa.

This generous contribution arrives at a critical juncture as the nation prepares for the Women’s National Shutdown on November 21, 2025, a movement demanding justice, safety, and protection for women and girls across the country. Women for Change, founded by Sabrina Walter, has mobilised women nationwide to participate in the shutdown by changing their social media profile pictures to purple and observing a 15-minute standstill at noon on the day of the protest.

The shutdown is strategically timed just before the G20 Summit in Johannesburg and aims to honour the memory of the

15 women killed daily in South Africa due to GBV. The movement calls for urgent government action to declare gender-based violence a national disaster, highlighting the severity of the crisis. Amanda du Pont’s significant financial support will enhance Women for Change’s ability to mobilise communities, intensify awareness campaigns, and expand vital survivor support services.

The funds will be directed towards advocacy programmes, protest organisations, and public education initiatives designed to confront the deeply entrenched and alarming GBV epidemic in the region. In a heartfelt message shared through Women for Change, du Pont expressed unwavering solidarity with survivors of gender-based violence and reaffirmed her commitment to using her platform to amplify the voices of those affected.

### Successful

Amanda du Pont’s rise to prominence is marked by her versatile career in entertainment, where she is best known for her roles in popular productions such as ‘Skeem Saam’ and the Netflix series ‘Shadow.’ Beyond acting, she has established herself as a successful model, television host, and entrepreneur, notably through her internationally recognised skincare brand, Lelive. Her professional foundation was shaped by rigorous training at the South African School of Motion Picture and Live Performance (AFDA) and the New York Film Academy, where she honed her craft.



# Shebeshxt's girlfriend hopeful amid legal woes

Shebeshxt's (real name Lehlogonolo Chauke) girlfriend, Kholofelo Moloto, is hopeful that the rapper will be out of police custody in time for his live festive gigs.

Moloto, who is also the mother of Shebeshxt's late daughter, took to Facebook to post a picture with the details of the rapper's scheduled appearances. Fans of the problematic rapper, however, aren't convinced that he will be out in time to perform.

Atie Adam Dolo commented: "Gig Guide? Is he gonna

be able to perform?"

Oscar Ofentse Letsoalo asked: "Is he going to perform via Zoom?"

Tshepo Hero Madubanya said, "Already he missed two and still counting."

This news comes shortly after Shebeshxt was arrested on November 12 in Polokwane, facing serious charges related to an October road rage shooting. This new arrest adds to a string of existing legal troubles.

Shebeshxt is currently out on R5 000 bail for other pending cases, including two counts of attempted murder, assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and robbery with aggravating circumstances, for which a separate trial is scheduled for February 2026.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has said that Shebeshxt's previous public outbursts and alleged assaults might be used to make his current situation worse. If the charges become a Schedule Six offence, getting bail could become very hard for him. Limpopo police commissioner Lieutenant-General Thembi Hadebe praised the investigative teams for their efforts, reminding everyone that the law is the same for everyone.

"The South African Police Service reiterates that no one is above the law, regardless of their social standing," stated Hadebe.

The state is opposing bail for Shebeshxt, aiming for a long jail sentence due to the serious nature of the charges he faces.



▲ Shebeshxt's (real name Lehlogonolo Chauke).

## John Cena bids farewell to WWE career

WWE superstar John Cena has officially ended his WWE career after a legendary run that captivated millions of fans around the world.

Cena's journey came to a triumphant end at Madison Square Garden on Monday, November 17, where he teamed up with wrestlers Sheamus and Rey Mysterio to take on The Judgment Day in an exciting six-man tag team match.

It was a special moment for Cena and his fans as he began the final phase of his retirement tour.

Having spent 2025 on his retirement tour, Cena has faced many big names in the wrestling world. Throughout the year, he battled with popular opponents like Cody Rhodes, Brock Lesnar, Randy Orton, CM

Punk, Logan Paul, and several others.

The iconic wrestler still has two more matches planned. He is expected to appear at Survivor Series on November 29, followed by his last-ever match on December 13 at

One Arena in Washington, DC. Social media is buzzing with pictures and videos of Cena's career. In one video, as the GOAT entered the ring for the last time, fans cheered, making Cena emotional.



▲ WWE superstar John Cena has officially ended his WWE career after a legendary run that captivated millions of fans around the world.





High-Protein Foods

The Basics: Protein

WHAT does protein do for your body, and what foods are packed with this nutrient?

You need to get 10%-35% of your calories from protein each day. If you eat 2,000 calories a day, that's 50-175 grams of protein. Here are some of the best protein sources that can help you meet your goals.

Seafood

Seafood is an excellent source of lean protein and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Here's how much protein you'll get in a 3-ounce serving:

- ▶ Salmon: 22.5 grams
- ▶ Tuna: 25.5 grams
- ▶ Scallops: 17.5 grams
- ▶ Rainbow trout: 20 grams
- ▶ Shrimp: 20.5 grams
- ▶ Tilapia: 22 grams

Meat

Beef, pork, poultry, lamb, and other types of meat are high in protein. Choose lean sources low in saturated fat and take the skin off poultry. You can pack in the protein with 3-ounce servings of:

- ▶ Chicken breast: 26.5 grams
- ▶ Ground beef (90% lean): 22 grams
- ▶ Pork tenderloin: 22 grams
- ▶ Ground lamb: 21 grams
- ▶ Ground bison: 21.5 grams

Dairy

Not only are dairy foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt excellent protein sources, but they're also a good source of calcium to keep your bones strong. Here's how much protein you'll get from popular dairy options:

- ▶ Skim milk: 8.5 grams per cup
- ▶ Low-fat plain yogurt: 9 grams in 6 ounces
- ▶ Cottage cheese: 14 grams in 4 ounces
- ▶ Parmesan cheese: 8 grams in 1 ounce

Eggs

Eggs are a source of high-quality protein that your body can easily digest and use. One egg has 5 to 8 grams of protein, depending on its size.

Legumes

Legumes are an excellent source of plant-based protein. They're low in fat and high in fiber. In one serving you'll get:

- ▶ Lentils: 18 grams per cup
- ▶ Peas: 8.5 grams per cup
- ▶ Black beans: 14.5 grams per cup
- ▶ Chickpeas: 14.5 grams per cup
- ▶ Peanuts: 7 grams per ounce

Nuts

Nuts are high in protein and healthy fats. Because they're high in calories, the normal serving size is about 1 ounce. Some good options are:

- ▶ Almonds: 6 grams
- ▶ Pistachios: 6 grams
- ▶ Brazil nuts: 4 grams
- ▶ Cashews: 4.5 grams
- ▶ Walnuts: 4 grams

Soy



Soybeans are a type of legume. They're high in protein and used to make many plant-based foods. Here's how much protein you'll get in a serving of common soy foods:

- ▶ Tofu: 15 grams per serving (about 1/4 block)
- ▶ Edamame: 18.5 grams per cup
- ▶ Soymilk: 7 grams per cup
- ▶ Tempeh: 15.5 grams per 1/2 cup

Seeds

Seeds are small but mighty. In 1 ounce you'll get:

- ▶ Flax seeds: 4 grams
- ▶ Chia seeds: 5 grams
- ▶ Sunflower seeds: 6 grams
- ▶ Pumpkin seeds: 5.5 grams

Whole grains

High-fiber whole grains are a better source of nutrients than refined grains. Per cup, you'll get:

- ▶ Brown rice: 5.5 grams
- ▶ Quinoa: 8 grams
- ▶ Oatmeal: 11 grams
- ▶ Bulgur: 6 grams

High-Protein Fruits

Fruits are high in vitamins, minerals, and

antioxidants. They also have a little bit of protein. Some that have the highest amount are:

- ▶ Avocado: 3 grams per fruit
- ▶ Guava: 1.5 grams per fruit
- ▶ Blackberries: 2 grams per cup
- ▶ Apricots: 2 grams per cup

Cheap Protein Sources

High-quality meats and seafood are usually expensive. Good protein sources when you're on a budget include:

- ▶ Peanut butter
- ▶ Edamame
- ▶ Eggs
- ▶ Beans
- ▶ Lentils
- ▶ Canned tuna
- ▶ Sunflower seeds
- ▶ Sardines
- ▶ Oats
- ▶ Milk

Tips when shopping for protein

For the healthiest and most budget-friendly protein options, keep these tips in mind next time you're at the grocery store.

- ▶ **Choose whole foods.** Packaged and prepared foods can be very processed and high in fat and sodium. Instead of buying lunch meat, pick up some fresh chicken

breast. Choose dried beans and cook them yourself instead of canned beans.

- ▶ **Look for low sugar and sodium.** When you're buying nuts and nut butters, read the labels.
- ▶ Many have lots of sugar and sodium added. Pick nut butters and whole nuts without anything added.

- ▶ **Try new things.** If you usually stick to chicken and eggs, branch out a bit. Go for plant-based options, or try a different type of seafood. This keeps things interesting and adds variety to your diet.

- ▶ **Look for frozen options.** Frozen meat and fish that's already packaged is just as nutritious as the fresh kinds at the counter. And it's often priced lower.

- ▶ **Buy in bulk.** Frozen meat and seafood and other protein sources like nuts and beans can also be cheaper when you buy them in large amounts.

Protein at Breakfast

Research shows that including a protein source like an egg or Greek yogurt at breakfast along with a high-fiber, whole-grain food like oatmeal can help you feel full longer and eat less throughout the day.

WebMD





YOUR heart is a muscle, and it gets stronger and healthier if you lead an active life.

It's never too late to start exercising, and you don't have to be an athlete. Even taking a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day can make a big difference.

Once you get going, you'll find it pays off. People who don't exercise are almost twice as likely to get heart disease as people who are active.

Regular exercise can help you:

- Burn calories
- Lower your blood pressure
- Reduce LDL "bad" cholesterol
- Boost your HDL "good" cholesterol
- Ready to get started?

How to Start Exercising

First, think about what you'd like to do and how fit you are.

What sounds like fun? Would you rather work out on your own, with a trainer, or in a class? Do you want to exercise at home or at a gym?

If you want to do something that's harder than what you can do right now, no problem. You can set a goal and build up to it.

For example, if you want to run, you might start by walking and then add bursts of jogging into your walks. Gradually start running for longer than you walk.

Don't forget to check in with your doctor. They'll make sure you're ready for whatever activity you have in mind and let you know about any limits on what you can do.

Types of Exercise

Your exercise plan should include:

► Aerobic exercise ("cardio"):

Running, jogging, and biking are some examples. You're moving fast enough to raise your heart rate and breathe harder, but you should still be able to talk to someone while you're doing it. Otherwise, you are pushing too hard. If you have joint problems, choose a low-impact activity, like

swimming or walking.

► **Stretching:** You'll become more flexible if you do this a couple of times a week. Stretch after you've warmed up or finished exercising. Stretch gently -- it

shouldn't hurt.

► **Strength training.** You can use weights, resistance bands, or your own body weight (yoga, for instance) for this. Do it 2-3 times a week. Let your muscles recover for a

Health benefits of squats

SQUAT exercises aren't just for athletes. You can do them as part of your regular exercise routine.

They strengthen your lower body, targeting your glutes and quadriceps.

They also make you use your core muscles. Other muscles that benefit from squats are:

- Hip muscles
- Calves
- Hamstrings
- Obliques

Squats burn calories and might help you lose weight.

They also lower your chances of injuring your knees and ankles. As you exercise, the movement strengthens your tendons, bones, and ligaments around the leg muscles. It takes some of the weight off your knees and ankles.

They help make your knees more stable, too.

What's more, squats may also help boost your bone mineral density for stronger bones. It adds strength to your skeleton, mainly in the spine and lower body.

Squats improve your flexibility, too. As you become older, your tendons, muscles, and ligaments become less elastic. Regularly doing squats can help slow down

this process and limber you up.

Squats help you feel and look good. Squatting helps shape up your legs and butt since it targets the glute and inner thigh muscles. As your buttocks become firm, your posture and balance might improve.

How to Do Squats

Do squats the right way to protect yourself from getting injured. Poor form can take a toll on your spine and knees over time. Squats are one of the most popular exercises, but often done incorrectly. Proper form can strengthen your lower body and core.

The right way to do a squat is to:

- Stand with your feet apart and parallel to each other.
- Place your hands on your thighs.
- Look up and lift your chest.
- Bend your knees to a 90-degree angle, putting all your weight on your heels and sitting back slowly.
- Your knees shouldn't go beyond your toes, and your head and chest should stay upright.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Rise back up, pressing through your heels, and straighten your hips back to the

starting position.

- Repeat five times.

Another type of squat is a chair squat. This can be especially helpful if you're a beginner.

Squats are one of the most effective strength-training exercises around. If

day between sessions.

How Much Should You Exercise and How Often?

Aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity (such as brisk walking). That amounts to about 30 minutes a day at least 5 days a week. If you're just getting started, you can slowly build up to that. In time, you can make your workouts longer or more challenging. Do that gradually, so your body can adjust.

When you work out, keep your pace low for a few minutes at the start and end of your workout. That way, you warm up and cool down each time.

You don't have to do the same exact thing every time. It's more fun if you change it up.

Exercise Precautions

You'll probably be able to exercise with no problem if your doctor says you can and if you pay attention to how you're feeling while you're working out.

Stop and get immediate medical help if you have pain or pressure in your chest or the upper part of your body, break out in a cold sweat, have trouble breathing, have a very fast or uneven heart rate, or feel dizzy, lightheaded, or very tired.

It's normal for your muscles to be mildly sore for a day or two after your workout when you're new to exercise. That fades as your body gets used to it. Soon, you might be surprised to find that you like how you feel when you're done. **WebMD**







▲Faith leader, Michael Woolf, minister at Lake Street Church of Evanston, is detained by Illinois State Police during a protest against immigration actions, outside the Broadview ICE facility in Chicago, Illinois.



▲An Indigenous demonstrator is held by a staff member as protesters forced their way into the venue hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), in Belem, Brazil.



▲A Palestinian man and children stand at a heavily damaged building surrounded by exposed rebar and rubble, in Gaza City.



▲Ariana Greenblatt poses as she arrives for the premiere of the new film ‘Now You See Me: Now You Don’t’ in New York City.



▲Randy Binder smokes a cigarette while waiting for hours in a queue of more than 100 cars at the Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center food distribution site, weeks into the continuing U.S. government shutdown, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



▲Ceverino Macob, 64, wades through the flood as he recovers a roof blown from his house due to strong winds after Typhoon Fung-wong hit Dagupan City, Pangasinan, Philippines.



▲Northern Lights, also called aurora borealis, illuminate the sky in Sturgis, South Dakota.



By Katlego Modiba

BAFANA Bafana midfielder Teboho Mokoena has spoken candidly about overcoming the suspension saga that threatened to derail South Africa’s FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign.

FIFA deducted three points from Bafana for fielding Mokoena against Lesotho, despite the midfielder being ineligible after collecting two yellow cards earlier in the group.

In the end, a draw against Zimbabwe and a crucial win over Rwanda in the final two fixtures ensured Bafana topped Group C and secured their spot among the 48 teams heading to the global showpiece in the United States, Mexico and Canada next year.

The qualification battle went right to the final round, with Bafana sealing the job through a convincing 3-0 victory over Rwanda at Mbombela Stadium last month. Nigeria also played their part, easing South Africa’s passage by defeating Benin 4-0 in the other group encounter.

“It was honestly very hard for me and my family, especially my mother because sometimes she will call and tell me that people on the streets are saying ‘this child is costing us and why did he play knowing that he had yellow cards?’,” Mokoena said to

# Teboho Mokoena opens up on Bafana suspension saga

Thabiso Mosia on Radio 2000.

“With me, it happened like twice at the mall when they were making fun of it and that’s when it started to hit me hard because before that I knew that social media people don’t care, but when it happened to me face to face with someone joking about it, and me thinking that we might not go to the World Cup, I knew I was going to regret it for the rest of my life.

“I didn’t even know that I had those yellow cards so it was very difficult and I was relieved when we qualified for the World Cup. I was not happy but relieved. It was tough months for me and I was not myself at home.

“Even in training I was not myself. I was trying but it was hard. I ended up blaming myself and I spoke to the coach [Hugo Broos] and he said I shouldn’t blame myself and that we’re all involved and we should have all known.”

Mokoena has since moved on from the ordeal and delivered another assured display in Bafana’s 3-1 victory over Zambia in last Saturday’s international friendly, a match that also marked his 50th appearance for the national team. (Citizen)



▲ Teboho Mokoena.

# Ashes hangs on pace and endurance

By Ian Ransom

MELBOURNE — While pace bowling quality has been a reliable predictor of Ashes success, resilience and depth may ultimately decide the battle for the urn in Australia.

The hosts face an immediate test in the series-opener in Perth starting on Friday, with captain Pat Cummins and fellow quick Josh Hazlewood sidelined by injury.

Scott Boland will step up and uncapped Brendan Doggett is tipped for a high-stakes debut to try to shore up the loss of a combined 604 test wickets of experience.

How long Cummins and Hazlewood will be out is unclear, but for an England team desperate for a good start, their absence is like Christmas coming early.

Going one-up in Perth could go a long way in England’s quest to win back the urn for the first time since 2017/18.

After all, they have not won a first test in Australia since 1986 nor won an away Ashes after losing the opener since 1954/55.

### Stay fit

If buoyed by Australia’s injury concerns, England may be nervous about their own attack’s endurance.

Bowling long spells on Australia’s hard wickets in often blistering heat is no easy matter for the fittest of fast men, never mind those with a history of breaking down.

Mark Wood and Jofra Archer can trouble Australia’s batters with sheer pace but few would bet on either playing a full series.

Archer has managed only 11 tests since his first Ashes in 2019 when he took 22 wickets and floored Steve Smith with a bouncer at Lord’s.

“It’s one of those big ifs. If England’s bowlers can stay fit -- which doesn’t happen very often -- and the captain can play a full part, then I think England have got a real



▲ Australia’s Scott Boland during practice. chance,” said former England all-rounder Ian Botham.

Skipper Ben Stokes took 17 wickets against India in this year’s home series, an outstanding all-round effort in the 2-2 draw, and England will look to their talisman again.

The 34-year-old will hope for heroes to emerge from a new generation of seamers led by Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue.

None have played a test in Australia but bring plenty of pace, a vital ingredient for success Down Under.

One or two will need to produce a big haul of wickets, just as back-up quicks Chris Tremlett and Tim Bresnan did in 2010/11 during England’s last Ashes win in Australia.

Australian bowling coach David Saker, who guided England’s attack in that triumph, will again plot against his home nation.

While pace invariably rules on Australia’s fast and bouncy wickets, a quality slow bowler can still make a difference.

### Lyon difference

None have for England since Graeme Swann took 15 wickets in 2010/11, while Jack Leach leaked more than 50 runs for each of

his six wickets four years ago.

A big test looms for England’s 22-year-old off-spinner Shoaib Bashir in his debut Ashes.

His opposite number Nathan Lyon is ready for his eighth Ashes campaign, though, having been an essential cog in the hosts’ dominance on home soil.

The 37-year-old has taken 56 wickets in 15 tests against visiting England at an average of 27.66, better than his career average of 30.14.

Though sometimes forgotten in the buzz around Cummins, Hazlewood and left-arm quick Mitchell Starc, Lyon leads one of the most feared attacks in world cricket with 562 wickets.

With all well into their thirties, it could be the last time the they combine in an Ashes team. If all four are fit and firing from the second test and enjoy solid all-round support from Cameron Green or Beau Webster, England may well depart Australia without the urn again.

“Our attack is relentless when they’re on,” former Australia paceman Ryan Harris told Reuters.

“We’ve shown over and over again that we are really good in our conditions.” (Reuters)



▲ Carlos Alcaraz.

# Alcaraz drops out of Davis Cup finals due to injury

WORLD number one Carlos Alcaraz he has pulled out of the Davis Cup Finals in Bologna due to a swollen hamstring, he said on Tuesday, adding he was “heartbroken” to miss out.

The Spaniard aggravated the problem during the ATP Finals, where he lost to Jannik Sinner in Sunday’s title clash, his withdrawal dealing another big blow to organisers the International Tennis Federation.

“I’m so sorry to announce that I won’t be able to play for Spain in the Davis Cup in Bologna,” Alcaraz said on Instagram.

“I have edema in my right hamstring and the medical recommendation is not to compete.

“I’ve always said that playing for Spain is the greatest thing there is, and I was really looking forward to helping us fight for the Davis Cup. I’m going home heartbroken.”

Sinner, ranked number two in the world, pulled out of the tournament last month before defending champions Italy confirmed his absence. Italy, who have won the past two Davis Cups, will also be without Lorenzo Musetti, who withdrew citing physical and family reasons.

Musetti’s place is expected to be taken by Lorenzo Sonego who has been in Turin practising in recent days.

Italy will face Austria on Wednesday while Spain play the Czech Republic on Thursday in the quarter-finals with the final on Sunday. (Reuters)



# US will make it easier for World Cup fans to get visas

WASHINGTON — The United States will expedite visas for foreign visitors with tickets to FIFA World Cup matches taking place next year in 11 U.S. cities, President Donald Trump said on Monday.

Washington will set up a scheduling system for visa-interview appointments that prioritizes foreign fans attending World Cup matches, which will take place from June 11 to July 19. Mexico and Canada will also host matches.

Trump told reporters in the Oval Office that government agencies had worked “to ensure that soccer fans from all around the world are properly vetted and able to come to the U.S. next summer easily.”

The president said his administration had sped up visa issuance for people in most countries, with the wait time now 60 days or fewer. He said the World Cup could generate \$30 billion and create 200,000 jobs.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the State Department added 400 consular officers to process visas, doubling the presence in certain countries.

“The U.S. is offering prioritized appointments so fans can complete their visa interviews and show they qualify,” Rubio said.

At the White House, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said 5 million to 10 million people would come to the U.S. for matches.

Over one million tickets have been purchased so far by fans from 212 countries, FIFA said.

In a statement, the football governing body said ticket holders would receive more information about the priority visa appointment system in early 2026. **(Reuters)**



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump sits next to FIFA President Gianni Infantino, as he meets with the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026 in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S.



▲ Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James.

## LeBron James inches closer to return

OFF to an impressive start nearly one month into the season, the Los Angeles Lakers are expected to add a major boost this week.

The addition of LeBron James for the first time this season could come as soon as Tuesday in a home game against the Utah Jazz.

James practiced with the Lakers’ G League team last week and had his first practice of the season with the NBA team on Monday. He has been out since the preseason with sciatica.

Los Angeles head coach JJ Redick said after Monday’s practice that James’ availability Tuesday is to be determined.

The injury caused James to miss a season opener for the first time in his career. However, when he steps on the court for the first time, the 40-year-old will become the first player in NBA history to play in 23 consecutive seasons.

“Obviously, it’s LeBron and just his presence and his ability is going to lift the team,” Lakers guard Austin Reaves said. “He’s a winner at the end of the day and he has been his whole career, and I expect him to do nothing but come in and be one of the best players.”

The Lakers have played well without their star to this point, getting 34.4 points per game from Luka Doncic and 28.3 from Austin Reaves. New center Deandre Ayton has added 16.2 points and 8.4 rebounds.

In a 119-95 victory on the road against the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday, Doncic scored 41 points with nine rebounds, Reaves had 25 with eight assists and Ayton added 20 points with 10 rebounds.

“Luka and AR ... just led us, like they’ve done all season,” Redick said. “Those guys have done an amazing job of leading our basketball team.” **(Reuters)**

# Tony Hawk lobbying for vertical exhibition at Los Angeles Olympics

By Rory Carroll

LOS ANGELES — Tony Hawk is pushing for vertical skateboarding to become an Olympic event and said he is making progress in getting the high-flying discipline accepted as an exhibition sport at the 2028 Summer Olympics.

“I am the bug in their ear at every turn, at every event,” Hawk said in an interview, adding that organizers are “making strides in possibly getting it as an exhibition sport at LA28.”

### Greatest ever

The 57-year-old, who is widely considered the greatest “vert” skater of all time, said it is too late to be included as a medal sport in Los Angeles but expressed optimism that a strong showing could secure vert skating’s place in future Summer Games.

“If we show what we do to the Olympic audience, there’s a good chance they would want it for the next Games,” he said.

Vert skateboarding, which involves aerial tricks on vertical ramps like halfpipes, has been notably absent from the Olympics

despite the sport’s inclusion in the 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Games. Only park and street disciplines have been featured.

“I do feel like it’s a missed opportunity for them because as exciting as park skating is, it’s not what vertical skateboarding is,” Hawk said.

“It’s high flying, it’s big spins, and it’s the kind of thing that people have gotten used to seeing on the X Games.”

### Vert ambassador

Hawk said he offered his portable ramp to organizers for potential use and hopes to serve as “the vert ambassador” for the Los Angeles Games.

Skateboarding competition at LA 28 is scheduled to take place at Sepulveda Basin, a location Hawk said has historical significance in skating culture dating back to the 1980s.

Beyond his Olympic advocacy, Hawk has become a sought-after spokesman due to his ability to connect with multiple generations.

He is a spokesman for Cancer Guard and recently participated in a multi-cancer early-detection blood test, motivated by his father’s late-stage lung cancer diagnosis when Hawk was in his early 20s.

“I never imagined that I’d be an ambassador for anything, especially skateboarding,” he



▲ Professional skateboarder Tony Hawk of United States in action on the skate park before the heats.

said.

“It feels like a fun side quest and if I can raise awareness to this type of screening, that’s all the better.”



MTN PREMIER LEAGUE PREVIEWS

Malanti  
headache  
for Insingizi

Stories by Chris Dlamini

WILL it be another day of upsets? The previous matchweek was full of them - big guns being Mbabane Highlanders, Mbabane Swallows, and Moneni Pirates all crumbled to their minnows. It is also only fair to mention the possibility of more upsets in the mid-week action since we have the giant-killing elite rookies Tabankulu Celtics as well as the yet-to-lose a game Malanti Chiefs. Celtics will welcome an inconsistent and yet to convince star-studded Young Buffaloes, while Malanti hosts faltering defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs.

These are no easy fixtures for all four sides, but it remains that the pressure is on Buffaloes and Nsingizini to win. What are the odds? We go through both fixtures. Interestingly, Celtics and Buffaloes are having their first meetings, but Malanti and Nsingizini, no. It is their second since the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup quarter-final penalty shootout success for the latter. Insingizi Yezulu could not score against Bafana Bemboyi, and the two teams finished their story with a 4-1 margin in the dreaded shootout. Nsingizini went on to win the second edition of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup with a 1-0 win over Green Mamba.

Is it time for revenge?

Malanti Chiefs vs. Nsingizini Hotspurs  
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025  
Venue: Killarney Stadium, Pigg's Peak  
Kick-off: 3pm



VS



possibly takes the black and gold side to second on the table, depending on how Tabankulu Celtics and Young Buffaloes fare in Tabankulu. Malanti just held Mbabane Highlanders to a 1-all draw at the revamped tiny stadium and will also use Nsingizini's failure against Celtics to their good for motivation.

Players To Watch:

Isaac Yeboah (M. Chiefs forward)  
Kwakhe Thwala (Ns. Hotspurs defensive midfielder)

LOG STANDINGS:

Chiefs - 6th (9 points)  
Hotspurs 7th (9 points)

M.  
Ns.

LAST MATCH RESULTS:

M. Chiefs 1-1 M. Highlanders  
T. Celtics 2-0 Ns. Hotspurs

LOG STANDINGS

M. Chiefs - 6th (9 points)  
Ns. Hotspurs - 7th (9 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

M. Chiefs  
W D W D D  
Ns. Hotspurs  
D W L W L

September 3, this year that elite returnees Malanti Chiefs played Nsingizini Hotspurs for the first time in history, and this was in the second edition of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup quarter-finals. What happened? It was a narrow escape for Nsingizini Hotspurs who could not score in regulation time as Malanti threatened to knock them out as they had just done to then defending champions Young Buffaloes. However, things proved to be way off Malanti's grid in the shootout as they were beaten 4-1. They meet again, and this time in a league match. The league defending champions, Insingizi Yezulu, as Nsingizini

already suffered two defeats, and a third one now will not augur well for them, particularly coach Mandla Qhogi. His team needs to bring its international form home real quickly, but at Killarney Stadium, their resilient hosts' backyard, it will not come on a silver platter. Malanti has proven to be tough nut, which explains why it is them and Ezulwini United, who are yet to lose a match. This will be an interesting match as Malanti will want their 8Bet Trade Fair Cup exit revenge, and a win



Buffaloes next on Celtics' giant-killing spree

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025  
Venue: Tambankulu Stadium  
Kick-off: 3pm

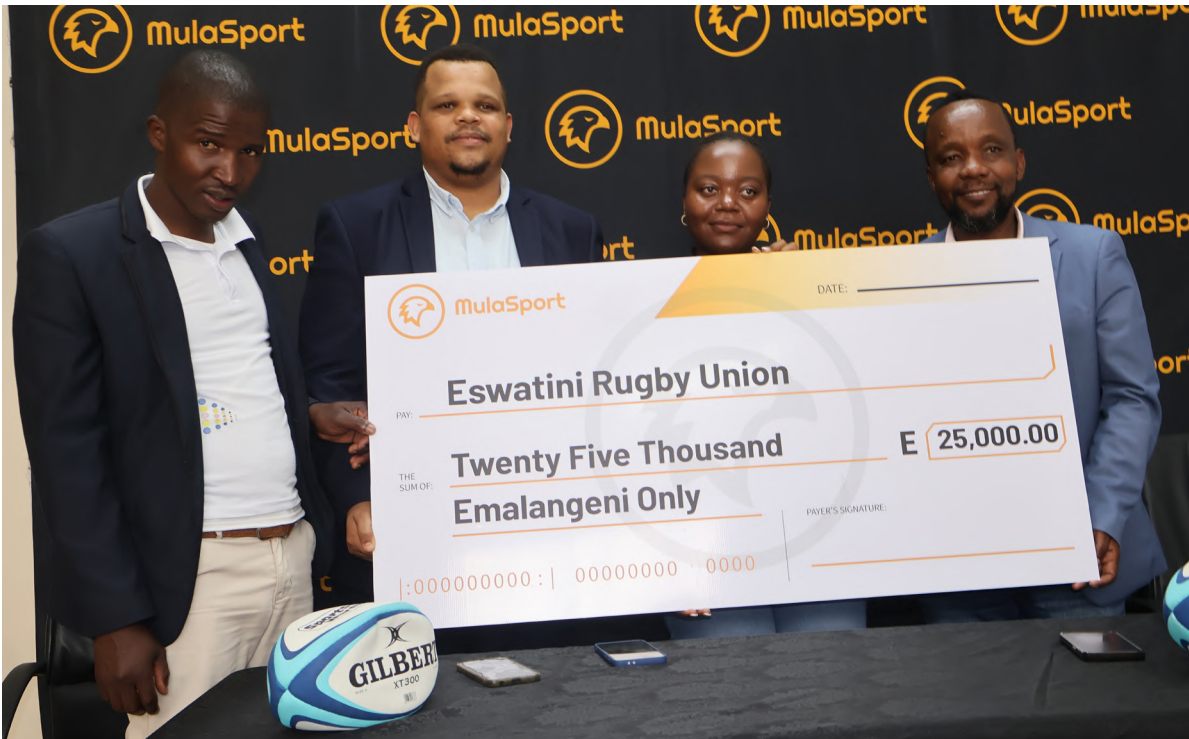
First, it was the star-studded Royal Leopard who got their dose of the giant killer instinct, inflicting a 3-0 damage to the team that had just exited the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup 2025/26 in the second preliminary round. When some thought it was all a fluke, Celtics went ahead and outclassed

yet again star-studded defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs 2-0 last Wednesday. Talk about their 'Batoze Bavume' tagline, then of course yes, their rivals will have to admit they are no walkovers. The green and white outfit is right on the fourth spot after five matches with nine points. If they keep up their giant-killing spree against Buffaloes, then they will be on 12 points and up the ladder to second on 12 points. Celtics is currently level on nine points with sixth-placed Malanti Chiefs and three other rivals, including Nsingizini Hotspurs. A win propels the elite debutants to

within a point short of leaders, Manzini Sea Birds, who has 13 points at the summit. The big question now is whether Celtics can stun Buffaloes or not? Given the above details, they have the potential, especially in their own backyard. Emathole Ezinyathi (Buffaloes) will certainly need to double up from previous displays if they are to stop Celtics. Currently on seven points and occupying the 10th spot after five games, Buffaloes has the chance to cut the gap between them and the leaders to three points with a win here. On paper, one can easily give the match to Buffaloes, but after everything we have seen so far in the league, do that at your own peril.



FOCUS ON MULASPORT SPONSORSHIP LAUNCH



▲ MulaSport marketing manager Phetsile Xulu presenting E25 000 cheque to ERU president Bandzile Vilakati, Vice president Simanga Magagula and ESRC Zama Tsabedze.



▲ ERU president Bandzile Vilakati delivering his remarks.

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

# E25 000 for MulaSport Rugby 10s tournament

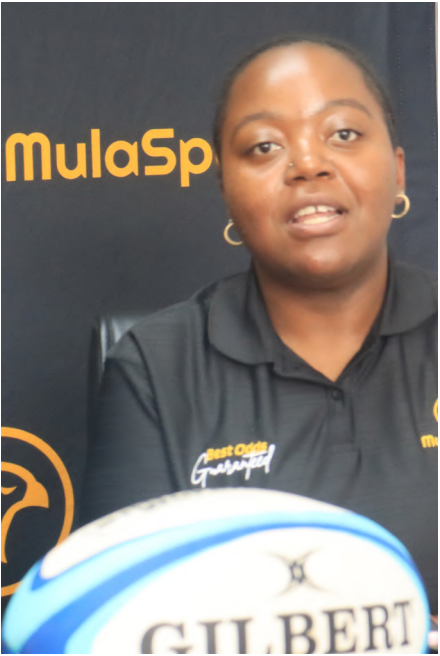
PASSIONATE about sports development. MulaSport has once again demonstrated its commitment to sports development in the country. The betting company has pumped in E25 000 towards the 2025 Rugby 10s tournament scheduled for November 22, 2025, at Malkerns Country Club. The sponsorship has been increased by E5 000 from last year's E20 000 package. The tournament will see teams compete

in a one-day tournament under the auspices of the Eswatini Rugby Union (ERU). MulaSport Marketing Officer Phetsile Xulu said the sponsorship is part of their commitment to sports development. This was during a presentation held at the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) head offices in Lobamba on Tuesday. “We are pleased to continue supporting the development of Rugby in the country and believe the sponsorship will go a long way in helping us unearth new talent,” she said. Eswatini Rugby Union (ERU) President Bandzile Vilakati thanked the sponsor for

the kind gesture. “We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which will go towards transforming the sport and unearthing young talent. We are grateful for the continued support from the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council, which helps us to implement our programs smoothly,” he said.



▲ Team represenmtatives posing with the trophy during the launch.



▲ MulaSport Marketing Manager Phetsile Xulu delivering her remarks.

## Produce strong national team – ESRC

THE Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council has urged the Eswatini Rugby Union to produce a competitive national team. This was revealed by the sports mother body Business Development manager Zama Tsabedze during the MulaSport sponsorship presentation during the 2025 Rugby 10's tournament launch. Tsabedze represented the organisation's Chief Executive Officer, Darius Dlomo, at the event.

“We would like to thank the sponsor for its continuous investment towards sports development in the country through the various sporting codes. We call upon the Rugby Union to use this tournament to produce the best players who will represent the country effectively during international competition. Our mandate is to compete, not to add numbers at the international stage,” he said. Some of the Rugby International competitions include the annual Khaniscala tournament, among others.

## Women teams for Rugby tourney

RUGBY is for all. The Eswatini Rugby Union (ERU) has included women's teams in the 2025 MulaSport 10's tournament. The three female teams will curtain raise for the male's teams during the second annual knockout tournament scheduled for November 22, 2025. ERU Public Relations Officer (ERU) Phumlani Gumedze confirmed the latest

news when reached for comment. “We will have three ladies pick teams taking part on the day as part of an effort to empower women in the sport. We call upon female teams to attend the competition in numbers to learn the sport, and we look forward to a successful event on the day,” he said.





▲ SMVAF board Chairman Zithulele Gina with King Office Mbongeni Simelane.



▲ PLE Chairman Polycarp Dlamini making remarks.

# SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup 2025/26 commissioned

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

**BUCKLE up, it's game on.**

The 2025/26 Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund Ingwenyama Cup is here.

The eighth edition of the prestigious knockout tournament has been commissioned by the tournament patron, His Majesty King Mswati III.

The King was speaking through the Board of Trustees Chairman, Prince Hlangabeza, during a press briefing held at Nkhanini on Tuesday. This year's edition will be funded by E6 million, which is the second instalment of the E18 million three-year sponsorship announced by the King two years ago at Mavuso Sports Centre.

The football category will kick off this coming weekend with the regional eliminations.

Hhohho Super league side Emajukujuku are the defending champions of the regional tournament after beating Manzini Super League side Nsenga Comrades during the final played at Manzini club.

"We are hereby informing the nation that the Ingwenyama Cup has kicked off, and the two portfolios will advise on the logistics of the football and culture



▲ SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup football category chairman Comfort Shongwe also attended the event.

competitions. We urge the nation to behave themselves throughout the tournament in order not to taint the image of the country internationally," he said.

SMVAF Board Chairman Zithulele Gina said they are happy to be part of the

## ...Tourney can help country fulfil King's dream

**PREMIER** League of Eswatini Chairman Polycarp Dlamini believes the Ingwenyama cup can help the country fulfil the King's dream of having the national team qualify for major international competitions.

Dlamini said this during the press briefing of the richest knockout tournament held at Nkhanini on Tuesday. "Let's use this tournament to identify talent so that we can produce the best national team that can qualify for major competitions such as the Africa Cup of Nations. We call upon teams to unearth young talent using this year's tournament," he said.

### Competition

Dlamini also said they were working collectively with the culture competition in putting together a successful tournament. "We will once again work with the Culture Committee in ensuring that the tournament is a success," he said. Culture committee Chairman Prince Bonginkhosi said details of their competitions will be announced in due course.

Royal Leopard are the defending champions of the tournament after beating Moneni Pirates by 1-0 at Somhlolo National Stadium. The police side sealed their ticket to the CAF Confederation Cup, where they were knocked out in penalties by the Congolese side AS Union Maniema on penalties. 'Ingwemabalabala' claimed the scalp of Namibian side Young African during the preliminary round. Other winners of the tournament include Green Mamba (twice) and Young Buffaloes(once).

Capital city giants Mbabane Swallows are the most successful team in the tournament with a treble.

tournament. "We are pleased to be part of this auspicious event, which is part of our effort to transform the sports industry in the country," he said.

# Build It Under-13s' best 20 for national team

By Chris Dlamini

**OUT** of 160 youngsters in the Build It Under-13 Soccer Tournament 2025, the best 20 players were selected.

The best of the best, led by the Player of the Tournament, Simphiwe 'Nyandoro' Tsabedze in the 2025 Build it Under-13 Soccer Tournament National Championship Finals at Somhlolo National Stadium, Lobamba on Saturday, will form their age group national team. "As usual, we have coaches led by the EFA Technical Director Boy 'Bizzah' Mkhonta who select the best players from the development programme," announced programme director Sibonangaye 'Komphele' Dlamini on Saturday.

The list of the shining youngsters was finalised later on the day, and it will be included in this article. The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) will soon release details about their international tournament participation, which is expected next year.

Meanwhile, eight teams with the best

talent from around the country competed in the national finals, and Manzini emerged as the champions after a 4-1 win over Mbabane.

The latter were the defending champions, but this was not year. Meanwhile, the national team players' list is dominated by Mbabane, who has five players while Manzini has four.

### THE SELECTED U13 PLAYERS:

#### Goalkeepers

1. Majaha Gadlela (Matsapha)
2. Mhlelisi Manana (Manzini)

#### Defenders

1. Junior Dlamini (Mbabane)
2. Senzo Gadlela (Manzini)
3. Sivile Masango (Pigg's Peak)
4. Senzo Gadlela (Manzini)
5. Philasande Vilakati (Siteki)
6. Mphilonhle Nobela (Nhlangano)

#### Midfielders

1. Siyabonga Vilakati (Pigg's Peak)
2. Okuhle Dlamini (Buhleni)
3. Sinokuhle Sibandze (Siphofaneni)



▲ 2025 Build It Under-13 champions, Manzini, in jovial mood.



**Teboho Mokoena  
opens up on  
Bafana suspension**

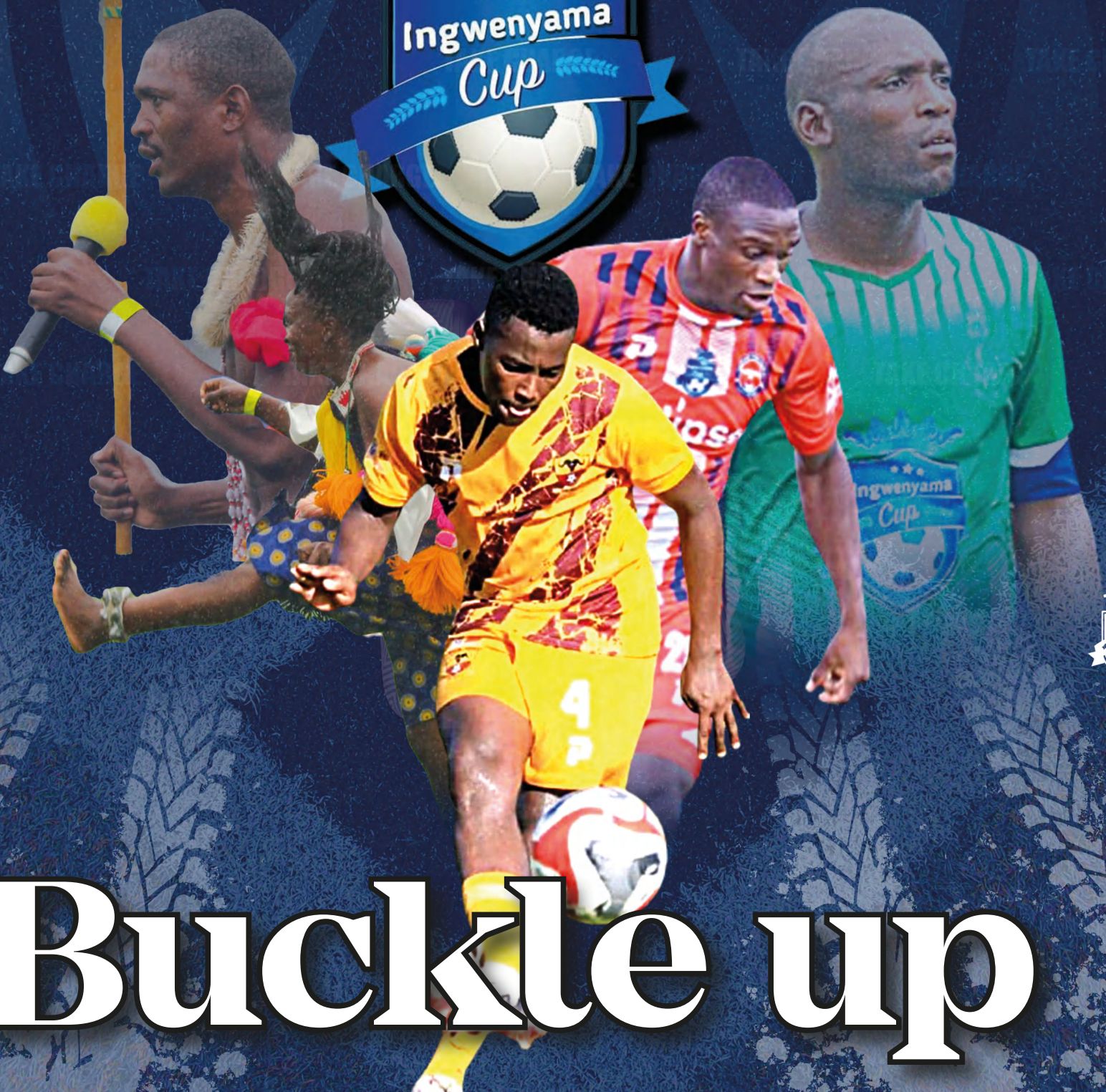
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national team**

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Eswatini  
Daily News  
**Sport**

Wednesday 19  
November, 2025



# Buckle up

... The country's richest tournament, the Ingwenyama Cup 2025/26 has been commissioned by its patron, His Majesty King Mswati III on Tuesday at Nkhanini. **Page 23**