



MPs call for stronger vetting of foreign investors

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

A HEATED debate unfolded in Parliament on Wednesday as Members of Parliament challenged the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade to strengthen its vetting systems for foreign investors and to prioritise empowering local entrepreneurs.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

FNB, foundation pour E752 000 into community support Page 8



▲ FNB Eswatini Foundation donated a combined E752,000 to various organisations across different sectors in the country. SOS Children's Villages received E500 000.



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▲Members of the PAC in Parliament on Wednesday.

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

A HEATED debate unfolded in Parliament on Wednesday as Members of Parliament challenged the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade to strengthen its vetting systems for foreign investors and to prioritise empowering local entrepreneurs.

Concerns were raised over cases where some foreign investors allegedly exploit Emaswati through underpayment and poor working conditions and where government agencies continue to overlook capable local businesspeople in favour of foreign entities.

The issue was raised during a session of the Public Accounts Committee where MPs pressed ministry officials to explain what mechanisms were in place to protect the country from dishonest or abusive investors. The debate also focused on the broader mandate of the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority and whether it is sufficiently supporting domestic business development.

MP Lieutenant General Thembeni Magono was among the first to voice strong concerns. He questioned the Ministry directly on whether there was an effective vetting system to assess investors before they are allowed to operate in the country.

He stressed that Eswatini must be protected from individuals and companies whose intentions are not genuine and who may cause harm to citizens.

In his remarks he asked whether the Ministry has procedures that can confirm if investors are legitimate or whether they might be crooks posing as businesspeople.

His comments reflect growing unease over reports of investors who arrive in the country presenting themselves as job creators but later engage in illegal or unethical conduct.

Echoing these concerns MP Sabelo Ndlangamandla from Matsanjeni criticised the manner in which some foreign owned companies treat their employees.

He expressed frustration that despite promises of investment job creation and economic growth a number of these busi-

MPs call for stronger vetting of foreign investors

... and appeal greater support for local entrepreneurs

nesses continue to exploit Emaswati. According to Ndlangamandla some employers have earned a reputation for underpaying workers and operating in conditions that undermine labour rights. He noted that this type of exploitation contradicts the stated goals of attracting foreign investment which should contribute positively to the economy and respect the dignity of workers.

Ndlangamandla urged the Ministry to adopt stricter scrutiny when reviewing applications from foreign investors. He argued that only companies with a clear commitment to ethical labour practices and fair treatment of workers should be allowed to operate in Eswatini.

He also insisted that the Ministry should regularly monitor businesses after approval to ensure compliance with labour laws and investment conditions.

Former Public Accounts Committee Chairperson MP Manzi Zwane further broadened the conversation by raising concerns over the priorities of the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority.

He questioned why EIPA spends significant resources seeking foreign companies to provide services and supply goods when many Emaswati already have the capacity to meet government needs.

Zwane asked whether the agency has a plan that empowers local entrepreneurs or whether its strategy is overly focused on foreign investment at the expense of local business development.

Zwane insisted that Eswatini has talented entrepreneurs who can manufacture goods provide professional services and support major national projects if given the opportunity.

He warned that continuing to overlook this potential undermines the growth of local industries and stifles economic self-sufficiency.

He urged EIPA to shift its focus toward identifying nurturing and promoting local businesses that can compete on both local and international markets.

In response ministry officials acknowledged the concerns and emphasised that several policies are already being implemented to safeguard the country from untrustworthy investors.

They explained that due diligence processes are part of the investor screening process but admitted that more work is needed to strengthen enforcement and to ensure that post approval monitoring is comprehensive.

Officials also stated that the Ministry is reviewing its investment guidelines and is working closely with

other agencies to improve transparency and accountability.

On the matter of empowering local entrepreneur's ministry representatives said that EIPA has programmes aimed at supporting Emaswati owned businesses but conceded that some gaps remain. They expressed commitment to expanding these initiatives to ensure that local businesses receive training financial guidance export support and access to funding opportunities.

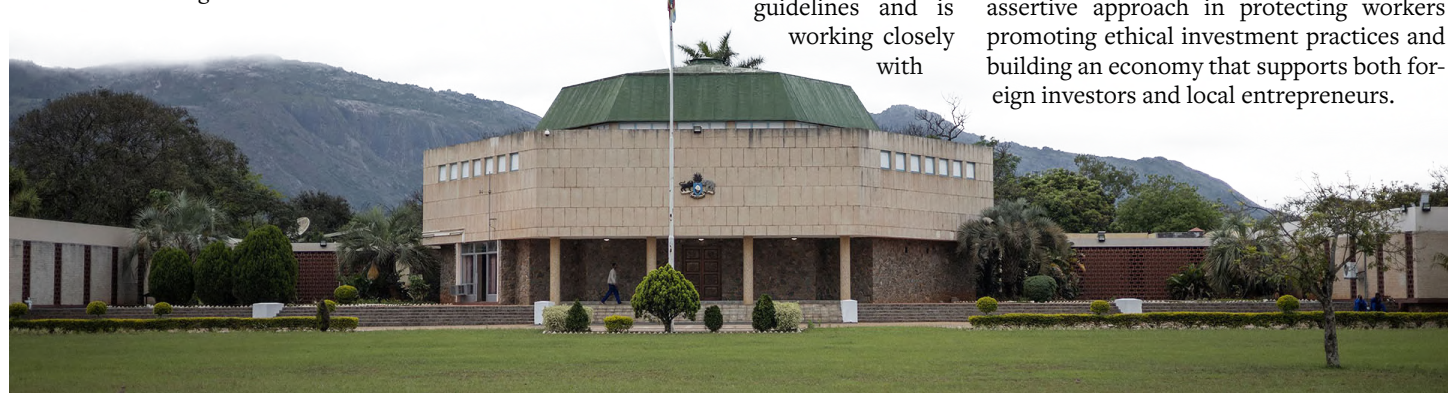
However, MPs argued that these programmes need to be more visible and more aggressively implemented to have meaningful impact. The parliamentary debate highlighted a growing call for balance between welcoming foreign investment and safeguarding national interests.

MPs across the political spectrum emphasised that while foreign investors play a critical role in economic development Eswatini must ensure that investors bring genuine value and operate in compliance with local laws. They also stressed that local empowerment must be at the centre of national development strategies.

As the Ministry continues reviewing its investment policies MPs have vowed to maintain pressure until stronger safeguards are in place.

The debate signals a shift toward a more assertive approach in protecting workers promoting ethical investment practices and building an economy that supports both foreign investors and local entrepreneurs.

▼Parliament building.



By Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI has been placed on high alert following a stark warning from Prime Minister Russell Dlamini. The premier has revealed that the country's common bacterial infections are becoming worryingly resistant to treatment, signalling what he described as one of the most pressing threats to national health and economic development.

The Prime Minister, speaking ahead of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week scheduled for 18–24 November, chose a direct and sobering opening: across the globe, he said, bacteria are mutating faster than the medicines designed to stop them.

“Across the world, bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to the medicines, often called antibiotics, that are designed to kill or treat them,” he warned, calling antimicrobial resistance, AMR, “one of the greatest challenges to health and economic development in our time.”

He added that the world has already paid a devastating price. In 2019 alone, AMR was linked to nearly 5 million deaths globally, a figure that the PM described indirectly as a chilling reminder that unchecked resistance holds real, life-ending consequences. Bringing the crisis closer to home, the Prime Minister unveiled the country's latest AMR surveillance results, and the numbers painted an alarming picture.

According to Eswatini's 2024 AMR national data, the resistance rate among common pathogens to widely used antibiotics has now reached 79 per cent, a figure he described as “deeply concerning.” The PM noted that this represents a 5 per cent increase from the previous year, signalling not only a worsening crisis but a rapidly accelerating one. “This troubling rise means that infections once

‘Act Now’ – PM calls for national action



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini.

easily treatable are becoming more difficult, more costly, and in some cases impossible to cure,” he said. Health experts say such resistance rates threaten to undo decades of medical progress and could lead to a future where routine infections become fatal. The PM's statement indirectly suggested that if current trends persist, the nation could face rising hospitalisation costs, longer recovery times, and treatment failures that strain an already burdened health system. The Prime Minister positioned Eswatini within a broader international mandate to curb AMR. He

reminded the public that world leaders have agreed to bold targets, including reducing AMR-related deaths by 10% by 2030 and ensuring that at least 70% of antibiotics used in human health come from the WHO Access Group, a category of antibiotics considered safer and less likely to drive resistance.

He further emphasised that stronger antibiotics, often classified under the “Watch” and “Reserve” categories, will be tightly controlled moving forward. They will be “carefully limited... reserved only as a last resort for treating life-threatening infections.”

He indicated that Eswatini's own health system must adjust prescribing practices, hospital protocols, and community expectations to align with these global priorities. The PM stressed that Eswatini “remains steadfast in its commitment to the global fight against AMR,” positioning the country not as a passive observer but as a determined participant in the world's response.

A key part of the Prime Minister's message was the unveiling of Eswatini's national AMR containment strategic plan, built under the One Health approach, a model that recognises the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and the environment. He described this approach as uniting the ministries of health, agriculture, and natural resources “to confront this challenge collectively.”

The strategy focuses on:

- Raising public awareness
- Strengthening laboratory and surveillance capacity
- Promoting responsible use of antibiotics in humans, livestock, and the environment
- Translating scientific data into evidence-based policy

“These initiatives are not merely policies on paper,” the PM stressed. Instead, he characterised them as “deliberate and transformative actions to protect the health of our people, preserve our food security, and safeguard the future of our beloved Kingdom.”

King calls for improved housing for the vulnerable, even those in slums — DPM

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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HIS Majesty King Mswati III has issued a call to improve housing conditions for the vulnerable populations and those living in slums across Eswatini. The King's directive was brought into sharp focus during a ceremony where Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla received a generous donation of Chromadek IBR iron sheets valued at E18,000 from Tak Roofing, trading as Vision Focus Africa.

The company, established in July 2025, was represented by its directors Nomcebo Simelane and Muntu Magagula, who pledged their support to the national housing initiative.

Deputy Prime Minister Dladla highlighted the gravity of the housing challenge facing the country. “We have a lot of families without proper shelter. His Majesty King Mswati III has commissioned the Office to provide proper shelter to the vulnerable, including those living in slums,” she said. The Office, she explained, is actively identifying vulnerable families and securing land to build them new homes. “Thank you for lending a hand, we truly need such support,” she added, emphasising the importance of partnerships between government and the private sector.

The DPM assured that the donated iron sheets would be put to immediate use in constructing a state-of-the-art house for a deserving family. “We will identify a deserving home and construct a state-of-the-art house. We wish you growth in your business



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla receiving a generous donation of Chromadek IBR iron sheets from Tak Roofing, trading as Vision Focus Africa.

and encourage you to hire more emaSwati,” she said, underscoring the dual goals of social upliftment and economic empowerment.

Representing Vision Focus Africa, director Nomcebo Simelane expressed the company's commitment to supporting national efforts aimed at restoring hope and dignity through shelter provision. “We have seen through the media what your Office is doing in restoring hope and dignity by providing shelter all over the country. It is our wish to partner with the Office and assist where we can,” Simelane said, signalling a strong willingness among local businesses to contribute to social development.



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla making her remarks.



TLC gets clean triple audit

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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FOR over two decades, The Luke Commission (TLC) has stood as a beacon of transparency and accountability in financial management, and recent developments reaffirm this enduring commitment.

In a rigorous demonstration of its dedication to ethical stewardship, TLC has completed three comprehensive audits, each conducted by reputable and independent entities. These audits, spanning from national to international levels, collectively underscore the organisation's unwavering integrity.

The first of these evaluations, an External Audit carried out by an accredited national firm, was finalised on August 19, 2025. Shortly thereafter, on August 25, 2025, an Internal

Audit conducted by the Ministry of Finance further validated these findings.

Completing this triad of assessments, an International Audit by a top 25 U.S. firm was concluded on November 7, 2025. TLC, on social media emphasised that these outcomes are not merely about compliance but are a reflection of a deeply ingrained culture of responsible stewardship. "Our commitment remains unchanged; accountable stewardship and compassionate care for every last

one."

An audit is a thorough and impartial evaluation of an organisation's records, procedures, or systems to verify their accuracy, compliance, and dependability. It offers an independent and objective assessment to determine whether financial statements accurately represent the company's financial status or if a process fulfils its intended objectives and standards.

PAC pays tribute to late Russell Nxumalo

... as Commerce Ministry appears before committee

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

THE Public Accounts Committee paused its proceedings on Wednesday to honour the memory of the late Russell Nxumalo, the Commissioner of Cooperative Development in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade.

The tribute came as the ministry appeared before the committee to respond to audit queries. PAC Chairman and Deputy Speaker Madala Mhlanga expressed the committee's condolences and noted that Nxumalo's passing had left a significant void in the ministry and in the national cooperative landscape.

The Chairman said the late Commissioner had been a pillar of experience and institutional knowledge within the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade. His contributions, he said, extended far beyond administrative duties. Nxumalo had been central in shaping the cooperative development agenda in Eswatini and had earned respect within public institutions and the wider cooperative movement. Mhlanga extended the committee's sympathies to the ministry and the family of the late commissioner, adding that his absence would be deeply felt in ongoing policy and development programmes.

Russell Nxumalo recently passed away, bringing an end to a distinguished career in public service that spanned several decades. Before joining the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade as Commissioner of Cooperative Development, he served as the National Civil Registrar. In that role, he contributed to strengthening the national civil registration system and improving administrative processes in vital records. Colleagues recall his professionalism, calm leadership and unwavering dedication to strengthening public institutions.

Within the Ministry of Commerce, Indus-



▲ Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade officials led by PS Phesheya Dube.

try and Trade, Nxumalo became known as a driving force behind efforts to modernise and expand the cooperative sector. His colleagues credit him with pushing for reforms aimed at making cooperatives more sustainable, better governed and more relevant to communities across Eswatini. He was particularly instrumental in the national drive to establish the country's first cooperative bank, a long-standing ambition aimed at providing tailored financial services to cooperative members and improving access to credit for rural and underserved areas.

Officials within the ministry said Nxumalo worked tirelessly to ensure that cooperatives were not only formed but properly supported. He championed training programmes, compliance initiatives and policy reforms intended to align cooperative governance with national laws and international best practice. His commitment to accountability, transparency and community empowerment made him a respected leader in the sector.

In recent years, the expansion of cooperatives into new sectors such as agriculture, retail and savings groups created greater demand for strategic direction and oversight. Nxumalo played a key role in navigating this growth, working closely with cooperative leaders, regulators and development part-

ners. His ability to balance technical expertise with hands on experience earned him recognition across government and among cooperative members who saw him as an accessible and solutions driven figure.

During Wednesday's PAC session, officials from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade shared similar sentiments, acknowledging both their grief and the professional gap left by his passing. Acting Principal Secretary Phesheya Dube told the committee that Nxumalo's knowledge, judgement and commitment to public service had been invaluable. He said the ministry was mourning not just a senior officer but a colleague who had consistently placed national development and community empowerment at the centre of his work.

The Public Accounts Committee also noted the timing of his death, which comes at a period when the ministry is undertaking several major policy reviews and sector development initiatives. His absence is expected to be felt particularly in the areas of cooperative oversight, institutional capacity building and the ongoing work toward establishing the cooperative bank. Committee members urged the ministry to continue advancing the initiatives he had championed as a way of honouring his legacy and stabilising ongoing programmes.



▲ The late Russell Nxumalo.

Messages of condolence have also been shared across the cooperative sector. Many cooperatives described Nxumalo as a mentor who offered guidance on governance, financial management and legal compliance. Several cooperative unions credited him with helping them navigate restructuring processes and operational challenges. His death has been described as a significant loss not only to the ministry but also to the thousands of cooperative members who benefited from his leadership over the years.

The PAC Chairman concluded the tribute by encouraging ministry officials to draw strength from the legacy left behind by the late commissioner. He said the committee acknowledges the value of dedicated public servants who commit themselves fully to national development. He urged the ministry to continue working with the same spirit of service that Nxumalo embodied throughout his career. As Eswatini's cooperative sector continues to evolve, the foundations he helped lay will remain central to its progress and future success.

Fatal assault reported at Mtjolobela

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

RESIDENTS of Lobamba were left reeling this week after a violent incident in the Mtjolobela area resulted in the death of a thirty-four-year-old man from Dlangeni.

The man was discovered late on the night of 17 November 2025 lying motionless after what authorities described as a brutal assault carried out by an individual known to the victim. Police have confirmed that a full investigation is underway as officers work to piece together the events that led to the fatal attack.

According to a statement released by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni the victim was found at approximately 2313 hours. Emergency responders who arrived at the scene confirmed that he had succumbed to extensive injuries sustained from being assaulted across his body. Although the assailant is believed to be known to the victim police have not yet released a name as investigations continue and formal charges have not been announced.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni stated that officers from the Lobamba Police Station responded immediately after receiving the emergency report from community members who noticed the man lying on the ground and alerted authorities. When officers arrived they secured the scene and began initial inquiries while awaiting the forensic unit. The body was later transported to a medical facility for a postmortem examination which is expected to clarify the full extent of the injuries and potentially provide additional evidence.

The Mtjolobela community has been shak-



en by the incident. Residents say the area is generally peaceful and they were not expecting such a violent occurrence within their neighbourhood. Several community members expressed fear and sadness explaining that they rely on familiarity and trust within their close-knit environment. The reality that the suspect is believed to have been known to the victim has intensified concern about safety and interpersonal conflict within the community.

Police have urged the public to remain calm while investigations proceed. Assistant Superintendent Mnguni asked members of the community to cooperate with officers by providing any information that might assist in the case. She noted that several statements have already been recorded and more interviews will follow as investigators attempt to establish the motive and the circumstances that preceded the assault. She emphasised that the police are committed to ensuring that justice is served and that

violent crimes of this nature are thoroughly investigated.

Authorities are also urging the community to avoid speculation that could interfere with the investigation. Mnguni reiterated that releasing unverified information could hinder police efforts and cause unnecessary panic among residents. She encouraged anyone with knowledge of the altercation to contact the Lobamba Police Station or their nearest law enforcement office.

In the wake of the incident local leaders have called for unity and calm. They expressed condolences to the family of the deceased and appealed for community support as the family deals with the tragic loss. Community elders have reminded residents about the importance of conflict resolution and the need to seek peaceful methods when disagreements arise.

The Lobamba Police Service has expressed its commitment to increasing patrols in the Mtjolobela and Dlangeni areas over the com-



▲ PICO Nosipho Mnguni.

ing days. The aim is to reassure residents and to demonstrate that police presence remains strong as officers carry out a thorough investigation. Officials say that maintaining safety and security is their top priority and they will continue to work closely with residents to prevent further violence.

As the investigation continues the community awaits further updates from the police. For now residents must deal with the shock of losing one of their own to a violent act that has disrupted the peace of their area. The authorities have promised transparency as more details become available and they continue to urge cooperation from anyone who may have witnessed the events of that night.

Three men arrested at Maloma farm for possession of illegal firearm

THE quiet morning in Lubulini was disrupted on 18 November 2025 when police arrested three men for illegal possession of a firearm.

The men aged forty-one thirty and twenty-six and all from the Hholomi and Hosea area were taken into custody at about 0430 hours after officers discovered a shotgun in their possession.

According to authorities the firearm had its serial number deliberately scratched off and the men were unable to produce any valid licence or permit authorising them to carry it.

The arrests were confirmed by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni who issued an official statement detailing the circumstances of the incident. She explained that police officers had been conducting early morning operations in the Maloma farm area when they encountered the three suspects. During the operation officers recovered the shotgun which will undergo forensic analysis as part of the ongoing investigation.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni emphasised that the discovery of a firearm with a tampered serial number raised serious concerns as such weapons are often linked to criminal activities. She added that officers acted swiftly to ensure that the situation was contained and that the suspects were safely apprehended without incident. The men were immediately charged for being found in possession of a firearm without a licence as

well as for the altered identification number on the weapon.

The police have not yet released information regarding the possible intentions of the suspects or whether the firearm may be connected to any ongoing criminal cases. Investigators are currently working to establish how the men came into possession of the shotgun and whether additional individuals may be involved. The suspects are expected to appear in court soon where they will face formal charges under national firearm regulations.

Residents of Maloma and surrounding communities have expressed relief following the arrests. Many community members have raised concerns over illegal weapons in recent years noting that their presence threatens the safety and stability of rural areas. Local leaders have praised the police for their swift response and vigilance particularly during early morning patrols which often prove effective in uncovering unlawful activity.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni encouraged the public to continue cooperating with law enforcement by reporting suspicious behaviour or possible illegal possession of weapons. She explained that police rely heavily on community support to curb the spread of unregistered firearms which remain a significant security risk. She also reassured residents that the police service is committed to maintaining strong visibility in the Lubulini and Maloma areas.

The police have reminded the public that



possession of any firearm without a valid licence is a criminal offence and that tampering with serial numbers is viewed as an aggravating factor under the law. Authorities urge firearm owners to ensure that their weapons are properly registered and stored securely to prevent misuse or theft.

As investigations continue the police have stated that further details will be released

once additional findings are confirmed. For now, the seizure of the illegal weapon and the arrest of the three suspects mark a significant step in efforts to reduce unauthorised firearms in the region. Law enforcement officials have reaffirmed their commitment to protecting communities and ensuring that those who violate firearm regulations are held accountable.

Pastor sentenced to 5 years for indecent dealing with a minor

By Delisa Magagula

PASTOR Bongi Phiri, a 40-year-old former children-in-transit worker commonly known as malume, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment without the option of a fine after being convicted of indecently dealing with an 11-year-old girl.

The incident took place on October 2, 2024. Moments after Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi delivered the sentence on Wednesday Phiri collapsed inside the courtroom and was rushed to the hospital. Court officials confirmed that he fell shortly after being informed of the jail term.

Phiri's conviction followed extensive testimony, including statements from a key witness who said she first learned of the incident through a phone call from her child, who was a friend of the survivor. She testified that she was instructed to open a WhatsApp voice note recorded by the minor.

According to the witness, the minor stated in the audio that Phiri had parked his vehicle near a primary school in Mbabane, kissed her, touched her private parts, and inserted his tongue into her mouth.

She further testified that the child sounded nervous when she phoned her after hearing the recording, and that the minor told her Phiri had dropped her off at home following the incident.

The witness said she then contacted the minor's mother and relayed the child's account. She told the court that she advised the mother to report the matter to the police.

The witness added that the mother later informed her that she confronted Phiri, who denied the allegations and claimed he had



▲ The Pastor being wheeled into an ambulance. only been playing with the child.

Tension rose during proceedings when the voice note recorded by the minor was played in court. Phiri had challenged the witness's claim, saying he was unaware of any audio recording and believed the child had spoken to the witness verbally.

He asked the court to have the audio played as proof. Principal Magistrate Nhlabatsi also revisited earlier evidence provided by the minor's mother, who stated that she was alerted about the incident on October 21, 2024, by a friend.

In her testimony, the minor's mother said her daughter reported that she 'did not like what malume did to her'. She told the court



▲ Phiri fainted after his sentence was read to him.

that she confronted Phiri, who denied any wrongdoing.

During cross-examination, Phiri told the court that he loved children and said giving



▲ Correctional Officers helping the convict into Ambulance

the minor a lift was an act of care.

He also questioned the witness on whether she understood the implications of testifying under oath. Phiri claimed he received a phone call after dropping the minor off, with the caller asking him what he had done to the child.

He said if he had money, he would have asked MTN to provide him with a recording of that phone call to support his claims.

During an earlier appearance, Phiri was instructed by the magistrate to remove a purple garment he wore over his shoulders when entering the dock. He was also warned against bringing it again.

Before his conviction, Phiri confronted a journalist outside the courtroom, demanding that photographs of him be deleted. A police officer intervened and advised him to lodge an official complaint if he had concerns.

Phiri's transport business licence had already been revoked in December following the minor's testimony.

House helper steals E100k, stashes it with Sangoma

By Delisa Magagula

POLICE are investigating a case in which a 33-year-old maid from KaKhoza, Nompumelelo Dlamini, allegedly stole E100 000 in cash from her Asian employer at Liqhaga Flats in Manzini.

According to police sources, the employer reported that the money had been kept securely inside his residence and was discovered missing shortly after Dlamini had been on duty.

Investigators launched a search to locate the missing funds, leading them to several sites across Manzini.

Police have confirmed that a total of E67 000 has so far been recovered. The recovered money includes E43 000 allegedly found at the home of a traditional healer and an additional E24 000 allegedly distributed among the suspect's acquaintances.

Officers stated that the money was retrieved after questioning individuals believed to have received portions of the cash.

Authorities further indicated that during preliminary investigations, one of Dlamini's



friends reported receiving E3 200 from her.

Police are continuing efforts to account for the remaining E33 000 that has not yet been recovered. Dlamini has been charged in connection with the theft. She appeared before investigators and is expected to continue making court appearances as the matter proceeds. The Manzini Magistrate's Court is handling the matter.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

FNB, foundation pour
E752 000 into
community support

FNB Eswatini and the FNB Eswatini Foundation have released a combined E752,000 to various organisations across different sectors in the country. The funds allocated go towards education, child welfare, environmental protection, and professional development. The sponsorship handover was held at the bank's headquarters in Ezulwini on Wednesday afternoon.

Stocks stabilise
after fall

SINGAPORE/LONDON — Global shares steadied on Wednesday, after another sell-off driven by nerves over AI valuations, although the mood was cautious ahead of what could be make-or-break earnings from chip titan Nvidia and U.S. jobs data this week. The tech-heavy Nasdaq fell 1.2 per cent overnight, marking a second straight daily decline. Worries about lofty valuations have knocked it more than 6 per cent below late October's record peak.

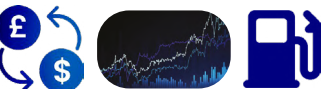
Oil falls on
oversupply concerns

LONDON — Oil prices fell on Wednesday due to higher crude inventories in the U.S., reinforcing oversupply concerns, but falls were limited by a tighter fuel market as a result of attacks against Russia's oil infrastructure. Brent crude futures fell 71 cents, or 1 per cent, to \$64.18 a barrel by 1111 GMT, after gaining 1.1 per cent the previous session.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.0844	17.5510
G.B. Pound	22.2302	22.9102
EURO	19.6269	20.2355
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	



Eswatini takes centre stage as:

SADC tightens anti-money laundering



▲SADC member states during the workshop.

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has positioned itself as a key player in regional financial-crime prevention as it hosted the 4th SADC Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML-CFT) Committee meeting from 19–20 November 2025 in Ezulwini.

Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg used the opening session to outline government's ongoing reforms in the sector, telling delegates that the Kingdom remains firmly committed to strengthening the legal, institutional and operational framework for combating financial crimes. He said the reforms were aligned with regional expectations.

"We have taken concrete steps to address deficiencies previously identified in assessments, and we continue to prioritise legislative amendments, enhanced financial intelligence, improved supervisory coordination and increased private-sector engagement," he told officials gathered at the Royal Villas Hotel.

Rijkenberg said Eswatini recently revised its Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Prevention Act. According to him, the amendment was intended to address gaps highlighted during earlier rounds of evaluation.

"The revised Act strengthens our compliance framework and enables more effective information-sharing across agencies," he said.

He added that government had invested significantly in the capabilities of the Financial Intelligence Centre, noting that the upgrades were designed to improve data analysis, reporting processes and inter-agency cooperation.

Rijkenberg also said coordination between the Central Bank of Eswatini, law enforcement agencies and supervisory authorities had been intensified.

He explained that this included new technical training and outreach sessions with commercial banks, microfinance institutions and designated non-financial businesses.

Delegates at the meeting included finance ministers, central bank representatives, Financial Intelligence Units, supervisors and AML-CFT specialists from across the region.

Their work over the two days will focus on



▲Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg making his remarks.

capacity building, peer learning and preparing member states for the upcoming third round of mutual evaluations.

Meanwhile SADC AML-CFT Committee Chair Clement Kapula described the gathering as a pivotal moment for regional cooperation.

Referring to the updated Annex 12 of the SADC Protocol on Finance and Investment formally endorsed by the 2025 SADC Summit in Antananarivo he said the amendment created a strengthened legal basis for harmonised AML-CFT collaboration across the bloc.

Kapula told participants that the amendment represented a major milestone for the region. He urged countries that had not yet signed to do so, saying its universal adoption would ensure consistent implementation and practical cross-border enforcement.

He added that the meeting was designed not only to share updates but also to prepare national authorities for the next mutual evaluation cycle.

"Peer exchanges of this nature are essential as we move toward the third round. They allow countries to understand emerging risks, prepare their systems and align with evolving global standards," said Kapula.

Presentations during the meeting outlined the technical areas member states are currently prioritising. Officials briefed the gathering on supervisory best practice, typologies of money-laundering and terrorism-financing schemes and transparency measures relating to beneficial ownership.

According to technical facilitators, one work-

stream focused on improving data analytics capabilities within FIUs. Delegates were shown examples of how risk-based analysis can be used to detect high-risk transactions and identify suspicious reporting patterns.

Another workstream addressed digital payment vulnerabilities, with specialists explaining how rapidly expanding digital platforms require updated monitoring systems.

Speakers also highlighted the role of regulatory outreach. According to presenters, national authorities have been working on more accessible compliance guidance for smaller financial institutions and non-bank sectors.

These measures, they said, were aimed at making reporting obligations clearer and reducing unintentional non-compliance.

For Eswatini, hosting the meeting provided an opportunity to showcase the country's progress. Officials delivered presentations detailing how the Kingdom is working to reinforce the integrity of its financial system while maintaining an environment conducive to business.

Rijkenberg said the reforms were intended to balance compliance with economic growth.

"Strengthening our AML-CFT framework supports investor confidence and protects public revenue. It ensures that our markets function fairly and competitively," said Rijkenberg.

He told delegates that Eswatini's institutions were actively aligning with the updated regional standards and that the country would continue to work closely with partners across SADC.

When the meeting concluded, Kapula thanked member states and technical partners for their contributions. He said the discussions held in Ezulwini were intended to guide national reforms that will unfold in the coming weeks.

"The amended Annex 12 requires domestic alignment. Member states must now ensure that their laws, supervisory mandates and information-sharing mechanisms reflect the regional commitments adopted at the Summit," said Kapula.

He added that implementation speed would be central to the region's success.

"The effectiveness of these reforms depends on how quickly and accurately countries align their systems," he said.

Kapula said the two-day meeting functioned as both a checkpoint on reforms already underway and a launchpad for the practical work still required.

By Delisa Magagula

FNB Eswatini and the FNB Eswatini Foundation have released a combined E752,000 to various organisations across different sectors in the country.

The funds allocated go towards education, child welfare, environmental protection, and professional development. The sponsorship handover was held at the bank's headquarters in Ezulwini on Wednesday afternoon.

Speaking during the ceremony, FNB Eswatini Chief Executive Officer Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini said the bank was committed to strengthening the communities in which it operates.

"It is my honour to hand over sponsorships that underline our renewed commitment to extending Help That Works," he said.

Dlamini reminded guests that 2025 marked the bank's 30th anniversary in Eswatini. He said the milestone had triggered a review of how the bank invests back into society.

"We have thought long and hard about how we can elevate the value we plough back into our communities. The sponsorships we are handing over today demonstrate our intention to support sustainable development across Eswatini," he said.

Worth mentioning, of the total amount, E575 000 came from the FNB Eswatini Foundation and E177 000 from FNB Eswatini.

Dlamini said the bank recognised the challenges that remained across the country, but pledged to walk the journey with partners.

"We must not lose heart, I urge you to manage these sponsorships with utmost integrity as we work together to build a prosperous, safe and thriving Eswatini," he said.

The Foundation's largest allocation was directed to SOS Children's Villages, while other beneficiaries included Gogo Nde Care Centre, Kwakitsi Foundation, UNESWA, the Eswatini Environment Authority and the Institute of Risk Management South Africa (IRMSA) Eswatini Chapter.

Representatives of the beneficiary organisations and institutions used the ceremony to thank FNB for the financial support, saying it would have a meaningful impact on vulnerable groups and students.

SOS Children's Villages received the largest share, E500 000 for the continuation of the Child-Headed Households (CHH) Project, which supports 180 orphaned and vulnerable children across the country.

The money will assist 45 child-headed families with monthly food hampers, hygiene packs and backyard agricultural inputs.

SOS National Director Phindile Nhl-eko said the funding would significantly strengthen the programme.

"The help from FNB will go a long way in supporting children who have no one else to rely on. This contribution ensures that child-headed families have food, dignity and the opportunity to sustain themselves," said Nhl-eko.

She said the combined support the Foundation had made to the CHH programme now stood at just over millions adding they appreciate that FNB continues to stand with vulnerable children.

Another beneficiary was Gogo Nde Care Centre which received E65 000 towards school fees, uniforms and stationery for 20 children under its care.

Centre representatives said the support would ease the burden on caregivers and ensure that children did not miss school.

"We thank FNB for recognising the needs of these children and for stepping in to assist," a Centre representative Malaza said.

Kwakitsi Foundation received E10 000 for a Christmas luncheon for 300 children.

FNB, foundation pour E752k into community support



▲ FNB CEO Thokozani TK Dlamini.

Foundation representative Nomalungelo Dladla said the organisation was grateful for the contribution.

"We are grateful and indebted to FNB. This support allows us to give children a Christmas experience filled with joy, dignity and hope," she said.

Dladla said the event was often the only celebration some of the children experienced all year.

"For many of them, this is the one moment where they feel seen and valued," she said.

Meanwhile, FNB Eswatini handed over four laptops valued at E97 000 to UNESWA's top-performing students in Accounting and Finance, BSc Computer Science and Mathematics, and BA Social Sciences (Economics and Statistics).

University of Eswatini Vice Chancellor Professor Justice Thwala said the institution appreciated the longstanding partnership with FNB.

"We are happy and grateful. FNB has continued to show its commitment to education, and its support motivates our students to excel," said Thwala.

Thwala added that the bank's assistance aligned with the university's goal of producing graduates ready to contribute to national development.

The Eswatini Environment Authority received E50 000 for the 2025 Temvelo Awards. Part of this amount will fund the FNB Sustainable Manufacturing Industry Award, which comes with a prize of E5 000.

The Authority's representative Nenekazi Thwala thanked the bank for supporting environmental initiatives, saying the awards encouraged organisations to adopt sustainable practices.

The Institute of Risk Management South Africa (IRMSA) Eswatini Chapter received E30 000 towards its launch event.

IRMSA representatives said the funding would help strengthen risk-management standards in the country.

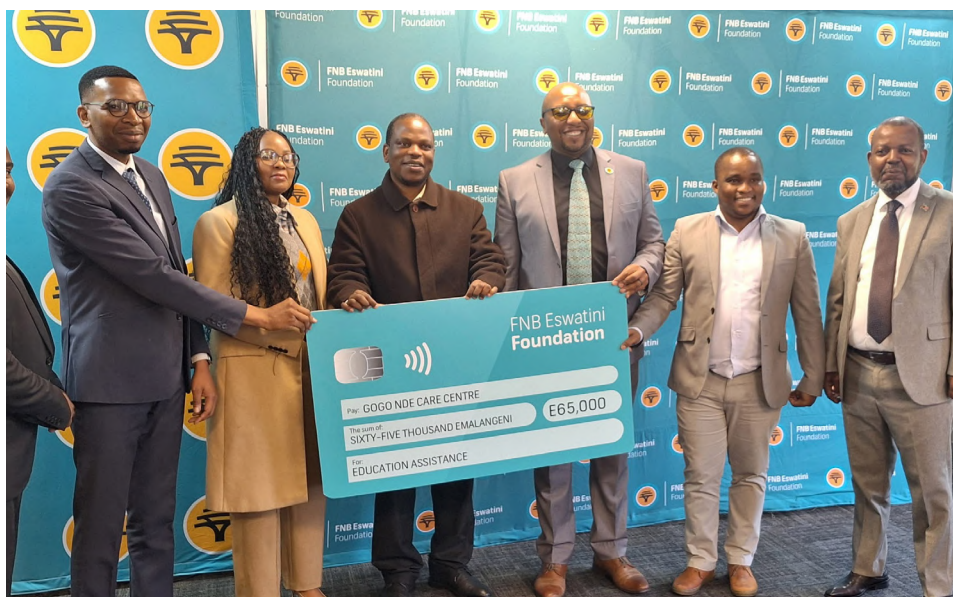
"We appreciate this support as we establish a chapter that will build professional capacity in Eswatini," a representative said.

FNB pumps over E1 million into SOS programme

FNB Eswatini and the FNB Eswatini Foundation have now invested more than



▲ Kwakitsi Foundation received E10 000.



▲ Gogo Nde Centre received E65 000.

E1.1 million into SOS Children's Villages' Child-Headed Households initiative.

This follows the latest E500 000 allocation announced on Wednesday. The Foundation previously committed E645 000 to the programme in 2020, bringing the total to E1 145 000.

FNB CEO Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini said the continued investment reflected FNB's focus on strengthening vulnerable families.

"This programme aims to respond to the growing needs of children who find themselves leading households. Our support is

guided by the belief that no child should carry the weight of a household alone," he said.

Meanwhile, SOS National Director Phindile Nhl-eko said the cumulative investment demonstrated long-term commitment.

"This is not a once-off gesture. FNB continues to stand with us, and with the children who depend on this programme," she said.

In addition, she said the funding would help prevent family separation, child poverty and risks linked to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) by ensuring that child-headed homes receive stable, predictable support.

Stocks stabilise after fall

... investor nerves fray ahead of Nvidia earnings, jobs data

By Tom Westbrook and
Amanda Cooper

SINGAPORE/LONDON — Global shares steadied on Wednesday, after another selloff driven by nerves over AI valuations, although the mood was cautious ahead of what could be make-or-break earnings from chip titan Nvidia and U.S. jobs data this week.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq fell 1.2 per cent overnight, marking a second straight daily decline. Worries about lofty valuations have knocked it more than 6 per cent below late October's record peak.

Heading towards the open, S&P 500 futures and Nasdaq 100 futures were up 0.3-0.4 per cent, having climbed steadily throughout the European morning. The STOXX 600 reversed early losses to rise 0.1 per cent, but is still down 4 per cent from record highs reached less than a week ago. MSCI's All-World index was down 0.1 per cent, easing for a fifth straight session in its longest stretch of daily losses since August.

Eyes on Nvidia

Nvidia, which sells the graphics processing units underpinning artificial intelligence, has been at the heart of a rally that has carried stock markets around the world to all-time highs and lifted any stock with even tangential links to AI. It reports its earnings after the market close in the U.S. and is expected to deliver a 56 per cent jump in its fiscal August-October quarter revenue to \$54.92 billion, according to data compiled by LSEG.

"It looks like Nvidia's stock price has been priced for perfection, so GPU demand must continue to grow strongly for many more years for the stock to stay up," said Wong Kok Hoi, founder and CEO of APS Asset Management in Singapore.

Nvidia shares were up around 1 per cent in the U.S. pre-market. The company's results could set the tone for risk sentiment for the near term, and not just in equities.



▲A man uses a mobile phone in front of a screen displaying the Nikkei share average inside a financial building in Tokyo, Japan.

"Given the current positive correlation between equities and the dollar (which reflects perhaps the renewed concerns over a tech/AI-specific correction hitting the broader U.S. economy) a bad earnings report this evening could drive the dollar weaker," MUFG strategist Lee Hardman said, adding that the focus would likely then rapidly pivot to Thursday's delayed U.S. employment data.

Fed outlook

The dollar has fallen by 8.1 per cent this year, heading for its worst performance against a basket of currencies since 2017. Year-to-date losses topped more than 10 per cent in October, but the dollar has been steadily clawing higher since then, as uncertainty over the economic outlook and persistent inflation have tempered expectations for rate cuts and the stock market bull run has started to stall.

The Japanese yen, which hit its weakest since late January against the dollar at 156, has given up almost all of this year's gains against the dollar and prompted officials in Tokyo to warn about the prospect of intervention.

Investors also worry that U.S. President Donald Trump's falling approval rating could drive fiscal spending and possibly stoke inflation, which has kept safe-haven U.S. Treasuries in check. The benchmark 10-year note was steady at 4.12 per cent, having barely moved so far this month. Markets are pricing about a 42 per cent chance of a 25-basis point Federal Reserve rate cut in December, something that was priced as a near certainty a month ago.

Bitcoin bounces back from below \$90,000

Meanwhile bitcoin has recovered slightly from Tuesday's seven-month lows to trade at \$91,400, but was still nearly 30 per cent below October's record high.

"BTC has erased this year's gains and then some, meaning anybody who acquired in the past 10 months is underwater," said Justin d'Anethan, head of research at Arctic Digital, a crypto investment and advisory firm.

In commodities, gold, which scaled record highs alongside stocks in October, has also fallen. It was last up 1.2 per cent at \$4,115 an ounce, while Brent crude futures fell 2 per cent to \$63.59 a barrel. (Reuters)



▲A pump jack operates near a crude oil reserve in the Permian Basin oil field near Midland, Texas, U.S.

Oil falls on oversupply concerns

By Enes Tunagur

LONDON — Oil prices fell on Wednesday due to higher crude inventories in the U.S., reinforcing oversupply concerns, but falls were limited by a tighter fuel market as a result of attacks against Russia's oil infrastructure.

Brent crude futures fell 71 cents, or 1 per cent, to \$64.18 a barrel by 1111 GMT, after gaining 1.1 per cent the previous session.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures fell 63 cents, or 1 per cent, to \$60.11 a barrel, after rising 1.4 per cent on Tuesday.

U.S. crude stocks rose by 4.45 million barrels in the week ended November 14, while gasoline inventories climbed by 1.55 million barrels and distillate inventories increased by 577,000 barrels, market sources said late on Tuesday, citing American Petroleum Institute figures.

"Overall, the report was relatively bearish," said ING commodities strategists, though they cautioned: "Market participants appear more concerned about supply risks than the odds of a surplus going forward."

Prices rose on Tuesday because of a tighter diesel market on the back of lower Russian exports, PVM analyst John Evans said.

U.S. sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil set a November 21 deadline for companies to unwind their dealings with the major Russian producers.

On Monday, the U.S. Treasury said the sanctions, already squeezing Russia's oil revenue, are expected to curb its export volumes. Crude buyers in China and India have already started switching to alternative suppliers.

Concerns about Russian supply are being weighed against analysts' forecasts that oil output is in excess of current demand, which has put pressure on prices.

After Ukrainian attacks on Russian energy and port infrastructure, profit margins on diesel fuel surged in Europe, reaching their highest on Tuesday since September 2023, amid an increase in refinery margins globally.

Official U.S. government inventory data will be released later on Wednesday.

Eight analysts polled by Reuters estimated that crude inventories were likely to have fallen by an average of about 600,000 barrels in the week to November 14. (Reuters)

Sterling eases after UK inflation, dollar rises

By Joice Alves and Ozan Ergenay

LONDON — Sterling edged lower on Wednesday after British consumer price inflation fell in October as expected, raising expectations the Bank of England will cut rates next month, while the dollar edged higher ahead of Nvidia's earnings release and key U.S. data.

In the meantime, the yen hit a 10-month low against the dollar after a meeting between Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda and key government ministers on Wednesday, including Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, who said government was closely watching the market "with a high sense of urgency".

Britain's consumer price inflation fell to 3.6 per cent in October, from September's joint 18-month high of 3.8 per cent, as expected by the BoE and economists polled by Reuters, official figures showed on Wednesday.



▲Pound Sterling notes and change are seen inside a cash register in a coffee shop in Manchester, Britain.

The data cemented expectations that the BoE could cut interest rates in December.

"With the (UK) labour market softening more than expected, GDP growth weaker than the BoE projected, and underlying inflation tracking a little lower than BoE expectations, we think Governor (Andrew) Bailey will feel more confident about cutting Bank Rate below 4 per cent," said Deutsche Bank chief UK economist Sanjay Raja.

Sterling was down 0.17 per cent against the dollar at 1.3121, briefly touching its lowest since Friday, when British markets were whipped around as speculation swirled around the highly-anticipated November 26 budget.

Elsewhere, investors struggled for direction, while U.S. agencies were clearing a backlog of data after a prolonged government shutdown.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, edged 0.15 per cent higher at 99.75.

The yen eased 0.4 per cent to 156.15, its lowest against the dollar since January.

The dollar had strengthened alongside demand for Treasury bonds even as odds of a Federal Reserve rate cut fell, which likely indicated safe-haven buying, analysts said. (Reuters)

Eswatini Mobile Matsapha, Mahlanya vendor channel visits



For first time, scientists see the very early stages of a supernova

THE explosive death of a star - a supernova - is among the most violent cosmic events, but precisely how this cataclysm looks as it unfolds has remained mysterious. Scientists now have observed for the first time the very early stages of a supernova, with a massive star exploding in a distinctive olive-like shape.

The researchers used the European Southern Observatory's Chile-based Very Large Telescope, or VLT, to observe the supernova, which involved a star roughly 15 times the mass of our sun residing in a galaxy called NGC 3621 about 22 million light-years from Earth in the direction of the constellation Hydra. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).

The shape of such explosions has been hard to nail down until now because of how rapidly they take place, so it took quick action with this supernova. The explosion was detected on April 10, 2024, around the time astrophysicist Yi Yang of Tsinghua University in China had landed on a long flight to San Francisco. Yang's formal request just hours later to aim the VLT at the supernova was granted.

The researchers thus were able to observe the explosion just 26 hours after the initial detection and 29 hours after material from inside the star first broke through the stellar surface.

What they saw was the doomed



▲ An artist's impression shows a star exploding at the end of its lifecycle, called a supernova, in this handout image released by the European Southern Observatory.

star surrounded at its equator by a preexisting disk of gas and dust, with the explosion pushing material outward from the stellar core to distort the star's shape into one resembling a vertical-standing olive. The explosion notably did not blow the star apart in a spherical shape. Instead, the explosion pushed violently outward at opposite sides of the star.

"The geometry of a supernova explosion provides fundamental information on stellar evolution and the physical processes leading to these cosmic fireworks," said Yang, lead author of the study published on Wednesday in the journal *Science Advances*, opens new tab.

"The exact mechanisms behind supernova explosions of massive stars, those with more than eight times the mass of the sun, are still

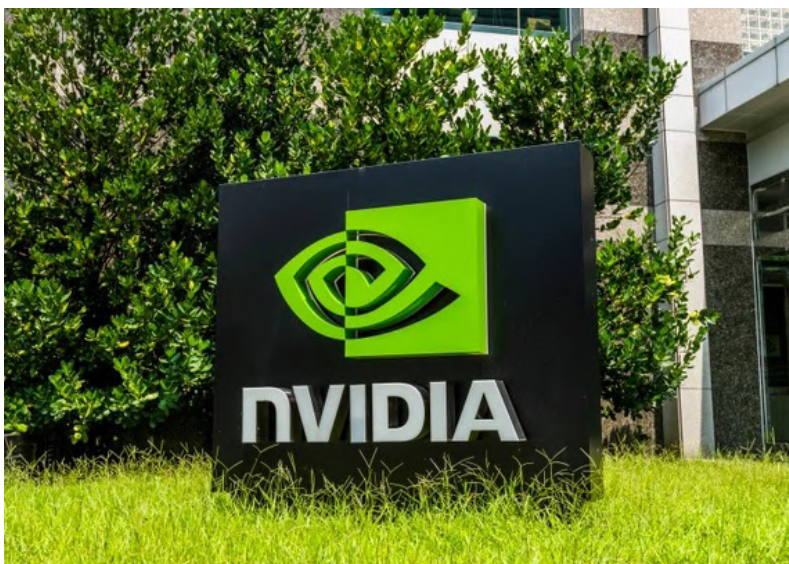
debated and are one of the fundamental questions scientists want to address," Yang said.

Big stars like those live relatively short lives. This one, a type called a red supergiant, was about 25 million years old at the time of its demise. In comparison, the sun is more than 4.5 billion years old and has a few more billion years to go.

At the time it exploded, this star's diameter was 600 times greater than the sun. Some of the star's mass was blown into space in the explosion. The remainder is believed to have become a neutron star, a highly compact stellar remnant, according to study co-author Dietrich Baade, a Germany-based astrophysicist at the European Southern Observatory.

(Reuters)

Nvidia move to phone-style memory may double server costs



▲ A smartphone with a displayed NVIDIA logo is placed on a computer motherboard in this illustration.

NVIDIA'S move to use smartphone-style memory chips in its artificial intelligence servers could cause server-memory prices to double by late 2026, according to a report published on Wednesday by Counterpoint Research.

In the past two months, electronics supply chains around the world have been hit by a shortage of legacy memory chips as manufacturers turned their focus to high-end memory chips suited

to semiconductors designed for AI applications.

But Counterpoint, a technology-focused market research firm, said there was a new problem on the horizon. Nvidia recently decided to reduce AI server power costs by changing the kind of memory chip it uses to LPDDR, a type of low-power memory chip normally found in phones and tablets, from DDR5 chips, which are typically used in servers.

Because each AI server needs more memory chips than a hand-

set, the change is expected to create sudden demand that the industry is not equipped to handle, according to Counterpoint.

Nvidia is scheduled to release its earnings report later on Wednesday. Memory suppliers like Samsung Electronics, SK Hynix and Micron are already facing shortages of older dynamic random-access memory products after reducing production to focus on high-bandwidth memory, which is necessary to make the advanced accelerators that power the global AI boom.

Counterpoint said tightness at the low end of the market was at risk of spreading upward as chipmakers weigh whether to divert more factory capacity to LPDDR to meet Nvidia's needs.

"The bigger risk on the horizon is with advanced memory, as Nvidia's recent pivot to LPDDR means they're a customer on the scale of a major smartphone maker - a seismic shift for the supply chain which can't easily absorb this scale of demand," Counterpoint said.

The firm said it expected prices for server-memory chips to double by the end of 2026. It also forecast that overall memory chip prices were likely to rise 50% from current levels through the second quarter of 2026. (Reuters)

Dutch control of Nexperia suspended amid internal row continuing

THE Dutch government said on Wednesday it was suspending its intervention at computer chipmaker Nexperia after what it said were constructive talks with China over a dispute which has led to shortages of chips needed by car manufacturers.

Although the move will give some comfort to customers that the clash over Nexperia between China and the Netherlands is easing, supply chain issues have not yet been resolved.

Nor has a dispute between Nexperia's European headquarters and its Chinese parent Wingtech (600745.SS), opens new tab which was sparked by the Dutch state taking control of Nexperia on September 30.

DUTCH POSITIVE ABOUT MEASURES TAKEN BY CHINA

The Dutch government said intervention was needed to prevent Nexperia's former CEO from moving its operations to China. Beijing responded by halting exports of Nexperia's finished products on October 4, a measure it has since partly relaxed.

Dutch Economy Minister Vincent Karremans said in a statement on Wednesday that the decision was a gesture of goodwill, adding that talks will continue.

"We are positive about the measures already taken by the Chinese authorities to ensure the supply of chips to Europe and the rest of the world," he said in a statement.

Meanwhile, European Union trade chief Maros Sefcovic welcomed the move, saying it would help stabilize supply chains.

Nexperia is a major supplier of basic computer chips to the car industry, and shortages have threatened automotive supply chains, leading to production slow downs and halts.

BMW Bosch and Aumovio all said they welcomed the development but that it is too early to judge what impact it will have, while Mercedes-Benz (MBGn.DE), opens new tab and Volkswagen (VOWG.DE), opens new tab declined to comment.

Nexperia manufactures most of its wafers in Hamburg, Germany, and then sends them to Dongguan, China to be packaged and sent on to customers.

STALEMATE CONTINUES TO THREATEN SUPPLIES

After the Dutch state intervention, Nexperia's Chinese arm declared itself no longer subject to control by European management and on Oct. 26, the European side of the company stopped shipping wafers to it, citing non-payment.

That stalemate continues to threaten supplies, although the Chinese side is now selling down stockpiles of chips it has previously processed, offering temporary relief to customers. Nexperia said it was preparing a reaction.

Separately, a Dutch court in October ordered the removal of ex-Nexperia CEO and Wingtech founder Zhang Xuezheng, citing alleged mismanagement.

A spokesperson for Wingtech, which oversees Nexperia's Chinese operations, said it "strongly rejects these accusations" and the Dutch government should end participation in the case, which was brought by the company's European managers.

"The ministry should now file a letter with the (court), explicitly withdrawing its support for the proceedings," the spokesperson added.

The next step in the legal process will be hearings on a formal investigation into mismanagement, a spokesperson for Amsterdam's Enterprise Court said.

(Reuters)



▲ Bikes are parked next to Nexperia (China) Ltd's factory amidst a shortage of chip supply caused by a diplomatic standoff between China and Netherlands over the company, in Dongguan, Guangdong province, China.

CHINA has indicated it will ban all imports of Japanese seafood, two government officials in Tokyo said on Wednesday, in what appears to be the latest salvo in an escalating diplomatic dispute between Asia's top two economies.

Tensions between the two countries ignited after new Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said this month that a Chinese attack on Taiwan threatening Japan's survival could trigger a military response.

China has demanded she retract the remarks and urged its citizens not to travel to Japan, resulting in mass cancellations that could deal a sizable blow to the world's fourth-largest economy.

Asked about the seafood restrictions at a press conference, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said: "Under the current circumstances, even if Japanese seafood were to be exported to China, it would find no market."

She reiterated that if Takaichi did not retract her remarks, China would have to take "stern and resolute" countermeasures.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Mino-ru Kihara told reporters Tokyo had not received any official notification from the Chinese government about a ban on seafood.

Beijing just months ago partially eased restrictions on Japanese seafood that had been imposed due to Tokyo's decision two years ago to release treated wastewater from its Fukushima power plant, the site of a 2011 nuclear meltdown that followed a massive earthquake and tsunami.

China informed Japan's ministry of agriculture, forest and fisheries on Wednesday that current import procedures were not sufficient, indicating a likely re-imposition of the blanket ban, Japanese government officials said, requesting anonymity due to the

Japanese seafood entangled in escalating dispute with China



▲ Las Vegas Grand Prix. sensitivity of the matter.

China said the move was due to concerns about Japan's screening method, the officials said, adding they believe it was likely further retaliation for Takaichi's remarks.

Facing a wave of vitriolic responses by a Chinese diplomat in Japan and Chinese state media aimed at Takaichi, Japan warned its citizens in China on Monday to step up safety precautions and avoid crowded places.

Tokyo has said Takaichi's remarks in parliament are in line with the government's position, suggesting no breakthrough is imminent.

JAPAN COUNTS COST OF DISPUTE

China had said in June that it would re-

sume importing Japanese seafood products from all but 10 of Japan's 47 prefectures.

The re-imposition will be a painful blow for many companies eager to re-enter a market that previously accounted for more than a fifth of all Japan's seafood exports.

Nearly 700 Japanese exporters had applied to re-register for shipments to China, Japanese Agriculture Minister Norikazu Suzuki told reporters on Tuesday. However, only three had been approved to date.

Before the 2023 ban, China was Japan's top scallop buyer and a major importer of sea cucumbers.

More immediately, China's travel boycott could have far-reaching consequences for Japan's shaky economy.

Tourism accounts for around 7% of Japan's overall gross domestic product, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council, and has been a major driver of growth in recent years. Visitors from mainland China and Hong Kong account for around a fifth of all arrivals, official figures show.

More than 10 Chinese airlines have offered refunds on Japan-bound routes until December 31, with one airline analyst estimating that around 500,000 tickets have already been cancelled.

A person at a state-owned Chinese bank said staff were informally told by managers on Tuesday that requests to travel to Japan would not be approved for the time being. The person declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

JAPANESE COMEDIANS, BANDS CANCEL SHOWS

An annual meeting of academics from both countries due to start in Beijing on Saturday has been postponed, China's foreign ministry said, citing the political fallout.

Another event promoting Japan-China friendship scheduled for November 21 in the western Japanese city of Hiroshima has also been cancelled.

Japanese artists have also been caught up in the furore.

Performances by Japanese comedians at an upcoming festival in Shanghai have been cancelled due to "unavoidable circumstances", entertainment firm Yoshimoto Kogyo said on Tuesday.

(Reuters)

Spain's far-right rise resurrects Franco's spectre 50 years

A spike in support for Spain's far right is reviving memories of late dictator Francisco Franco and burnishing his legacy among disaffected young Spaniards, even as the left-wing government seeks to eradicate symbols of the fascist past.

AI-generated clips of Franco railing against modern ills proliferate on social media along with revisionist history lessons and nightclubs playing techno remixes of Spain's fascist-era anthem.

A survey by state run pollster CIS last month showed that more than one in five - 21.3% - of Spaniards saw the Franco era as "good" or "very good" for the country, compared to 11.2% when asked a similar question in 2000.

In another CIS poll from July, 17.3% of Spaniards aged 18-24 said they preferred an authoritarian government to a democratic one, a 10-point jump from 2009.

Spaniards are largely split along the right-left divide over how to handle the legacy of the four-decade dictatorship that followed the 1936-39 civil war, which ended with Franco's death 50 years ago on Thursday at age 82.

Hitherto, democratic Spain has done little of the soul-searching of other nations with troubled pasts like South Africa, with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or Chile, with the jailing of generals from its past military regime.

Since coming to office in 2018, the Socialist-led government of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has stepped up efforts. It has exhumed the remains of victims of Francoism, designated sites of repression as places of "democratic memory", removed Franco-era symbols from public spaces, and run advertising campaigns about the benefits of de-

mocracy.

The conservative People's Party (PP) and far-right Vox are contesting those measures in court, calling them divisive and partisan by focusing only on victims from one side.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT

Riding a wave of anger over concessions to separatist movements and increased immigration, far-right Vox has nearly doubled its projected vote share since 2023.

Voting intention for Vox climbed to a record 18.9% by July this year, while CIS polls also show Vox's backing among youth rising from low single digits in 2019 to double digit support, especially among men.

Vox lawmaker Manuel Mariscal said that thanks to social media, "many young people are discovering that the post-civil war years weren't a dark period, but rather one of reconstruction, progress and reconciliation to achieve national unity".

Steven Forti, a historian at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, agreed that social media was breeding affinity with authoritarianism, along with anti-establishment and revisionist narratives aided by the passage of time.

"It's obvious that young people today haven't experienced the dictatorship, and in most cases, neither have their parents," Forti said.

CLASH OF NARRATIVES

Defenders of the dictator say life was more affordable under Franco compared to the current housing and cost-of-living crises disproportionately affecting young Spaniards.

They also cite Franco's public works such as dams, hospitals and housing, as well as containing the spread of Communism or preserving the unity of European Union member state Spain.

Historians say Franco's regime executed tens of thousands of dissidents, operated a



▲ Far-right demonstrators make the fascist salute as they march towards Spain's Parliament under the slogan "Join us to save Spain" in Madrid, Spain, November 8, 2025. In Spain, the public display, distribution, or use of dictator Franco symbols and propaganda is not a crime unless it humiliates the victims or there's a glorification of the dictatorship.

vast network of prisons and forced-labour camps, and tortured detainees. Political parties, trade unions and regional separatist movements were banned while women needed permission from their husbands or fathers for basic administrative procedures.

Censorship and secret police enforced Franco's blend of Spanish nationalism and ultra-Catholicism. Millions went into exile fleeing repression and famine.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Madrid government has vowed to dissolve the Franco Foundation, a non-profit organisation set up by the late dictator's sympathisers, but the process is expected to be lengthy and eventually resolved in court.

"They can extinguish it and outlaw it, but they'll never extinguish ideas. They'll keep on flowing with time, so it's a totalitarian measure that won't lead us anywhere," the foundation's president, Juan Chicharro, told Reuters.

Chicharro said the leftist government frequently drew the "Franco card" to divert attention from other problems.

Emilio Silva, who heads a group campaigning for victims of Francoism, said Franco had never really gone away.

"Francoism remains in Spain. There are hundreds of traces. Franco is still buried in a tomb paid for with my taxes."

Carmina Gustran, a historian heading the government's commemorative events called "Spain: 50 Years Of Liberty", told Reuters it must tackle disinformation and revisionist narratives with strengthened education and digital literacy programmes.

Spain must give up the notion that burying the past would birth a healthy democracy, she added.

"You cannot close a wound that hasn't healed; if it isn't cleaned it will get infected," she said.(Reuters)

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihle@rubiconmedia.group

Ballet duo to hoist Eswatini flag in Russia

TWO talented Eswatini ballet dancers, Nothando Makhanya (22) and Welcome Mavoko (25), are preparing to showcase their skills on the international stage at the upcoming WFADS Acrobatic Rock'n'Roll World Cup. The prestigious event is scheduled to take place in Moscow, Russia, from November 23, 2025, marking a significant milestone for Eswatini's presence in the global acrobatic dance community.

The announcement was made during a press conference held on Wednesday at the Manzini Fitness Zone, where the Eswatini Federation of Acrobatic and Swing Dances (WFADS) unveiled the national delegation set to represent the country. Happiness Banda, the federation's president, expressed pride in the progress made by Eswatini's dancers over the past two years. "This is our third international trip," Banda stated. "We have previously competed in Senegal and Dubai, and now we are excited to send our team to Moscow. They will depart on Friday, perform on Sunday, and return home shortly after." Banda emphasised the importance of expanding the sport beyond the current participants, encouraging parents and schools to support acrobatic rock'n'roll as a means of promoting fitness and cultural exchange among youth. "This is not just about the kids who can come here today; it's about introducing this sport in schools. It will help our children become physically fit and open up new opportunities," she explained.

The federation sees the sport as a vehicle for cultural enrichment and international exposure. "As our athletes travel abroad, they will promote Eswatini's culture and put our country on the map," Banda added with



▲ Stakeholders during the press conference. (Right) Eswatini Acro Swing Federation President Happiness Banda making her remarks.

enthusiasm. Despite the excitement, the federation faces challenges, particularly in securing financial support. Banda revealed that the team's participation is currently funded by parents and federation executives, with no external sponsors yet committed. "We wel-

come anyone willing to support us financially or otherwise," she appealed. In closing, Banda offered words of encouragement to the athletes. "Go with an open mind and remember you are representing Eswatini. Shine on that stage, knowing you have our full support," she said.



Nothando Makhanya vows to make Eswatini proud at World Cup debut

NOTHANDO Makhanya, one of Eswatini's rising stars in acrobatic rock'n'roll dance, has vowed to make her country proud at the upcoming WFADS Acrobatic Rock'n'Roll World Cup in Moscow. Speaking ahead of the competition, Nothando expressed immense excitement and determination to represent Eswatini with excellence on the international stage. "I am so happy. I promise well representation at the World Cup," Nothando said confidently. Her words reflect the dedication and hard work that she and her dance partner have invested in preparing for this prestigious event.

"My partner is very competitive. My muscles are aching," she admitted, highlighting the intensity and rigour of their training regimen.

This World Cup marks Nothando's first experience competing internationally, and she views it as a valuable learning opportunity. "This is my first time competing internationally," she revealed, underscoring the significance of the event not only as a competition but also as a milestone in her career. Supporters have rallied behind the team, with local sponsor Macford Sibandze urging the dancers to carry the nation's pride with them. "It's all about Eswatini first. Go and hoist the Eswatini flag. We are behind you," Sibandze encouraged, emphasising the importance of national representation on a

global platform. Behind the scenes, the dancers have been guided by Nonsika Lukhele, ballet coach at Sisci Studios, who has overseen their preparation with great care and enthusiasm. Lukhele described the sport as a unique fusion of gymnastics, ballet, and cultural dance, creating a dynamic and expressive performance style that challenges the dancers technically and artistically.

"The sport is a unique combination of gymnastics, ballet, and other dance genres, offering students a dynamic platform to develop both technical skill and artistic expression," Lukhele explained. She also highlighted the opportunity for the dancers to incorporate African cultural elements into their routines, which not only enhances the visual appeal but also serves as a powerful expression of national identity on the world stage.

This blending of styles allows the Eswatini dancers to stand out in the international competition, promoting both cultural pride and artistic innovation. Lukhele expressed pride in her team's achievements, noting the relentless hard work that led to their qualification for the World Cup. "We are tired but against all odds God has been great and let's make it a little bit easier for our country," she said, acknowledging the physical demands of their preparation while emphasising their unwavering commitment to representing Eswatini with honour.



▲ One of the two stars of the 2025 WFADS Acrobatic Rock 'n' Roll World Cup Nothando Makhanya. (Right) The sponsor, Macford Sibandze.





▲ True Classic.



▲ Young Zesh to headline alongside uGatsheni.

Six local acts to headline in SA alongside uGatsheni

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

A lineup of six Eswatini musical acts is gearing up to take the stage at a highly anticipated South African show scheduled for December 13, 2025.

The event, scheduled to take place at Soft Life 1344, promises an electrifying night of diverse sounds and cultural expression. Tickets are priced at E100, inviting music lovers to witness a memorable showcase of talent from the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The featured Eswatini artists include Gedlembane, Histo, Cool Drop, Young Zesh, M Nation, Bongiswa & Darren, and DJ Citie.

In an exclusive conversation, Young Zesh expressed his enthusiasm about participat-

ing in the event. "I am so happy to be part of the show," he said. "I promise to represent emaSwati well and deliver an A-star performance that I am known for."

M Nation, a prominent member of the True Classic crew, shared insights into the significance of the event for both the artists and their community.

"As a team, we are very happy to be part of the show," he remarked. He highlighted that such international platforms serve as milestones, signalling the growing recognition of Eswatini's music scene beyond its borders. "International shows are evidence that we are doing well. It tells us to work more because we are getting so much international recognition, so our brand is growing very fast and in a very good way," M Nation explained.

The True Classic crew has carved a niche

by blending traditional Eswatini sounds with contemporary beats, creating a unique and captivating musical experience. Their dedication to authenticity and cultural representation is a hallmark of their artistry. M Nation emphasised the importance of showcasing their heritage at the festival, encouraging fans to support the event. "People should show love and come in numbers because we are coming with something different that has so much SiSwati language in it," he said.

This show not only entertains but also serves as a cultural bridge, connecting audiences across borders through the universal language of music. The participation of these Eswatini artists alongside uGatsheni and others highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of Southern Africa's music industry.

Kwasukasukela Lolonga project launches major actor auditions

THE Kwasukasukela Lolonga Project is making significant strides in nurturing Eswatini's film industry with the announcement of upcoming auditions for actors in its latest series of short films.

Set to take place on November 22, 2025, in Mbabane, this casting call represents a pivotal moment for local talent eager to break into professional acting within the country's growing cinematic landscape.

Supervising producer Welile Masuku shared insights into the initiative, explaining that the auditions are a critical component of a comprehensive film development programme funded by the Eswatini Communications Commission.

Launched in September, the project is designed not only to discover acting talent but also to provide extensive training that blends classroom learning with practical production experience. This holistic approach aims to elevate the skills of participants and foster a sustainable film ecosystem in Eswatini. The 2025 edition of the Kwasukasukela Lolonga Project features four short films, each requiring a diverse cast for leading and supporting roles.

Masuku emphasised that the auditions are open to both men and women aged between 20 and 40, with all performances conducted in Siswati to maintain cultural authenticity. She highlighted that this is more than a typical casting call; it is a rare professional opportunity for local actors to demonstrate their abilities on a significant platform. Successful candidates will receive payment for their roles and benefit from the mentorship of international film experts, which is expected to enhance the quality and professionalism of the productions.

This year marks the most ambitious phase of the project to date. Masuku outlined that Kwasukasukela has expanded its scope beyond screenwriting to include directing, cinematography, lighting, and production management. This growth aligns with the broader mission of Bumba, the organisation behind the project, which seeks to develop Eswatini's film industry infrastructure and storytelling capacity.



▲ Kwasukasukela supervisor Welile Masuku.

Sphiwo Ndoni readies two songs for release

ESWATINI's gospel music scene is poised for a significant uplift as acclaimed worship leader Sphiwo Ndoni prepares to release two new songs, "Sogcamile" and "Sinomvuzo," later this week.

These tracks are expected to resonate deeply with the nation's faithful, continuing Ndoni's legacy of inspiring and uplifting spiritual music. Sphiwo Ndoni, a household name in Eswatini's gospel circles, revealed in a recent interview that both songs emerged from profound spiritual reflection and intimate encounters with God.

"Sogcamile" was born out of his daily prayers, where he consistently asks for God to be the foremost presence in his life, ministry, and worship gatherings. This song embodies a posture of surrender and reverence, echoing Ndoni's heartfelt desire to maintain God at the centre of all his endeavours. The lyrics and melody are crafted to invite listeners into a similar space of devotion and humility.

On the other hand, "Sinomvuzo" draws its inspiration from Hebrews 10:35, a scripture urging believers to cling to their confidence in God. Ndoni explained that this song serves as a powerful reminder not to lose faith,

especially during challenging times. "It is a reminder to all believers not to stop trusting God, for in due season we shall be rewarded," he said. The track is designed to encourage those who may feel weary in their spiritual journey, offering hope and reassurance that perseverance in faith yields divine rewards. Both songs reflect the core message that Ndoni has consistently championed throughout his ministry: the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the declaration of Jesus Christ as King of kings, and the affirmation that faith is transformative and richly rewarding. This thematic continuity strengthens his connection with audiences who have



▲ Sphiwo Ndoni.

come to expect spiritually enriching content from his work.

Sphiwo Ndoni's distinctive sound is a unique blend of traditional and contemporary worship styles. He masterfully fuses elements from Zion, Wesleyan, Roman Catholic hymns, and modern worship music, creating a soul-stirring and inclusive musical experience. His previous hits like "Tivetemhlaba Tikubone," "Waze Wetsembeka," and the beloved "Icilongo levangeli/Amaculo Medley" have cemented his reputation as one of Eswatini's premier gospel voices. His contributions to gospel music have not gone unnoticed. Ndoni is a multi-award nominee and winner, including accolades from the Best of Africa Award (MGOMA), which recognises outstanding African musical talent. Beyond his musical achievements, Ndoni is also the visionary founder of the Mount Zion

Experience, an annual worship event that unites believers from various denominations in a powerful celebration of faith and worship.

‘Africans come from brilliance’

“I REFUSE for future generations to be brainwashed into believing our ancestors were anything less than extraordinary.” Those are the words of South African media personality and radio host, Nandi Madida.

Madida was responding to Errol Musk, the father of the controversial tech billionaire, Elon Musk, after he said that he did not witness oppression of black people during apartheid.

Musk made the controversial statement during an interview with CNN’s Donie O’Sullivan for Sullivan’s upcoming special, MisinfoNation: White Genocide.

“You see, if you take South Africa, we have a small white population that projects European culture, or what we learned from Europe. How do you oppress? We know, we gave them work, we paid them.

“They grew from a tiny little group into a massive group. That’s not oppression, that’s feeding them. Do you understand? You only grow big if you get fed. You only start at 800 000 and become 50 million if you get fed.

“We feed them for crying out loud. You know, enough with this nonsense. Well, we never saw this oppression you’re talking about. No, I never saw it,” said Musk. “I refuse for future generations to be brainwashed into believing our ancestors were anything less than extraordinary.”

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“We feed them for crying out loud. You know, enough with this nonsense. Well, we never saw this oppression you’re talking about. No, I never saw it,” said Musk.

(IOL)



Sphamandla Dhludhlu honoured to play Chicco Twala in Brenda Fassie doccie

IN the SABC 1 four-part documentary-series Vulindlela, actor Sphamandla Dhludhlu portrays music mogul and Brenda Fassie’s producer and friend Sello “Chicco” Twala.

The narrative of the late icon is a brisk trot through Langa Township, her place of birth, Cape Town. Told by Dzinge Productions, the story goes through her life before birth, childhood, struggles, stardom, until her last days.

It gives her family a platform to tell her true authentic life story. And the people who worked with her share the experience of the vulnerable, emotional singer with yet a poignant passion for music until her success and death in May 9 2024. Big Shoes to fill

Brenda Ngxoli re-enacts some moments of Fassie’s life, which are merged in the doccie-series. Former The River, Ithonga, Mina Nawe, Shaka iLembe actor Sphamandla Dhludhlu was challenged with the role of

award-winning music producer and composer for the late singer.

At first, Sphamandla was uncertain whether he could fit into the shoes of a highly respected man like Twala, whose music experience earned him international acclaim. “I didn’t think I’d be able to share the mystery and power behind Bab Twala,” Sphamandla told Sunday World.

When his agent called him to prepare for the audition, he went straight to the internet to search for what he could find about the relationship Brenda had with Chicco.

“I was nervous, thinking of how I would navigate the role. It was a big task. When I searched the internet, everything was surface-level and not enough.”

But like a true actor, he allowed himself to “be one with the character”.

“I am an actor, at the end of the day. And being an actor means I can challenge myself to play any role given to me.”

(Sunday World)



▲ Actor Sphamandla Dhludhlu.

Gail Mabalane steps into powerful new role in SABC2’s Pimville

ACTRESS Gail Mabalane is gearing up to captivate viewers once again, this time as Phello Mohapi, the lead detective at the centre of SABC2’s brand-new telenovela Pimville.

Known for her compelling performances and her ability to breathe life into layered female characters, Mabalane says this latest role is one of her most exciting and demanding yet.

Detective Phello Mohapi is a Kasi-born, family-oriented woman who carries an invisible cape, determined to “save the world” even when the world pushes back. Though she’s played the role of a detective in the past, Mabalane told Sunday World that this iteration is different: gritty,

grounded, and deeply rooted in the lived realities of black South Africans. “This show goes in-depth into the issues the police face and the issues the community faces. You get to experience first-hand what it’s like spending hours and hours at a police station, solving cases, and feeling the pressure from communities who want answers.” Filmed inside an actual police station, the story doesn’t shy away from portraying the strain, frustration, and emotional weight that detectives carry. For Mabalane, witnessing real people come open cases while she worked on set was eye-opening. “As South Africans, we can be very impatient and judgmental about the police, but being here every day. (Sunday World)

Coffee may help protect against AFib

... challenging advice to avoid it



- A new clinical trial challenges the long-held medical advice that coffee triggers a common type of heart arrhythmia.
- Results of a new trial found that adults with atrial fibrillation (AFib) who drank coffee daily had a significantly lower risk of recurrence than non-coffee drinkers.
- The findings suggest that moderate coffee consumption may protect the heart from

that it's going to worsen their atrial fibrillation. That's the most conservative perspective on this. Now, whether it makes sense to actually encourage consumption of caffeinated coffee, that will require further study," Marcus said.

What explains the reduced AFib risk among coffee drinkers isn't yet clear. The authors suggest several possible mechanisms, though the study doesn't provide direct evidence for any of them.

Caffeine is known to block adenosine receptors, which is one of the ways it makes you feel more alert. Adenosine is a naturally occurring chemical in the body that makes you feel drowsy. It's part of how the body regulates energy and sleep cycles, but it's also known to provoke AFib. Trusted Source

The authors propose that blocking adenosine may confer antiarrhythmic properties to caffeine.

Coffee also has anti-inflammatory prop-

erties that may be protective against AFib.

"Coffee, as we know, naturally contains antioxidant properties, such as chlorogenic acids and melanoidins, which may act as protective effects for our body and our heart," said Alyssa Kwan, a clinical dietitian in Cardiology at Stanford Medicine who wasn't affiliated with the research.

The effects could also be attributed to a healthier lifestyle in general. For example, a 2023 clinical trial found that people in the coffee drinking group walked approximately 1,000 more steps per day than the abstaining group.

Coffee, caffeine best enjoyed in moderation

Although the research suggests that coffee will not worsen your risk for AFib, there are still some important caveats.

First, this study focused exclusively on coffee. Its findings don't extend to other forms of caffeine, such as energy drinks, supplements, or pills, that people commonly consume

today.

In fact, energy drinks, which can have twice as much (or even more) caffeine in them as a cup of coffee, may trigger AFib, even in young and otherwise healthy people.

"People should absolutely not extrapolate from this study that more caffeine is therefore better," Marcus said. "All of the observational evidence that caffeine may reduce the risk for AFib is all related to moderate or normal consumption of naturally occurring caffeine, such as in coffee."

Kwan said that you should also be mindful of what you put in your coffee.

"I would still caution against choosing coffee that might contain high amounts of added sugars or saturated fat, including items like lattes and mochas," she said.

The bottom line: if you have AFib and enjoy coffee in moderation, your morning coffee likely won't trigger an AFib episode and may, in fact, lower your risk.

If your doctor advised that you avoid drinking coffee on account of your AFib, you should still consult them before starting regular consumption.

"For many patients with AFib, a cup of coffee is an integral part of their routine. We need more data if we are going to tell people to give up the things they like," said Passman.

(Healthline)

Coffee drinkers had 39% lower risk of AFib recurrence

Marcus and his team recruited 200 patients with a history of AFib or atrial flutter for the trial.

The average participant was 69 years old; most participants were males (71%) and identified themselves as white (80%). All were regular coffee drinkers, averaging about one cup per day.

The patients were enrolled immediately after successful cardioversion therapy, a treatment that uses an electrical impulse or medication to restore a healthy heart rhythm.

Half of the participants were randomly assigned to either continue drinking coffee daily or completely abstain from all caffeinated products, including coffee and even decaffeinated coffee. Over a six-month period, researchers recorded any recurrence of AFib or atrial flutter lasting at least 30 seconds.

At the end of the trial, 47% of coffee drinkers experienced an episode of AFib, compared with 64% of those who abstained. This represents a 40% lower risk of AFib recurrence among individuals who regularly consume coffee.

"For people that enjoy drinking caffeinated coffee, they should not avoid it for fear

What does ‘body image’ mean?

BODY image refers to the perception and attitudes you have about your physical appearance.

It encompasses how you see yourself, how you feel about your looks, and how you believe others perceive you.

Body image plays a significant role in your overall mental and physical health.

Understanding the different types of body image can help you recognize and address your perceptions and attitudes toward your body.

What does it mean to have a positive body image?

Positive body image means having a clear and accurate perception of your body and feeling comfortable and confident in your own skin. You appreciate your body for what it can do and feel satisfied with your appearance.

Characteristics of a positive body image include:

- confidence in your appearance
- appreciation for your body functionality
- acceptance of natural body changes (e.g. aging, changing weight)
- resilience against unrealistic beauty standards

What does it mean to have a negative body image?

Negative body image involves a distorted perception of your body and feeling dissatisfied or ashamed of your appearance. It can lead to constant self-criticism and comparison with others.

Characteristics of a negative body image include:

- frequent body checking
- constant comparison with others
- constant validation-seeking
- feeling shame or anxiety about your appearance
- avoiding social situations due to body dissatisfaction
- going to extreme lengths to change your appearance

Having a negative body image doesn’t make you a superficial or bad person. But it can take its toll on your mental health.

If your body image is negatively impacting your well-being, consider reaching out to a therapist or joining a support group, such as through the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) or Sister Circle by Therapy for Black Girls.

Neutral body image, or body neutrality, focuses on what your body can do rather than how it looks. It emphasizes focusing on your body’s abilities and nonphysical characteristics over your appearance.

If you have a negative body image, body neutrality might be easier to attain than a positive body image.

Characteristics of body neutrality:

- viewing the body as a tool for living rather than an object to be judged
- focusing on caring for your health and well-being
- reducing the emphasis on physical appearance



- appreciating your body even if you don’t feel attractive
- accepting your body even if you struggle to “love” it

What factors can influence your body image?

According to researchTrusted Source, several factors can shape and influence your body image.

Exposure to idealized body standards in media and social media can lead to unrealistic expectations and body dissatisfaction.

However, the media can also promote body neutrality or body positivity. For example, body-positive social media content has the potential to improve body image.

Cultural and societal standards

Cultural norms and societal pressures can dictate what is considered attractive, influencing body image.

Family and peer influences

Family attitudes and peer comments about appearance can affect how you perceive your body.

Research shows that family-based weight stigma can contributeTrusted Source to negative body image and less favorable mental health. For example, your family frequently criticizing or teasing you because of your body weight.

Experiences such as bullying and abuse can shape body image. A 2012 studyTrusted Source linked childhood trauma and sexual abuse to negative body image.

Mental health

Certain mental health conditions are closely linked to body image issues.

These conditions include:

- Anxiety disorders
 - Depressive disorders
 - Certain eating disorders
 - Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD)
- Getting mental health treatment may help improve your body image.

Identity

While anybody can experience negative body image, LGBTQ+ people are more likely to develop difficulties with body image and disordered eating, according to the NEDA.

NEDA also notes that gender is also a factor. Women are more likely to experience negative body image than men.

How does your body image affect your overall health and wellness?

Your body image can significantly affect your overall health and wellness in various ways.

Mental health

Negative body image is associatedTrusted Source with mental health issues such as eating and mood disorders. It can lead to low self-esteem.

Physical health

Body image concerns can lead to potentially harmful behaviors, such as excessive dieting and overexercising.

You may also neglect to care for your body. For example, this could involve avoiding things like eating well, resting, or getting medical help when necessary.

Social well-being

Negative body image could result in social isolation. You may avoid social interactions

because of shame, fear, or embarrassment about your appearance.

Conversely, positive body image contributes to a higher quality of life, promoting self-confidence, resilience, and healthy relationships with others and oneself.

How do you build and maintain a healthy body image?

There are several strategies for building a healthy body image.

Practice self-compassion

Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, especially when facing body image challenges. Focus on your strengths and positive attributes.

Identify and challenge negative thoughts about your body. Replace them with more realistic and positive affirmations, such as “I am grateful that my body lets me do the hobbies I enjoy” or “I am thankful for my health.”

If you find it hard to accept or love your physical traits, try to appreciate your body for what it can do rather than how it looks.

Limit media exposure

Be mindful of your media consumption. Consider following body-positive social media accounts and limiting your exposure to unrealistic body standards. Avoid following accounts that make you feel conscious about your appearance.

A recent study found that participants who reduced their social media usage experienced improvements in their body image within just a few weeks.

Learn more about building a healthy relationship with social media and how to take a social media break.

(Healthline)

Around the world in pictures



▲ A man carries a child while waiting to enter a courtroom for their hearing at U.S. immigration court in Manhattan, New York City.



▲ Stephany Abasali of Venezuela takes part in the National Costume show during the 74th Miss Universe pageant in Bangkok, Thailand.



▲ Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman holds President Donald Trump's hand during a meeting in the Oval Office.



▲ Producer Steven Spielberg, Director Chloe Zhao and cast member Jessie Buckley attend a premiere for the film Hamnet in Los Angeles.



▲ Pope Leo XIV gestures as he arrives to hold a general audience in Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican.



▲ Smoke rises from an apartment building hit by a morning Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Ternopil, Ukraine.



Ancelotti confident Brazil will improve before World Cup

CARLO Ancelotti's Brazil were held to a disappointing 1-1 friendly draw by Tunisia in Lille on Tuesday as their stuttering build-up to the 2026 World Cup continued.

In-form 18-year-old Estevao scored a penalty but Lucas Paqueta squandered an opportunity to win the game for the Selecao from the spot.

The five-time world champions are heading into next year's tournament in the United States, Mexico and Canada under a bit of a cloud after only finishing fifth in South American qualifying.

They also slipped to a 3-2 friendly loss to Japan last month, but Ancelotti is confident his team will improve before the tournament.

"We're on the right track to reach our best level at the World Cup," the former Real Madrid boss told reporters.

"We played a very good match against Senegal (last week) and today it was a much more difficult match against Tunisia.

"Tunisia have different characteristics — they defend with a very deep block. It's much more difficult to find openings in this type of defence."

Brazil coach Ancelotti named a strong side, including four forwards — Matheus Cunha, Vinicius Junior, Rodrygo Goes and Estevao — in his starting XI.

But Tunisia took a surprise lead midway through the first half when Ali Abdi's brilliant pass found Hazem Mastouri and the Dynamo Makhachkala striker kept his composure to slip the ball beyond on-rushing Brazil goalkeeper Bento.

But Brazil were awarded a penalty by VAR for handball shortly before half-time, much to the disappointment of the thousands of Tunisian fans at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

Estevao, who also scored on Saturday against Senegal, stepped up to net his fifth international goal.

Brazil were given another penalty with 12 minutes remaining, but substitute Paqueta took over spot-kick duties from Estevao and smashed his effort over the crossbar.

(Supersport)

Jose Riveiro has 'no regrets' about leaving Orlando Pirates

FORMER Orlando Pirates coach Jose Riveiro has spoken about his exit from the club, insisting that he has no regrets about leaving the Buccaneers.

Riveiro, who left Pirates before the end of last season to join Egyptian giants Al-Ahly, is back in the country as part of his collaboration with Carling Black Label.

After his Bucs exit, reports emerged that the opportunity at Al Ahly triggered Riveiro's move, but the Spaniard says this is far from the truth, as he was going to leave Pirates anyway.

"I'm not used to looking back in life. It was a decision made under certain circumstances. So, to think about the same thing now in different circumstances, it doesn't make any sense. It's easy to make decisions with tomorrow's journal,

like we used to say. I don't know if people understood the nature of my decision at that time, but I didn't leave Pirates because of the move to Ahly," said Riveiro during a conversation with Andile Ncube on Metro FM.

"It was a decision that was made a long, long, long time ago. Before Ahly came along. They knew. And Ahly came later."

"The only thing that I didn't like"

Riveiro added that the only thing he regrets is leaving Pirates before the season was complete. But says he had no choice because Al Ahly wanted him in Cairo immediately for Club World Cup preparations.

"The only thing that I didn't like about what happened was the fact that I must move before the season ends here. I wasn't happy about that. I was not ready.(The Citizen)



▲ Former Orlando Pirates coach Jose Riveiro.

Las Vegas leans on F1 as weaker consumer sentiment hits tourism

AFTER a rocky debut and a softer second year, the Las Vegas Grand Prix is emerging as a stabilising force for the city's tourism industry just as visitor demand shows signs of weakening, the head of the local tourism authority said.

"Year one was logistically very challenging," Steve Hill, CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, told Reuters.

"The event itself was great but we were under construction basically for eight months and that was hard on people."

Logistics improved the following year as the permanent track was in place, but "demand wasn't the same," he added.

WELCOME ECONOMIC BOOST

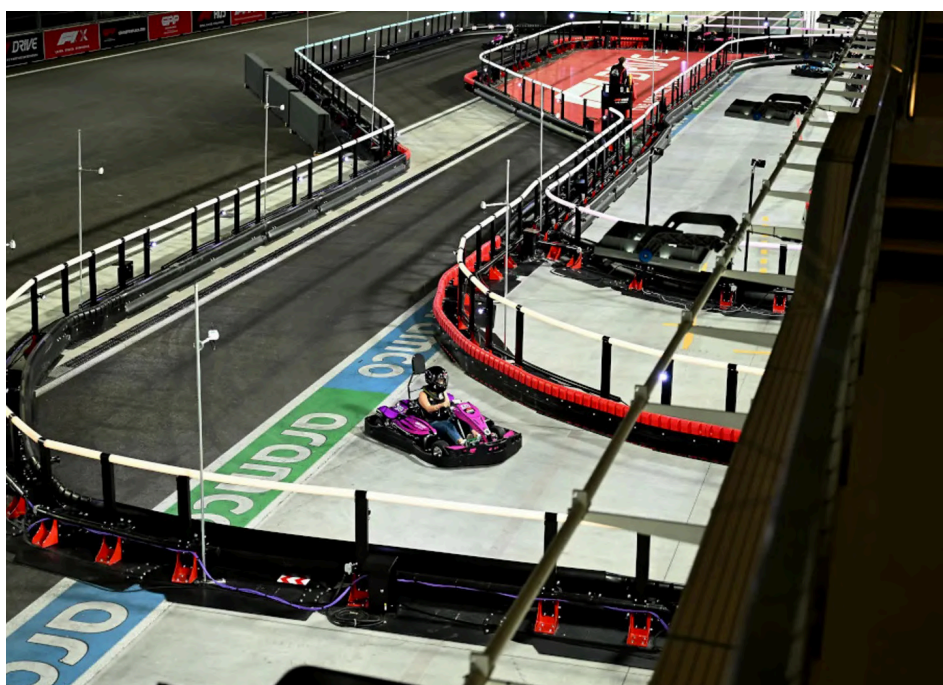
Now in its third year, the Formula One race is taking place at a moment when Las Vegas can feel the difference between a packed calendar and an ordinary week, Hill said.

"We're going through kind of a downturn here in 2025 for a number of different reasons," he said.

"It serves to point out that you can't take for granted the impact an event like this has, and I think the community sees that."

Hill said the slowdown reflects more than just tough comparisons with record-setting years in 2023 and 2024, when Las Vegas hosted the Super Bowl and other marquee events. He pointed instead to waning consumer confidence.

"We are certainly seeing a downturn that is largely driven by consumer sentiment



▲ Las Vegas Grand Prix.

- concern about the economy, jobs, and affordability."

As a destination heavily dependent on discretionary spending, Las Vegas is especially vulnerable when households feel strained, he said.

CANARY IN THE COAL MINE

"We are a little bit of a canary in that we are a very discretionary destination," Hill said.

When people are worrying about housing, food and education costs, "we're one of those

decisions that they can make to postpone to take care of the necessities in life."

"That is an expanded number of people right now and we're seeing the effects of that," he said.

Hill said organisers were still fine-tuning the balance between ticket prices, overall cost to visitors and operational efficiency, but the race had largely reached the level of "maturity" the city wanted when it extended the Formula One deal for two more years to 2027.

"We're trying to find the balance between what the right ticket pricing is, what the total pricing should be, as well as continue to improve the logistics," he said.

F1 officials said the glamorous Saturday night race down the famed Las Vegas Strip was drawing strong interest this year thanks to the range of ticket prices.

"This year we had repositioned ourselves around our ticketing proposition, and we're pacing really, really well for a sell-out," said Emily Prazer, the chief commercial officer at Formula One.

Hill said the mood around the city was upbeat ahead of the race.

"Ticket sales have been great, input from hotels that I've gotten has been universally positive. Everybody seems very positive about this week," he said.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

International travel patterns have been mixed, Hill said, with a steep drop in Canadian visitors contrasting with growth from Mexico, the United Kingdom and Australia.

"Tariffs and talk about 51st states and things like that haven't been helpful from a tourism standpoint for sure," he said, noting Canadian visitation heading into November was down about 20 per cent to 25 per cent.

Canadians usually account for about 3.5 per cent of total visitors, he said.

"From the rest of our international visitation, it's been kind of a mixed bag," Hill said.

(Supersport)

Verstappen needs to win big in Vegas to stay in title contention

EVEN if he cannot win the Formula One title in Las Vegas this weekend, McLaren's Lando Norris could end Max Verstappen's reign on the same floodlit Strip where the Red Bull driver celebrated a fourth successive crown last year. If Verstappen falls too far behind the Briton after the Saturday night spectacular then McLaren, already constructors' champions for a second year in a row, will be assured of both titles in the same season for the first time since 1998.

The Dutch driver is third overall and 49 points adrift of championship leader Norris, who makes his career 150th race start on Saturday, with 58 remaining to be won in the last two rounds after Las Vegas.

Norris needs to stretch his lead over Verstappen by nine points to ensure the final races of the triple header – Qatar and Abu Dhabi – become a straight title duel between him and second-placed teammate Oscar Piastri, who is 24 points behind.

Australian Piastri could equally take back the overall lead if he wins and Norris fails to score.

VEGAS COULD BE A BIG CHALLENGE FOR MCLAREN

The only problem is McLaren do not expect it to be one of their stronger races, with Mercedes and Ferrari likely in the mix as well as Red Bull.

"I think it was our worst race last year," Norris said, of a track with low grip and possibly the coldest temperatures of the season, after winning in Brazil this month.

"Mercedes were incredibly strong there last year, as well as Red Bull and Ferrari. I think we were the bottom of those four. So we'll wait and see.

"Obviously we've improved a lot of things this year, so I'm not going to be too negative about it."

McLaren have won 14 of 21 so far and Norris is chasing his third win in a row, after Mexico

and Brazil. He has now beaten his Australian teammate in the last six races.

Another win would be a huge step towards a first title for the 26-year-old but Verstappen showed, in coming from the pitlane to third at Interlagos, that you dismiss him at your peril.

"We will try and perform as best we can and keep pushing as we have nothing to lose," said Verstappen, winner in 2023.

"Vegas is a fast circuit, there is low downforce and temperatures look pretty low this week so we will need to be managing our tyres well."

Norris knows what to expect: "Max will be a threat because he always is," he said after Interlagos. "He's always there, he's always fighting and I'm sure he'll fight to the end."

Last year's winner George Russell has a milestone of his own to celebrate, like Norris making his 150th start, while rookie Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli is fresh from his best result yet of second in Brazil.

Mercedes are second overall but still battling Ferrari and Red Bull for the runner-up slot and taking nothing for granted.

Ferrari have something to prove after a grim double retirement in Brazil led to the Italian team's chairman John Elkann suggesting drivers Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton should talk less and focus on driving.

"Over the past few events we have showed good speed and have been able to fight at the front. We will aim to repeat it this weekend," said team boss Fred Vasseur.

One title that will be decided this weekend is the all-female F1 Academy, with Ferrari's Maya Weug and Mercedes' championship leader Doriane Pin fighting for supremacy in the final round on Saturday.

Frenchwoman Pin is nine points clear of her Dutch rival.

(Supersport)



Resilient Haiti deserved World Cup qualification says coach

SQUAD unity and resilience were the overriding factors behind Haiti's unlikely qualification for the World Cup, coach Sebastien Migne said after a 2-0 triumph over Nicaragua secured the strife-torn Caribbean nation a place at the 2026 finals.

Haiti overcame considerable odds to qualify for their second World Cup appearance, after a disastrous debut in 1974, topping their qualifying group.

That was despite the team being forced to play all their matches away from the country where armed gangs have taken control of almost all of the capital, Port-au-Prince, amid a conflict that has forced some 1.3 million people from their homes and fuelled famine-level hunger.

"It's fantastic that after 52 years' absence Haiti has qualified for the biggest footballing stage," Migne told a press conference on Tuesday

in Curacao, where they hosted their last fixture.

They had a few hundred supporters watching them qualify and Migne addressed a single reporter afterwards in an empty press conference room in stark contrast to the packed auditoriums where coaches from top teams field the media's questions.

"I'm happy to make everybody proud and for my players because they deserve it. I sometimes pushed the older players to the limits, but it wasn't for nothing," Migne said.

"We had a road map laid out from the beginning. We knew where we were going but we also knew it would be a steep road. But we didn't give it up, we did it all together."

Haiti had been trailing in the standings after Honduras beat them 3-0 in October but bounced back to ensure first place in Group C with wins over Costa Rica and Nicaragua in their final two fixtures over the

past six days.

"We never panicked. I know how to do it because I qualified for the previous World Cup with another country," the manager added.

Migne was the assistant coach of Cameroon at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"It's about keeping calm, working collectively, and that's what we did. And on top of that, we had some quality. So once we were connected to one another, I had no problems, and then it was crazy, high-level resilience."

COACH HOPES TO TRAVEL TO SEE LOCAL PLAYERS

The key to qualification was unity, he added. "Unity, unity, and more unity. We also refreshed the team by introducing a couple of new faces, but we are not a perfect team. However, the more matches we play, the better this team will be. We are going to grow with experience."

(Supersport)

Arsenal to end partnership with Visit Rwanda

PREMIER League leaders Arsenal will end their partnership deal with Rwanda at the end of this season, the African country's development board announced on Wednesday.

The Visit Rwanda partnership, signed eight seasons ago, had increasingly come under scrutiny due to spiralling violence in mineral-rich eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, which borders Rwanda.

The DRC accuses Rwanda of arming and supporting the M23 militia, which has seized swathes of DRC territory since taking up arms in 2021.

The conflict has killed thousands of people and triggered a humanitarian crisis, although the



VISIT RWANDA

DRC and M23 have signed a ceasefire deal and peace framework in recent months.

Arsenal fans in April protested against the ongoing partnership,

which involves the Visit Rwanda logo being carried on the sleeves of the players' jerseys.

"Arsenal and the Rwanda Development Board have mutually agreed to conclude their partnership at the end of this season, bringing to

a close an eight-season collaboration that included Visit Rwanda as Arsenal's first Official Sleeve Partner," the Rwanda Development Board said in a statement.

Rwanda still has other partnerships with European giants Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern Munich and with Atletico Madrid.

(Supersport)



▲ Max Verstappen.

Who will rise, fall?



By Chris Dlamini

The games are coming in thick and fast. Interestingly, every match week has mouthwatering fixtures and unexpected results - giants bite the dust to minnows in this league. As is, some will be looking to make amends after last week's setbacks, while others could fall again, or find it

tough winning against some giant-killing minnows.

Surely, every team wants the same thing - the maximum three points, and that makes it even more interesting. The coaches have the pressure to produce positive results, and already, some are under the microscope and must shape up or ship out. The players are expected to carry their clubs and take responsibility while the supporters only come to cheer and return home after the final whistle. We briefly highlight some of the intriguing details about some of the fixtures.

Buffaloes for revenge

Young Buffaloes vs. Green Mamba
Date: Saturday, November 22, 2025
Venue: Mayaluka Stadium, Big Bend
Kick-off: 3pm

It's a security forces' derby between the army team Young Buffaloes and the Correctional Services outfit Green Mamba. After an inconsistent start by both sides, it is Green Mamba who has had a good run in the last three matches which took them up to third in the standings with 11 points, two behind leaders Manzini Sea Birds. Green Mamba has played one game more than yet-to-convince Buffaloes. The latter did not have the best of starts, and ahead of this derby clash, they had a mid-week fixture on Wednesday (yesterday) against a giant-killing Tabankulu Celtics. It was a must-win match for the coach Dominic Kunene-led side as they play catch-up. They are four points behind Green Mamba and five behind leaders Manzini Sea Birds. This derby is one that neither side will want to lose as the first round is almost halfway through, and soon, the language and mode will change to the

E120 000 first round incentive race. The host side, Emathole Ezinyathi, lacks consistency. Kunene knows he has the quality, and it should not be long before they get their rhythm stable for consistency. It is a game full of stars and experience, for that matter. Winning is all these two need, but will any of them win, or will it be a share of the spoils?

Players to watch:

- Leon 'Chuster' Manyisa (Y. Buffaloes midfielder)
- Sandile 'Saviola' Gamedze (Y. Buffaloes attacking midfielder)
- Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa (G. Mamba forward)
- Banele 'Pupu' Sikhondze (G. Mamba midfielder)

LOG STANDINGS:

Y. Buffaloes - 10th (7 points)
G. Mamba - 3rd (11 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

Y. Buffaloes
D W L L W
G. Mamba
L D W W D

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

07/12/24
G. Mamba 2-0 Y. Buffaloes
03/05/25
Y. Buffaloes 1-1 G. Mamba

Mwase's 3-game ultimatum starts

Nsingizini Hotspurs vs Moneni Pirates
Date: Saturday, November 22, 2025
Venue: King Sobhuza II Stadium, Nhllangano
Kick-off: 3pm

When a team wins, the players always get the credit, but when it loses, the coach is responsible. That is just how it is, and also the very reason Malawian gaffer Meck Mwase and his assistant Charles Manda find themselves under scrutiny at Moneni Pirates after six league games and one 8Bet Trade Fair Cup last 16 match. The duo has been given a three-match ultimatum to get their team together or ship out. The Moneni supporters know their team, and once they start mumbling, it is not for nothing. Mwase needs to bring back their fast-attacking one-two football that took them to two major finals last season.

Away to the faltering defending champions, Nsingizini Hotspurs on Saturday, Mwase's troops have a tough one as the green and white side is also having its amends to make after going down to elite rookies Tabankulu Celtics last week. The latter inflicted a 2-0 damage to make it to defeats in five matches for Insingizi Ye-zu-

lu (Nsingizini). As is, the two sides are two points apart. Moneni has seven on the 11th spot, and Insingizi has nine points on seventh. A win is vital for both teams and coaches as even Mandla Qhogi is not safe at Nsingizini if this game and a couple more goes against them.

With a mission to defend their first-ever title and return to the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League for a second consecutive time, Qhogi needs to get his team to win games consistently. His first task was the mid-week away pending fixture in Pigg's Peak inside the Killarney Stadium against an unbeaten Malanti Chiefs since their return in the topflight after they were relegated in the 2021/22 season. This article was compiled ahead of that clash. If all goes well, then Nsingizini could be second by the time you read this.

Players To Watch:

- Kwakhe Thwala (Ns. Hotspurs defensive midfielder)
- Thubelihle Mavuso (Ns. Hotspurs wing midfielder)
- Senanelo Nkambule (M. Pirates forward)
- Biko Sibandze (M. Pirates wing forward)

LOG STANDINGS:

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

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

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

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

02/09/25 - 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26
M. Chiefs 0-0 Ns. Hotspurs
(Ns. Hotspurs won 4-1 after penalties)

It's swim or drown for Leopard

Manzini Sea Birds vs Royal Leopard
Date: Saturday, November 2, 2025
Venue: Nsukuwansuku Stadium, Mhlume
Kick-off: 3pm

Four consecutive wins, the summit, and eight points clear of their faltering star-studded rivals, Royal Leopard. That is Manzini Sea Birds, who are on good run and deservedly sit at the apex of the standings with a good 13 points. Sea Birds are a tough side with some quality and experienced stars like Philani Mkhonto, who has four goals already, Muzi Tsabedze and Joseph Kibonge. The latter has three goals, and he will be one of the players Leopard needs to keep a close watch on. It has hardly been easy meetings between these two, and this time, Sea Birds look ready to give Leopard nothing but defeat. After all, Sea Birds managed a 1-all draw and lost 3-0 to the police outfit and runners-up last season. Leopard has amends to make after a shock 3-0 defeat to Tabankulu Celtics, followed by a goalless draw against minnows and rookies Amaweale. It has already been two defeats for coach Edwin Matsebula and his team, all the reason they need to stamp up their authority, live up to their billing. It is high time Leopard's stars rise to the occasion and fight for the three points amid Sea Birds' also showing signs they were not about to slow down.



By Chris Dlamini

WHAT a way to win and stay atop!

In a star-studded Manzini/Matsapha Zonal Sphana Investments League second round match, leaders Manzini Pool Club (MPC) and Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) put up a game of their lives on Saturday.

REPS went to the game sitting third on the standings and looking to catch up.

However, despite being the better team for most of the game, the star-studded police side would also blow up their leads such that tje talent and experience of Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula and Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane was too much for them to handle. The duo ensured they came back into the match when each won four out of five frames.

MPC was about retaining their place at the top and they did with a narrow 13-12 margin. Star players Sibusiso ‘Mabura’ Nhlabatsi (REPS) and Bharuka had to play the deciding frame after yet another decorated star Flag Nxumalo made it 12-10.

REPS was looking to move to second from third but could not dislodge Give Thanks who they face this Saturday in the Sphana Investments Manzini/Matsapha Zone Pool League.

They took a 6-2 lead but blew ot before again going in front. This blockbuster match was about the points and bragging rights and had the new MPC arena so alive.

The match started on a high, after REPS led 6-2 and 6-4. They extended their lead to 8-4 after the break, before MPC made amends to make it 8-7 through Langza, Bharuka and Linda.

REPS then upped the tempo through Mabura, Siyabonga Dlamini and Sifiso Dlamini to extend their lead to make it 12-8 with wonderful clearances.

At 12-8, Dodge had to dig deep into his reserves to wrestle crucial points against Siyabonga and Khanyokuhle Simelane, to make it 12-9 and 12-11 respectively.

MPC continued to mount a comeback when Malangeni won his frame against Siyabonga to make it 12-12.

This meant the frame between Mabura and Bharuka became a decider for the match.

REPS stunned in MPC star duo comeback



▲ Pool star Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane.

Mabura, who had won all his frames at this stage, had the upper hand in the frame after Bharuka had committed an unforced foul, leaving Mabura with open balls to go for a win.

However, a poor position on the blackball left Mabura with a difficult cut shot which

eventually led to a scratch, opening the door for Baruka, who was left with 3 balls, to lead MPC to a pulsating 12-13 victory.

This result left MPC on top of the log table with 55 points, followed by Give Thanks with 51 points. REPS remains third with 45 points.



▲ Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula.

Match Statistics:

REPS Pool Team
Siyabonga 2/5
Khanyo 3/5
Mabura 4/5
Xokza 2/5
Thobani 0/2
Sifiso 1/2

MPC

Langza 3/5
Flag 1/3
Dodge 4/5
Linda 1/3
Aviator 0/2
Hero 0/2
Bharuka 4/5

ECSA ‘cues’ for excellence in IOC/WPA

By Chris Dlamini

LEARNING never stops. The Eswatini Cue Sports Association (ECSA) is over the moon about the opportunity to partake in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and World Pool Association (WPA) Coaching Programme.

The programme took place in Kenya from November 12-16 in Kenya. ECSA was represented by its secretary Mbongeni ‘Mdlkiza’ Gamedze who is already back home.

“We are excited to be part of such an important initiative. We are grateful to IOC, WPA, EOCGA and the Sports Council for the opportunity,” said ECSA President Muntu Dlamini.

He also posted on his Facebook account timeline that for Eswatini, this was nothing but ‘cuing for excellence’. The programme has been initiated by IOC and WPA and will be annual.

Eswatini and three member countries



▲ ECSA Secretary Mbongeni Gamdze with international instructor Jorgen Sandman in Kenya.

backed the programme. It was Eswatini, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia.

The programme is continental and meant to augment coaching capacity across all members. Meanwhile, there was no immediate comment from Gamedze who

was part of the programme led by WP Sports Director Jorgen Sandman.

On a sad note, Gamedze returned home only to be met by the unfortunate news of the passing of one of the game’s players. A former France Pool Team player, Bongani

‘Sagila’ Dvuba lost his life. He was last registered with Manzini Regional Pool Association (MRPA) member team, Stairs.

Details of his demise were still scanty, but every local pool page confirmed and passed condolences.

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

Malanti Chiefs..... (0) 0,
Nsingizini Hotspurs..... (2) 3,
Neliswa Dlamini 31st, 53rd, Joel Madonda 34th

EVERYTHING has its own ending. MTN Premier League defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs have ended Malanti Chiefs’ five-match unbeaten run with a 3-0 win over returnees.

The Green and white ensemble conquered the home side at their own backyard, the Kilarney Stadium, in front of over 400 fans on Wednesday. This was a morale-boosting win for the Mandla Qhogi-led side following the recent 2-0 away loss to Tambankulu Celtics, moving to the second spot with 12 points in the log standings after six matches.

The visitors had to wait until the half hour mark to break the deadlock through Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini with a powerful volley inside the box after a good attacking move.

The motley travelling fans were in cloud nine three minutes later when Joel Madonda doubled the advantage with a well-taken strike inside the box past the diving Bongiswa Dlamini between the opposition goal.

The Ugandan player’s goal gave the Mandla Qhogi led side a two-goal cushion heading to the break. Nsingizini continued where they left off during the last half as ‘Tiger’ completed his brace eight minutes into the resumption of play

Tiger-ish Nsingizini ends Malanti unbeaten run



with a sublime finish against the run of play. Malanti Chiefs coach Sreten Pavlovic made a couple of changes during the last stanza by bringing his two internationals, Daniel Appiah (Ghana) and Gift Namieg (South Africa), in a bid to change fortunes.

Nsingizini protected until the full time, returning to winning ways in an emphatic fashion following their shared glory with Amazulu in the Prince Mangosuthu Cup.

Other matches saw Royal Leopards suffer their third consecutive loss to Ezulwini United by 1-0 while Young Buffaloes pipped Tambankulu Celtics by a solitary goal.

... Maverick midfielder Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini grabs a brace in Nsingizini’s 3-0 win which brought Malanti Chiefs five-match winning streak to a juddering halt.



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs fans celebrating a goal. (Top) The team in action yesterday.



▲ Prcy Shongwe.

Percy assumes physical trainer role at Ubombo Sugar

FORMER Red Rhinos coach Percy Shongwe has found a new home at Ubombo Sugar FC.

Shongwe has assumed the role of physical trainer following his shocking exit at the MulaSport National First Division side.

He is now part of the technical bench headed by interim coach Van Rooyen Magagula.

Other members include three interim assistant coaches: Sihle Mavimbela, Mandla Dlamini, and Themba Tsabedze.

The interim technical bench was roped in after the departure of former head coach Gcina Dlamini to Manzini Wanderers.

Ubombo Sugar FC Public Relations Officer (PRO) Jada Smith confirmed Shongwe’s presence in the team when contacted.

“We are pleased to welcome our new physical trainer to the team and are confident that we will add value to the technical bench. Our mission is to have a competitive team throughout the team; hence, we have strengthened the technical bench,” she said.

Shongwe comes with wealth of experience, having coached several Premier League clubs such as Manzini Wanderers, Moneni Pirates, Manzini Sundowns and the defunct Vovovo FC, among others.

Ubombo Sugar is sitting at position 15 in the MTN premier League standings with five points after six matches.

The Big Bend based side recently clinched a three-year technical sponsorship with Primo.

Instacash Lubombo Social Sports Day set to thrill Simunye folk

THE sugarcane-scented air of Simunye will be filled with the roar of supporters when Instacash stages its biggest community event the Lubombo Social Sports Day on Saturday, 22 November 2025 at Simunye Stadium.

This inaugural one-day sporting festival will see three tournaments unfold simultaneously on the stadium’s main pitch and adjoining courts.

A mammoth 40-team social soccer knockout – one of the largest single-day tournaments ever organised in the region – will battle for glory alongside fiercely contested social netball and volleyball competitions. By sunset, three sets of champions will lift trophies, with all finals scheduled under floodlights to crown an unforgettable day.

What sets the event apart is its heart. Every lilangeni collected through team registration fees, gate takings and spectator donations will be handed directly to charities operating in the Lubombo region. Organisers say the initiative is a deliberate move to channel the passion Emaswati have for sport into tangible support for vulnerable families, orphanages and health programmes in the area.

Instacash Managing Director Mandla ‘Cheeks’ Nxumalo described the occasion as a milestone in the company’s journey.

“The growth of Instacash is on the people in different parts of Eswatini transacting on the



▲ Instacash MD Mandla ‘Cheeks’ Nxumalo.

Instacash platform,” Nxumalo said. “This is an exciting time and we look forward to having Emaswati come through and enjoy different games whilst using the Instacash platform. Events like these allow us to say thank you to the communities that have embraced digital financial inclusion and to give back in a meaningful way.”

The sporting spectacle has attracted high-profile partners. Global sportswear brand Joma has come on board with kit and equipment support, while Good Shepherd Catholic Hospital and College of Health Sciences have lent its name and moral backing to the initiative, underscoring the health-and-community focus of the day.

From early morning, gates will open at 7am, with the first soccer

matches kicking off at 8am sharp. Netball and volleyball courts will run parallel schedules, ensuring non-stop action across the venue. Between fixtures, families can look forward to a vibrant sideline village: food vendors serving sizzling braai and local delicacies.

Instacash is urging attendees to go cashless where possible. “Download the app, load your wallet and experience how quick and easy it is to pay for everything from entrance fees to cold drinks,” Nxumalo added.

Point-of-sale agents will be on site to assist first-time users, turning the sports day into a practical showcase of mobile-money convenience.

Teams from Siteki, Big Bend, Siphofaneni and Mhlume have already confirmed participation.



**Ancelotti
confident
Brazil will
improve**

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**Percy assumes
physical trainer
role at Ubombo
Sugar**

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Eswatini Thursday 20
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Sport

**3
vs
0**



►►► SHISELWENI-BASED OUTFIT BACK TO WINNING WAYS IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE AS...

Tiger-ish Nsingizini ends Malanti unbeaten run

● **Maverick midfielder Neliswa 'Tiger' Dlamini grabs a brace in Nsingizini's 3-0 win which brought Malanti Chiefs five-match winning streak to a juddering halt. Page 23**