



NOTHANDO  
HLOPHE CROWNED

Nothando Hlophe  
wins Crown Gospel  
‘Best Of Africa’  
Award

By Siphesihle Dlamini

ESWATINI’s gospel sensation Nothando Hlophe has been honoured with the prestigious ‘Best Of Africa’ award at the 18th Crown Gospel Music Awards. Received on Sunday at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, this accolade highlights her significant contribution to African gospel music and cements her status as one of the continent’s leading voices in the genre. The Crown Gospel Music Awards, now in its 18th edition, is widely regarded as the premier platform recognising excellence in African gospel music.

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By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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The Crown Gospel Music Awards, now in its 18th edition, is widely regarded as the premier platform recognising excellence in African gospel music.

The event attracts over 30 top artists and key figures from the gospel music industry, creating a vibrant atmosphere where faith and artistry merge with glamour and style.

The awards ceremony is renowned for its iconic red carpet, celebrity fashion displays, and dynamic stage performances, making it a cultural highlight on the African music calendar. More than 25 trophies are awarded across various categories, celebrating diverse talents and encouraging artistic courage within the gospel community. Nothando Hlophe’s triumph at this event is a testament to her enduring

# Nothando Hlophe wins Crown Gospel ‘Best Of Africa’ Award

influence and the spiritual depth she brings to her music.

Her winning of the ‘Best Of Africa’ award reflects not only her vocal prowess but also her ability to connect deeply with audiences across the continent through messages of faith and hope. In addition to this prestigious award, Nothando’s latest musical work continues to captivate listeners.

Her song “Methodist Medley,” featured on her album ‘A New Dawn,’ has surpassed an impressive 2.9 million views on YouTube. The album ‘A New Dawn’ was launched on June 7, 2025, at a lively event held at the Mavuso Trade Centre.

Alongside “Methodist Medley,” other tracks such as “Sithumela Wena” have also resonated strongly with audiences, accumulating over 770,000 views on YouTube, further demonstrating her widespread appeal.

A New Dawn album is produced by Genesis Ekucaleni Media, a media company founded by the pioneering Senator Pholile Shakantu, who is also



▲ Gospel sensation Nothando Hlophe has been honoured with the prestigious ‘Best Of Africa’ award at the 18th Crown Gospel Music Awards.

known for her iconic work on the Eswatini film “BakaNgwane”. Collaborating with Genesis Ekucaleni Media is the talented Lokuhle Media Group, spearheaded by renowned music producer Phindokuhle Sithole. Eswatini Mobile was the main sponsor of the live recording event.

# Wife replaces husband in Bucopho By-elections

By Thokozani Mazibuko

IN a significant political transition, a wife has successfully taken over her husband’s role as Bucopho for Mphumakude in the Siphofaneni Inkhundla.

The former Bucopho, Nqobizitha Mndzebele, was reportedly arrested in South Africa, prompting the need for a by-election.

The election, held on November 22, 2025, saw Gwebu Bawinile Bongekile emerge victorious with 299 votes, securing her place as the new Bucopho. In a statement to EDN, Bongekile confirmed her relationship to the former Bucopho, emphasizing the trust and continuity her family has fostered within the community.

The Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) reported that the by-election was conducted smoothly and peacefully, marking it as a resounding success reflective of Eswatini’s growing electoral maturity. The Commission commended all involved for their commitment to ensuring a credible and well-managed electoral process, which resulted in the successful election of two new Bucopho representatives in Mphumakude and Macudvulwini.

Voter participation was steady, and polling stations operated effectively, with no significant disruptions reported. The collaboration among electoral officers, community leaders, and security personnel was lauded, as it maintained order and allowed every eligible voter to exercise their democratic right.

In Macudvulwini, Kunene Sibusiso claimed victory with 150 votes, earning the confidence of his constituents to advocate for community needs and development



▲ Sibusiso Kunene, the new Bucopho at Macudvulwini.

initiatives. Meanwhile, Bongekile’s win in Mphumakude was particularly poignant, as it not only signified a continuation of her husband’s legacy but also served as a testament to the trust the community places in her leadership abilities.

The EBC formally congratulated the newly elected Bucopho representatives and reminded them of their responsibilities to govern with diligence, integrity, and a deep understanding of community needs. They emphasized the importance of strong communication with residents, transparent administration, and active engagement in local governance.

Mbonisi Bhembe, the Communication Officer for the EBC, expressed satisfaction with the civic responsibility displayed by voters. “Peaceful elections enhance community trust in democratic institutions,” he stated, underscoring the necessity for local governance to remain accountable and representative.



▲ The new Bucopho of Mphumakude under the Siphofaneni Inkhundla Bawinile Gwebu. She has replaced her husband, Nqobizitha Mndzebele.

The success of these by-elections reflects broader progress in local political participation. Bucopho representatives play a pivotal role in grassroots governance by coordinating community projects, addressing concerns, and facilitating dispute resolution. Therefore, their effective election is crucial for service delivery and community cohesion.

Bongekile’s election, transitioning into a role once held by her husband, symbolizes both resilience and continuity within the community. Many residents conveyed optimism that she would build on existing foundations while infusing her individual vision and leadership style into the role. Her victory also highlights the increasing recognition and inclusion of women in local governance, paving the way for a more

balanced leadership landscape.

As the newly elected representatives prepare to assume office, the EBC encouraged them to engage with their communities immediately and prioritize urgent development needs. They also called on constituents to actively participate in supporting their leaders through dialogue and unity.

With the 2025 by-elections now concluded, the Elections and Boundaries Commission reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining transparent, efficient, and people-centred electoral processes. They expressed pride in the peaceful conduct of the election and urged the nation to continue fostering a democratic culture through active and responsible participation in future electoral endeavours.



# Dr Thokozani Nkambule makes history

By EDN Reporter

WHEN Dr Thokozani Mpendulo Nkambule arrived for his first session at Harvard Business School earlier this year, he wasn't just another executive settling into a new classroom.

He was the only Liswati in the AMP209 cohort and the first from Eswatini ever to complete the school's Advanced Management Program. The moment carried the weight of home, and he knew it.

His achievement is a milestone for the country as much as it is for him. Eswatini rarely features in global executive education circles dominated by bigger economies, yet here was one of its own stepping into one of the world's most competitive leadership programmes.

Dr Nkambule talks about the experience with a sense of gratitude, and he doesn't shy away from acknowledging the people who helped make it possible. High on that list is Inyatsi Group Holdings Executive Chairman, Michelo Shakantu, whose support opened the door to Harvard. "I will always be grateful," he says. "Opportunities like this change how you see the world and how you think about leading at home."

Shakantu is often associated with his role at the helm of Inyatsi, but those close to him speak more about the support he offers quietly: scholarships, mentorship, and community projects that have changed lives across Eswatini. Over the years, he has helped pay school fees for children from low-income families, backed university students who had nowhere else to turn, and supported development initiatives in several communities.

Dr Nkambule attributes Shakantu's mentorship and support as an enabler for him to pursue the course and also for paving the way for him to lead Lidwala Insurance. Nkambule adds: "I have learned so much from the Chairman over the years that I have worked with him. He has been both a mentor and a father figure and has helped me to grow into the business leader that I am today."

He adds that Harvard's AMP is not a course one signs up for on a whim. Established in 1945, it is the school's flagship senior leadership programme, reserved for executives who already influence sectors and shape economies. Over several intensive weeks, participants tackle complex global business challenges, study governance and digital disruption, examine organisational

► Dr Thokozani Nkambule says the course was life-changing.

... as first liSwati to join Harvard's Elite AMP Alumni



▲ Dr Thokozani Nkambule at a podium at Harvard.



Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program 209  
September 7 - November 21, 2025



transformation, and explore how leaders make decisions when everything is on the line.

"It is a space filled with people who have built banks, run multinationals and influenced public policy," Dr Nkambule says. "You realise quickly that you're part of something bigger."

Becoming an AMP alumnus means joining a global network of high-impact leaders. Dr Nkambule now stands in the company of several who have publicly confirmed completing the programme,

including:

#### South Africa

- Maria Ramos – Former CEO, Absa Group & Transnet
- Funke Ighodaro – Former CFO, MTN Group
- Sifiso Dabengwa – Former Group CEO, MTN

#### Global

- Anne Mulcahy (USA) – Former CEO & Chairperson, Xerox
- A.G. Lafley (USA) – Former CEO, Procter & Gamble
- Michael Sabia (Canada) – Former CEO, BCE Inc.; Former Deputy Minister of Finance
- Roberto Setúbal (Brazil) – Former CEO, Itaú Unibanco

For the first time, Eswatini now has its own name on that list.

Those who know Dr Nkambule will say Harvard is a fitting step for a career built on resilience and transformation. As Managing Director of Lidwala Insurance Company, he has pushed the business into a new era, strengthening profitability, sharpening competitiveness and positioning the company as one of the fastest-growing insurers in the country. He has modernised systems, restructured operations and invested in leadership capacity across the organisation.

Before Lidwala, he worked across telecommunications, construction, finance and real estate in several African markets. He was part of the



▲ Dr Thokozani Nkambule is hoisting Eswatini's flag high.

founding leadership team at Eswatini Mobile, helping steer the company to positive EBITDA within four years, an achievement many considered ambitious at launch. At Inyatsi Group, he helped strengthen governance, oversaw multi-country financial operations and led system upgrades that prepared the company for further expansion.

All this sits on top of a strong academic foundation: a Doctorate in Finance, an ACCA qualification, a master's degree from the University of London and executive leadership training from institutions across Africa and beyond.

What gives the Harvard milestone even greater meaning is what he hopes to bring back home.

The AMP pushes leaders to think deeply about purpose, service and legacy. For Eswatini, his return offers several possibilities:

#### Stronger governance and leadership:

The frameworks he gained can help bring global decision-making standards into local boardrooms.

#### International networks:

Harvard's alumni community opens doors to conversations and partnerships that small economies often struggle to access.

#### Sharper strategy for national goals:

His training aligns with the country's priorities in diversification, infrastructure, innovation and competitiveness.

#### A new generation of leaders:

Colleagues describe him as someone who encourages young professionals to study further, think broadly and commit to excellence.

For Dr Nkambule, the journey was personal, a chance to stretch himself, learn from the world and carry Eswatini's flag into one of the toughest executive classrooms on the planet.

For the country, it is a reminder that global excellence is within reach. His achievement breaks new ground and widens the path for those who will follow: the young accountants, engineers, analysts and future CEOs who will see his story and imagine their own.

As the first Liswati to earn this distinguished alumni status, Dr Nkambule has set a new benchmark. And in doing so, he has given Eswatini one more reason to believe in what is possible.





Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

PRIME Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini has presented detailed responses to critical questions raised by the Cabinet Portfolio Committee regarding the status of the Police Service Commission and the long-awaited Insurance and Medical Cover Fund for police officers.

The Committee had requested clarity on progress made in both areas which are regarded as essential pillars for strengthening governance within the Royal Eswatini Police Service and ensuring the welfare and protection of officers who risk their lives daily to maintain law and order.

In his written response the Prime Minister outlined that the establishment of the Police Service Commission is both a constitutional and statutory requirement. He confirmed that significant steps have already been taken by the Office of the National Commissioner to operationalise the Commission. According to the update the National Commissioner has already presented a proposal to Cabinet. The proposal received approval and has since been forwarded to all relevant stakeholders including the Ministry of Public Service and the Ministry of Finance for further implementation processes.

The Prime Minister stressed that the Office of the National Commissioner is in constant engagement with these ministries. The main objective of the ongoing consultations is to establish the Secretariat of the Police Service Commission and to facilitate the appointment of Commissioners. He explained that these engagements are now at an advanced stage. The focus is on ensuring that the Commission becomes functional as soon as the administrative processes are completed. The establishment of the Police Service Commission is expected to strengthen oversight enhance human resource management within the police service and align national policing structures with constitutional requirements.

The Portfolio Committee also sought an update on the progress made toward establishing an Insurance and Medical Cover Fund for police officers. This fund is meant to provide compensation and medical support for officers who are injured or lose their

THE Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued a strong public warning following the circulation of a fraudulent artificial intelligence generated video falsely linked to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The video, which has been shared across social media platforms and private messaging groups, is described as a deliberate attempt to mislead the public and harvest personal information through a malicious online link. In a formal statement released on Monday, the Office expressed deep concern about the growing sophistication of online scams that use digitally altered content to impersonate public figures.

The Office emphasized that the circulating video is not authentic and that the Deputy Prime Minister has no connection to the message or the suspicious link attached to it. According to the statement, the entire content was digitally fabricated with the intention of exploiting unsuspecting citizens who may click on the link or engage with the misleading message.

The Office stressed that the public should treat the content as a clear attempt at fraud. Officials highlighted that the rise of arti-

# Police Service Commission will be in place soon – PM



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini.

lives in the line of duty. The Prime Minister explained that this issue is fully provided for in Part IX of the Police Service Act which makes it mandatory for such a fund to be created. The Office of the National Commissioner has been working closely with the Ministry of Finance to bring the provisions of the Act to life.

According to the Prime Minister the Office of the National Commissioner submitted a formal request to the Ministry of Finance to develop regulations that would guide the implementation of the fund. These regulations are expected to govern important matters such as eligibility criteria procedures for accessibility compensation guidelines and mechanisms for medical care for officers. These measures are aligned with the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act of 2017 which prescribes how public funds must be regulated and protected.

The Ministry of Finance has already pro-

duced a draft of the regulations. The Prime Minister revealed that ongoing consultations between the National Commissioner and the Ministry aim to harmonise the draft with the provisions of the Police Service Act. This process is considered essential to ensure that the regulations are legally sound practical and responsive to the needs of the police service. The consultations follow established government procedures where all regulations must be scrutinised and aligned across ministries before they can be implemented.

An important revelation in the Prime Minister's response is that the draft regulations that will support the Insurance and Medical Cover Fund have far wider implications. He explained that these regulations fall under Section 41 of the Public Finance Management Act. This means the regulations will not apply exclusively to the police service but will extend to all security forces and

services in the country. The draft is therefore named the Security Forces and Services Compensation Special Fund Regulations 2025. This broader scope is expected to standardise how compensation and medical support are administered across all state security institutions.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the intention is to ensure that members of the police service defence force and other uniformed security agencies receive fair and consistent treatment in matters of compensation and welfare. This approach is aimed at improving morale strengthening institutional support and acknowledging the sacrifices made by security personnel across the country. The inclusive nature of the draft regulations also reflects a coordinated approach toward managing risks and financial obligations associated with frontline service in the security cluster.

Despite the progress made the Prime Minister acknowledged that finalisation of the regulations is still underway. Once the consultations are completed and adjustments implemented the draft regulations will follow the formal adoption process which includes legal scrutiny approval and publication before they can be operationalised. He reassured the Committee that the Office of the National Commissioner remains committed to fast tracking the implementation of the fund. The Office views the fund as a critical component of the welfare system for police officers and an important instrument for honouring the commitment of those who serve the nation.

The responses by the Prime Minister have provided clarity on two major governance and welfare concerns that have been widely discussed within the security sector. The establishment of the Police Service Commission is expected to introduce structured oversight and professional management in line with constitutional expectations. At the same time the Insurance and Medical Cover Fund promises to offer tangible support to officers and their families particularly in times of tragedy or injury.

## Scam alert video sparks DPM warning



tent. Officials cautioned that forwarding or reposting misleading information contributes to its spread and increases the likelihood that more people will be targeted. The public was reminded that awareness and responsible online behavior play a critical role in countering cybercrime.

The Office also highlighted that online scammers often rely on curiosity and fear

to manipulate their victims. They frequently associate fraudulent content with well-known individuals or respected public offices to create a sense of legitimacy. This tactic is not new but has become more prevalent as digital platforms grow and as cybercriminals refine their methods. Eswatini has witnessed a steady rise in online fraud incidents over the past few years, prompting government offices and law enforcement agencies to increase their vigilance and public education efforts.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated its commitment to ensuring transparent and secure communication with the public. It encouraged citizens to rely solely on official government channels for updates, statements and announcements. Any communication purported to come from the Deputy Prime Minister or the Office should be cross checked with official social media pages, press releases or government websites before being believed or shared.



Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

# Uncle arrested for allegedly raping a 6-year-old girl



IN a distressing event that has left the Siphofaneni community reeling, the local police have arrested and charged a 30-year-old man from Madvubeni for violating the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018.

The suspect has been accused of sexually abusing a six-year-old girl, an incident that has raised significant concerns surrounding child safety and the protection of vulnerable individuals within society.

The disturbing events transpired on 18 November 2025, when the victim's grandparents entrusted the care of their two granddaughters, including the victim and her twin sister, to the accused while they attended church services. This decision, meant to provide the children with a safe environment, tragically turned into a nightmare. Reports indicate that during the absence of their guardians, the suspect allegedly took advantage of the young girl, committing the horrific act of rape in full view of her twin sister. This appalling breach of trust has left an indelible mark on the lives of the children involved and, on the community, at large.

The situation became known to the authorities two days after the incident occurred. The twin sister, seemingly confused by the suspect's ongoing presence in their home, approached their grandmother with questions that would ultimately reveal the truth. Concerned about why the man had not been arrested, she detailed the events that had taken place in his care, highlighting the distressing information she had learned at school regarding the illegality of such acts. This moment of bravery demonstrated the girl's understanding of right and wrong, prompting her grandmother to immediately contact the police.

The response from law enforcement was swift, with officers arriving promptly to apprehend the suspect and take him into custody. This rapid intervention underscores the commitment of law enforcement to addressing crimes against children and ensuring that justice is served. The accused

is scheduled to appear before the Big Bend Magistrates Court on Monday, where legal proceedings will commence. The case has captured public attention and serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of vigilance within communities, especially regarding the protection of young and vulnerable individuals.

Following the incident, Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni issued a statement expressing her deep concern over the case. She emphasized the critical need for reporting any suspicions of abuse, stating, "We urge community members to remain vigilant and proactive in reporting any suspicious behavior. The safety and dignity of our children must be our utmost priority. It is imperative that we work together to create an environment where abuse of any kind is not tolerated."

Considering this tragic incident, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has reiterated their commitment to protecting the rights of children. They have called on parents and guardians to be mindful of whom they entrust with the care of their children, encouraging open communication between children and their families about safety and boundaries.

The horror of child abuse is an issue that

resonates across many societies, touching hearts and inciting outrage. In this case, the community of Siphofaneni now finds itself grappling with feelings of disbelief and anger as they come to terms with the events that have unfolded. This incident serves to highlight the necessity of fostering a culture of safety and awareness within families and communities, ensuring that children feel secure and supported in their environments.

In a statement the police pointed out that educators and caregivers must work collectively to instill knowledge in children about their rights and the importance of speaking up against wrongdoing. Young individuals need to be made aware that they are not alone, that they have the power to voice their experiences, and that there are mechanisms in place to protect them. The cops stated that schools and communities should initiate educational programs centred around body autonomy, consent, and identifying safe adults whom they can trust if they feel threatened in any way.

Moreover, according to deputy PICO, it is crucial for community leaders to advocate for policies and programs that support survivors of abuse and provide them with the necessary resources to heal and recover. Access to counselling and support services is essential for victims and their families to



▲ Deputy PICO Nosipho Mnguni

navigate the aftermath of such trauma. The road to recovery is often long and complex, and as a community, the focus should be on fostering environments that promote healing and resilience.

"As we reflect on this heartbreaking incident, it serves as a reminder of the vulnerability of children and the enduring necessity for vigilance, communication, and education within communities. Together, the Siphofaneni community and beyond must unite against the horrors of abuse, working towards a future where children can grow up in safe, nurturing environments free from fear and harm," the Deputy PICO said.

In conclusion, Mnguni pointed out that the tragic events in Siphofaneni should galvanize community action towards a more profound commitment to safeguarding children. "The collaboration between law enforcement, educators, caregivers, and the public is imperative in ensuring that such awful incidents are not repeated and that every child can flourish in safety and dignity," Mnguni stated.

## EBC hails peaceful and successful Bucophu By Election

**THE Elections and Boundaries Commission has expressed satisfaction following what it describes as a peaceful, orderly and highly successful Bucophu by election held over the weekend.**

The Commission confirmed that the voting process proceeded smoothly from the opening of polling stations until the final announcement of results, with no major incidents recorded. According to the Commission, the conduct of voters, candidates, electoral staff and all involved stakeholders reflected a strong sense of civic responsibility and commitment to democratic participation.

The by election was conducted to fill vacant Bucophu positions in two chiefdoms, Macudvulwini and Mphumakudze. After the counting of ballots, the Commission announced Kunene Sibusiso as the winner at Macudvulwini with a total of 150 votes, while Gwebu Bawinile Bongekile secured victory at Mphumakudze with 299 votes. Both results were accepted without objection, a development which the Commission believes demonstrates maturity within the communities as well as trust in the electoral process.

In its statement, the Elections and Boundaries Commission expressed warm congratulations to the successful candidates. It noted that the role of a Bucophu carries significant

responsibility, particularly in matters of community development, local governance and service delivery. The Commission encouraged the newly elected representatives to immediately begin engaging their communities, identifying priority needs and working closely with local leadership structures. It emphasised that the position is more than a title, but a service mandate that requires dedication, transparency and a willingness to represent the interests of the entire chiefdom.

The Commission also extended sincere gratitude to all electoral stakeholders for their cooperation throughout the process. This includes voters who turned out to cast their ballots, electoral officers who ensured professional management of polling stations, security agencies that maintained a peaceful atmosphere and community leaders who supported the organisation of the event. The Commission highlighted that the smooth conduct of the by election was only possible because every participant respected the rules, arrived prepared and showed patience even during peak voting times.

Communication Officer Mbonisi Bhembe noted that this by election once again demonstrated the strength of Eswatini's electoral administration system. He said the Commission has worked tirelessly to ensure that every step

of the process is transparent, predictable and grounded in legal procedures. According to Bhembe, the positive outcome of the recent by election reinforces the public's confidence in the Commission's capacity to organise elections that meet national expectations and align with established democratic practices.

Bhembe further explained that the Commission places strong emphasis on ensuring fairness during the nomination, campaigning and voting phases of all elections. For the by election, the Commission engaged early with community leaders to inform them about the required procedures, voter rights and responsibilities, and the specific timelines guiding the process.

This early engagement created a well informed environment and reduced any possibility of confusion among voters or candidates. He added that the Commission remains committed to constant improvement and regularly evaluates each electoral event for lessons that can enhance future operations.

The peaceful nature of the by election has been highlighted as one of the most encouraging outcomes of the entire exercise. The Commission has noted that elections are often viewed as moments of heightened emotions, particularly when communities must choose between multiple candidates. Despite this,

the process unfolded without conflict, intimidation or disruptions. Polling stations opened on time, queues moved steadily and accredited observers reported calm and cooperation among voters. The Commission attributes this to the deepening culture of peaceful participation that has continued to strengthen across communities in the country.

The Commission also observed the enthusiasm displayed by many first time voters who participated in the by election. It said such participation signals hope for sustained civic engagement and ensures that younger citizens understand the value of contributing to their local governance structures. Bhembe noted that the Commission continues to invest heavily in voter education, especially within rural chiefdoms, because informed voters are essential for the health of the nation's democratic framework.

Looking ahead, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of electoral integrity. It stated that every election, whether national or local, provides an opportunity to refine systems, reinforce transparency and strengthen public trust. The Commission stressed that credible elections depend on responsible collaboration among all parties, and the recent by election stands as a clear example of what can be achieved when communities and institutions work together with shared purpose.



By Delisa Magagula

# 70 000 Emaswati to benefit from new anti-HIV jab

## ... E6.4 million for the first year of roll-out

ESWATINI is preparing to offer long-acting injectable PrEP to more than 70,000 people, following the introduction of lenacapavir (LEN) into the national HIV prevention programme.

Chargé d’Affaires Marc Weinstock said the U.S. Government plans to ensure the medication reaches high-burden countries over the next two years, including tens of thousands of Swati.

He said LEN provides “a powerful and convenient tool for people who want a discreet and long-term HIV prevention option.

Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula said the Ministry is prioritising groups most at risk of new infections, including young women and adolescent girls.

He said expanding prevention access to 70,000 people is a critical step in lowering the country’s still-high rate of new HIV infections.

According to Weinstock, the U.S. has committed over E6.4 million for Eswatini’s first year of roll-out.

He also said Gilead Sciences is supplying the product to the U.S. Government and the Global Fund at cost, without profit, to support access in countries with the highest need.

Meanwhile, Global Fund Executive Director Peter Sands said lenacapavir’s twice-yearly dosing could reduce adherence challenges and stigma.

He said the medication arrived in Eswatini less than four months after WHO’s

recommendation, describing the speed as a result of bold leadership from the Ministry of Health and strong coordination through NERCHA, CANGO, CIFF, PEPFAR and the wider Global Fund partnership.

“Eswatini’s performance in the HIV response including achieving 98-98-98 against the UNAIDS treatment cascade has created a strong foundation for scaling up new technologies at the national level,” said Sands.

Meanwhile, Matsebula said reaching 70,000 people will require close collaboration between the government, implementing partners and community organisations. He said the Ministry aims to ensure that every eligible person receives accurate information, access to services, and follow-up support once enrolled.

Weinstock said LEN will complement not replace existing treatment and prevention efforts. He emphasised that maintaining stable treatment access for people already living with HIV remains essential, even as prevention options expand for those without HIV.

Stakeholders said ongoing shipments of LEN are expected to increase next year, to ensure availability across all regions.

Civil society groups at the launch said the twice-a-year injection is expected to appeal



▲ Minister of Health Mduduzi Matsebula.

particularly to young people, who often struggle with daily or monthly adherence to other forms of PrEP.

Sands said the introduction of the medication in Eswatini at the same time as in Europe and North America demonstrates what global health equity can look like when partnerships work effectively.

He added that the Global Fund remains committed to supporting the country as it scales access to the targeted 70,000 people.

Matsebula said the Ministry views the initiative as part of broader efforts to reduce new infections, strengthen community-level prevention efforts and move the country closer to its 2030 HIV targets.

## Global fund boosts Eswatini’s health supply chain

By Delisa Magagula

ALONGSIDE the introduction of lenacapavir, the Global Fund announced expanded investments to strengthen Eswatini’s health supply chain.

The support builds on the longstanding partnership that began with the refurbishment and opening of the Central Medical Stores in 2018.

Peter Sands said the Global Fund and Eswatini have worked closely to improve the storage and distribution of essential medicines over the years.

He said the progress is part of a broader effort to ensure that the health system remains resilient, efficient, and capable of supporting new interventions.

Sands confirmed that the Global Fund is supporting the transformation of the Central Medical Stores into the Eswatini Medical Supplies Agency (EMSA).

He said the institution will operate as a sustainable national agency responsible for procurement, warehousing, and distribution of health commodities. According to Sands, the Global Fund is providing E34.2 million for this transition, focusing on building a reliable and professional supply chain that can serve the country’s long-term needs.

Noteworthy in the current funding cycle, Sands said the Global Fund is also investing E26.1 million in full digitisation of the supply chain. The initiative includes real-time data visibility, improved forecasting, and strengthened accountability mechanisms.

He said the digitisation project aims to prevent stockouts, enhance planning, and ensure that communities receive the medicines they need without delays.



▲ Chargé d’Affaires Marc Weinstock.

Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula said the supply chain upgrades reflect the Ministry’s commitment to improving service delivery.

He said a strong supply chain is essential for maintaining access to lifesaving medicines, supporting national HIV, TB, and malaria programmes, and ensuring readiness for new technologies such as long-acting PrEP.

“Eswatini’s achievements in the HIV response demonstrated by the country surpassing the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets with



▲ Global Fund Executive Director Peter Sands.

results of 98-98-98 show that strong systems contribute to measurable national progress,” he said.

He added that the country’s move into malaria pre-elimination and the rise in TB treatment success rates to about 83 per cent also underline the impact of sustained investment in integrated programmes.

According to Sands, more than 70 million lives have been saved globally through the Global Fund partnership. He said this outcome shows what is possible when implementing countries, donors, communities,

civil society, technical partners, and the private sector work together toward a shared public health goal.

Sands thanked Eswatini’s partners for contributing to a strong foundation that allows the country to adopt innovations quickly and at scale. He said that as new shipments of lenacapavir arrive next year, the strengthened supply chain will play a central role in delivering the medication efficiently across the country.

Meanwhile, Weinstock echoed the importance of strong systems, saying U.S. support will continue through technical assistance and collaboration with government, civil society, and implementing partners.

He said the U.S. Government’s new global health strategy emphasises partnership, country leadership, and sustainable development to achieve long-term results.

Both Sands and Weinstock said the shared priority is ensuring that Eswatini becomes the first country to meet the 2030 AIDS targets, building on the country’s earlier achievement of the 95-95-95 treatment cascade.

They said the combination of new tools such as lenacapavir and a strengthened supply chain allows the country to move faster toward reducing the burden of HIV and improving health outcomes.

Matsebula said the Ministry remains committed to working with all partners to strengthen health systems and ensure that communities benefit from the latest advances in prevention and care.

He said the Government will continue to prioritise initiatives that strengthen national capacity, build resilience, and support the country’s goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat.



### Inflation forecast revised to 3.27%

THE Central Bank of Eswatini revised its 2025 inflation forecast to 3.27 per cent, up from 3.24 per cent, following an uptick in domestic inflation to 2.9 per cent in October 2025.

The Bank attributed the rise to higher meat prices and increased housing rental costs.

“Though inflation increased slightly, it remains within the Bank’s target outlook and continues to reflect stable domestic conditions,” said CBE Governor Dr Phil Mnisi in the Monetary Policy Statement released on November 21, 2025.

The Bank expects inflation to moderate in 2026 and stabilise at 3.71 per cent, with a further rise to 3.97 per cent in 2027, reflecting regional price trends and energy costs. Global inflation is projected to fall to 4.2 per cent in 2025 and 3.7 per cent in 2026, according to the IMF.

The IMF also revised global growth to 3.2 per cent for 2025 and 3.1 per cent for 2026, describing the outlook as influenced by trade tensions and geopolitical uncertainty.

Regionally, consumer inflation in South Africa declined to 5.3 per cent in October 2025, down from 5.4 per cent in September, supported by lower food and fuel costs. The South African Reserve Bank kept the repo rate at 8.25 per cent, maintaining a cautious stance.

Domestically, the Central Bank reported stable economic activity following the 3.4 per cent quarter-on-quarter GDP growth recorded in the second quarter. The Bank said recovery in the secondary sector and stable demand in services continue to anchor growth. Credit to households totalled E9.6 billion, driven by increases in personal loans, motor-vehicle finance, and housing finance. Business credit reached E11.6 billion, supported by growth



#### FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.9876	18.4546
G.B. Pound	22.5453	23.2168
EURO	18.6833	19.2932
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	41%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E19.80/Litre	
Diesel	E20.20/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	



# CBE holds rate at 6.75%, inflation rises to 2.9%

By Delisa Magagula

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) kept the discount rate unchanged at 6.75 per cent following the Monetary Policy Consultative Committee (MPCC) meeting held on November 20, 2025.

The Bank said the decision was influenced by global, regional, and domestic economic conditions as it continues to pursue its price and financial stability mandate. Governor Dr Phil Mnisi said the current stance supports economic performance and maintains alignment with the Lilangeni’s peg to the South African Rand.

“The Bank decided to keep the discount rate unchanged at 6.75 per cent. At this level, the policy

rate supports domestic economic performance and the Lilangeni parity to the South African Rand,” he stated.

The report further noted that, headline inflation increased to 2.9 per cent in October 2025, up from 2.8 per cent in September 2025, driven mainly by rising meat prices and higher housing rental costs. The Bank revised its inflation forecast for 2025 marginally upward from 3.20 per cent to 3.27 per cent. Forecasts for 2026 and 2027 remain at 3.71 per cent and 3.97 per cent, respectively.

Globally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised its growth outlook to 3.2 per cent for 2025 and 3.1 per cent for 2026, down from earlier projections.

The IMF noted that though growth had improved relative to 2024, it still reflected expected headwinds from uncertainty and

protectionism.

Regionally, South Africa’s inflation eased from 5.4 per cent in September to 5.3 per cent in October 2025, while the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) kept its repo rate unchanged at 8.25 per cent. SARB also revised its growth outlook upward for 2025 and 2026.

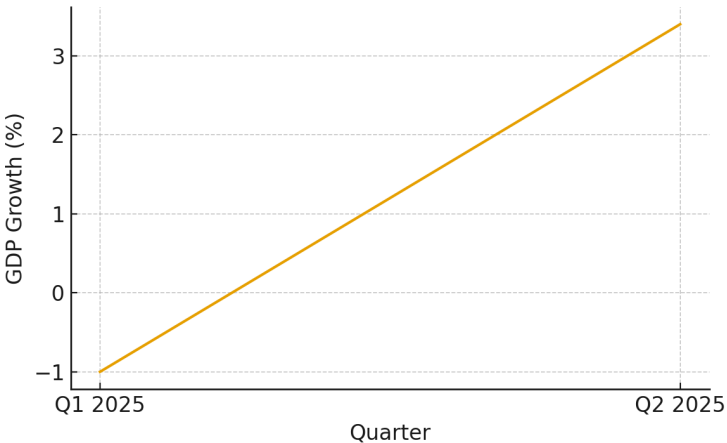
On the domestic front, Eswatini’s economy recorded a strong rebound in the second quarter of 2025, with GDP growing 3.4 per cent quarter-on-quarter, seasonally adjusted, following an earlier contraction of 1.0 per cent. Growth was supported by improvements in the secondary sector and stable performance from services.

Dr Mnisi said the Bank will continue monitoring developments closely. “We will act appropriately in line with our mission to foster price and financial stability,” he said.

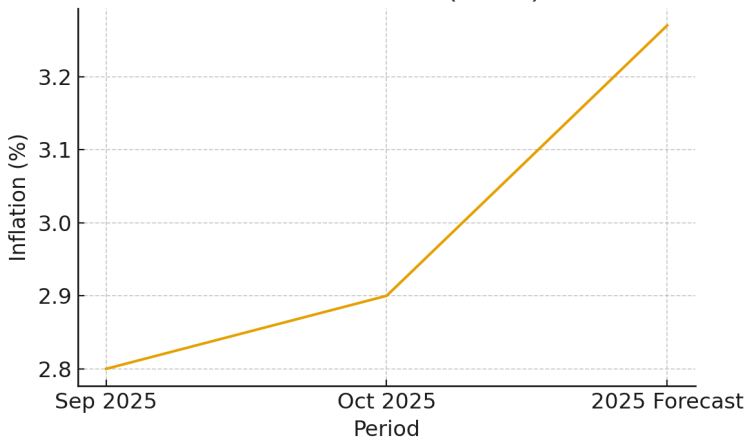


▲ EIPA CEO Sibani Mngomezulu during the session.

Eswatini GDP Growth 2025



Inflation Trend (2025)

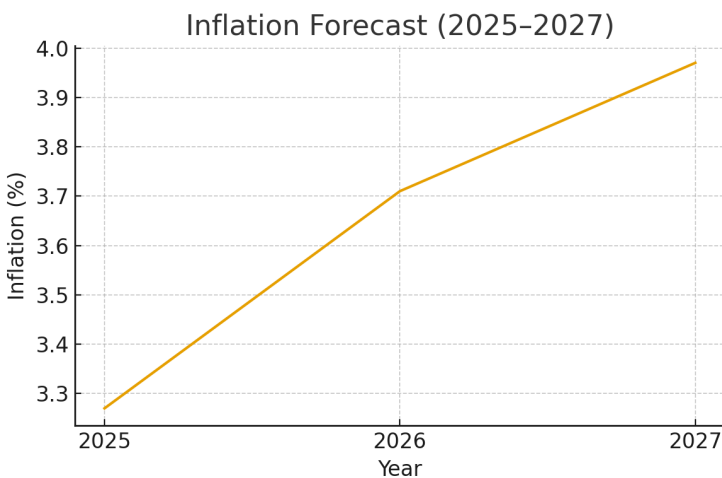


## GDP rebounds 3.4% as credit demand strengthens

Eswatini’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) recorded a 3.4 per cent seasonally adjusted quarterly growth in the second quarter of 2025, marking a rebound from the 1.0 per cent contraction in the first quarter.

The Central Bank of Eswatini highlighted the improvement as broad-based, with significant support from the secondary sector. The tertiary sector maintained positive performance, though slowing compared to the previous quarter. The Bank said the recovery reflects improved international trade conditions and stronger demand across industries.

“Credit extended to the private sector also strengthened. After three consecutive months of decline, private-sector credit rose by 1.2 per cent month-on-month to E21.7 billion in September 2025. Credit to households increased by 0.9 per cent, while credit to



businesses rose 0.8 per cent,” read the Governor’s policy statement. It further notes that, business credit closed the month at E11.6 billion, supported by increases across almost all sub-categories. Personal loans rose 1.2 per cent, with motor-vehicle finance growing 11.2 per cent year-on-year.

The Bank also reported that preliminary figures show total public debt at E37.4 billion as of September 2025, equivalent to 39.0 per cent of GDP. External debt stood at E13.7 billion, with an import cover of 3.2 months. Governor Dr Phil Mnisi said the Bank’s monetary stance is aimed

at supporting the recovery while safeguarding stability.

“The Bank continues to encourage a resilient domestic trading environment,” he said.

In addition, he said, the IMF maintained that emerging market growth would remain unchanged at 1.6 per cent, with economic activity expected to slow in 2026. Growth forecasts for emerging and developing economies were revised to 4.2 per cent for 2025 and 4.0 per cent for 2026.

Regionally, South Africa’s economy expanded by 0.8 per cent quarter-on-quarter in the second quarter, with the SARB projecting 1.4 per cent growth for 2026 and 1.3 per cent for 2027.

The Central Bank reiterated that it will continue monitoring credit conditions, inflation dynamics, and global risks. It noted that financial sector indicators remain stable and supportive of economic activity.



# Eswatini's digital payments future

Stories By Delisa Magagula

THE SIIPS 2025 report states that Africa processed more than 64 billion instant payment transactions between 2020 and 2024, describing this as the fastest period of growth since tracking began.

According to the report, this surge is driven by a shift toward systems that enable full interoperability between banks, mobile money providers, microfinance institutions, and fintechs. The findings describe this model as a foundation for inclusive economic growth across the continent.

For Eswatini, the data points to a regional direction that is expected to influence national payment strategies. The report notes that instant payment systems are now active in 25 African countries, with five new systems launched in the past year.

It further states that Africa is not only digitising payments but building the core rails for inclusive economic growth. This framing situates Eswatini at the edge of continental momentum, where digital payments are becoming increasingly central to commerce, retail, and service delivery.

“Transaction values across Africa reached nearly E2 trillion in 2024, according to the report, which cites this as evidence of increasing trust in digital payment rails. For Eswatini’s financial sector, this signals a need to align with regional trends that emphasise real-time settlement and low failure rates. The report highlights that simplicity, trust, and cost are the primary drivers influencing digital adoption across countries studied,” reads the report in part.

In the context of Eswatini, these findings align with familiar barriers in the



▲ A panel discussion was also held on the SIIPS.

local market. Consumers have shown a willingness to use digital channels, but they revert to cash when network performance drops or when transaction reversals take too long.

The report’s findings that cash continues to dominate daily financial behaviour remain relevant for Eswatini’s traders and SMEs who rely heavily on predictable transactions.

The report also highlights that Government-to-Person (G2P) payments represent one of the continent’s largest untapped opportunities. It further states that instant payment systems could support

more efficient disbursements, reduce leakages, and enable transparent, trackable payments.

Eswatini’s own public disbursement programmes could benefit from such systems, especially in sectors where manual or delayed processes increase queues, travel costs, and administrative burdens.

Additionally, SIIPS 2025 positions instant payment systems as part of a broader digital public infrastructure (DPI), alongside digital identity and data exchange.

The report emphasises that IPS are emerging as the backbone for this wider

infrastructure. In Eswatini, where digital identity and interoperability initiatives are still evolving, the report’s framing suggests that payment systems will increasingly be integrated with other digital public systems.

Overall, SIIPS 2025 presents instant payments as a continental direction rather than a national experiment. The report points to a future where low-cost, real-time payments support merchants, consumers, and government programmes.

An economist said, for Eswatini, the findings outline a path shaped by regional developments that are expected to continue

## Cross-border payments edge local trade competitiveness

THE SIIPS 2025 report highlights persistent barriers in Africa’s cross-border payment landscape.

According to the report, only 11 of 36 instant payment systems currently support government pay-outs, and only 11 support cross-border payments.

The document states that most cross-border money continues to move through channels that are slow, expensive, and poorly suited for everyday Africans and the traders who move goods across borders.

Economist and Professor at the University of Cape Town Mkhosi Thwala said for Eswatini, which relies heavily on trade corridors with South Africa and Mozambique, this finding has direct implications.

“SMEs that import goods or supply regional markets continue to face delays and high transaction charges. The report explains that people adopt digital systems gradually, starting with small amounts and losing confidence quickly when systems fail. This pattern mirrors the experience of many Eswatini traders who shift back to cash when digital transactions take too long to clear,” he said.

Meanwhile, the report further states that cash doesn’t fail, hang, get lost, or freeze, which helps ex-



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

plain its continued dominance across Africa’s cross-border trade environment.

“This observation is visible in Eswatini’s informal trade sector, where many business owners prefer travelling with physical cash to purchase stock in neighbouring countries,” said Thwala.

Another key finding from the report is the central role of agents. According to SIIPS 2025, agents remain the backbone of digital pay-

ments in Africa, serving as the trusted interface that onboards new users, resolves transaction issues, and provides guidance on service use. Noteworthy this pattern is consistent with the structure of Eswatini’s mobile money ecosystem, which continues to rely on agent networks for rural and urban service delivery.

A significant development highlighted in the report is the early discussion around a Payment Services Directive for Africa (PSDA). The

report raises several questions regarding whether such a framework could simplify the 54 different payment regulations currently in place on the continent.

It also asks whether the PSDA could support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by providing the payment backbone required for day-to-day regional trade.

Thwala noted, these discussions carry direct relevance for Eswati-

ni’s exporters, manufacturers, and cross-border service providers. A harmonised system, as described in the report, could allow businesses to operate across borders without rebuilding payment processes for each market.

The report also notes that digital channels are widely used but inconsistently relied upon because acceptance, fees, and network performance vary widely from provider to provider.

This finding is reflected in Eswatini’s business environment, where inconsistent transaction reliability affects merchant confidence and increases operational risk.

The SIIPS 2025 report concludes that Africa is moving toward more interoperable payment systems that enable anyone to pay anyone across providers and networks.

For Eswatini, this direction signals that future competitiveness will depend on aligning with regional systems that prioritise speed, reliability, and interoperability. The report portrays a landscape where countries that modernise their payment rails are better positioned to support trade, attract investment, and strengthen business efficiency.



## Lilly first drug maker to hit \$1 trillion valuation

ELI Lilly hit \$1 trillion in market value on Friday, making it the first drugmaker to enter the exclusive club dominated by tech giants and underscoring its rise as a weight-loss powerhouse.

A more than 35% rally in the company's stock this year has largely been driven by the explosive growth of the weight-loss drug market.

In the last two years as new, highly effective obesity treatments hit the market, the category has emerged as one of the most lucrative segments in healthcare.

Sales of Lilly's tirzepatide, marketed as Mounjaro for type 2 diabetes and Zepbound for obesity, have also topped Merck's (MRK.N), opens new tab Keytruda as the world's best-selling drug.

Novo Nordisk had the early lead in the space, but Mounjaro and Zepbound have surged in popularity and helped the company eclipse its rival in prescriptions.

Lilly pulled ahead in part because Novo's Wegovy launch in 2021 was hampered by supply shortages, giving Lilly room to gain ground. The U.S. company's drugs have also shown stronger clinical efficacy, and Lilly has been faster to scale up manufacturing and expand distribution.

The company's shares, which briefly hit a record high, were trading nearly 1% higher at \$1,051. Lilly now trades at one of the richest valuations in big pharma, at about 50 times its anticipated earnings over the next 12 months, according to LSEG data, reflecting investors' bets that demand for obesity drugs will remain strong.

Shares have also far outpaced the broader U.S. equity market. Since the launch of Zepbound in late 2023, Lilly has gained more than 75%, compared with an over 50% rise in the S&P 500 over the same period.

(Reuters)



▲ Shoppers queue outside the first Walmart store in South Africa during its opening in Roodepoort, west of Johannesburg, South Africa,

## Walmart makes African debut with South African store launch

**WALMART** opened its first store in South Africa on Saturday, marking the U.S. retail giant's debut on the African continent as it seeks a stake in a competitive market.

More than a hundred shoppers queued for hours outside the store to take advantage

of Walmart's "Everyday Low Prices" and shop international products that are not easily available in South Africa such as designer counter-top air fryers by Drew Barrymore, Labubu dolls and Dr.Pepper sodas.

"I'm actually here for a specific product that you can't really get in South Africa....it's a children's

toy, Labubu," Refilwe Mabale, told Reuters.

Some, like Tshepo Rambau, were hoping to snap up deals during Black Friday weekend. The 44-year-old told Reuters while standing in the queue that he was eyeing tech products like WIFI extenders.

"Hopefully I'll get them

cheaper here," he said.

The retailer will also be offering a sixty-minute online delivery service.

This places it in direct competition with Checkers' Sixty60 on-demand delivery service owned by South Africa's largest grocery retailer Shoprite. (Reuters)

## Investors eye holiday season turbulence amid AI and rate cut doubts

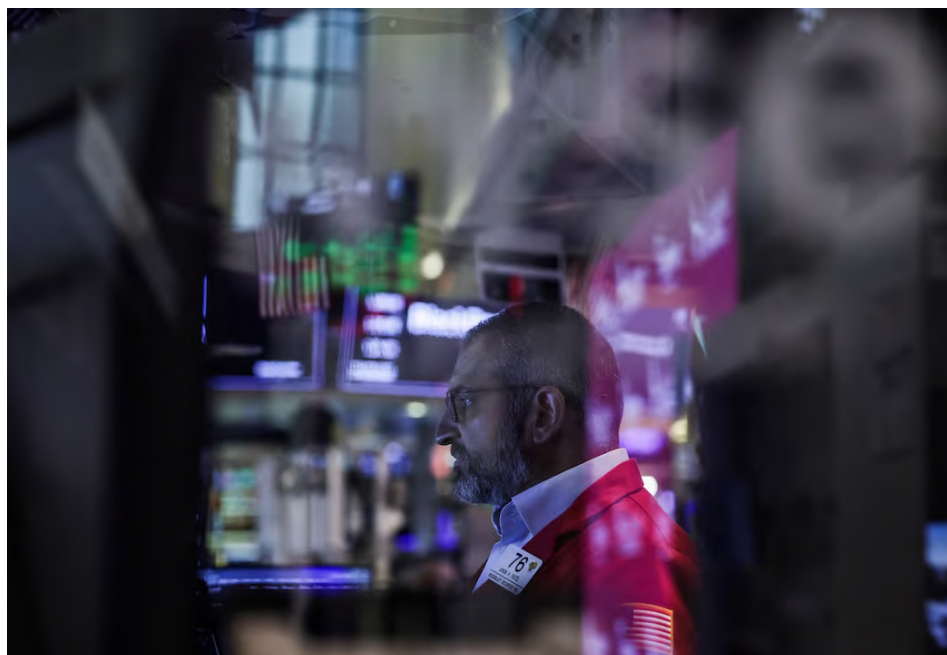
**STOCK** market investors are preparing for a turbulent year-end sparked by uncertainty over near-term Federal Reserve interest rate cuts and mounting worries that artificial intelligence companies, which have propelled the market to new records this year, are overvalued.

The market continued to slide this past week, despite equity indexes rebounding sharply on Friday. As of Friday's close, the benchmark S&P 500 index (.SPX), opens new tab and Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab were down 4% and 7% respectively from their late October record highs. After a relentless rally since April driven by AI excitement and expected rate cuts, market exuberance this week gave way to caution, with investors warning of more choppy season as doubts grow over those two key themes.

"It's certainly approaching what looks like is going to be a volatile holiday season," said Eric Kuby, chief investment officer at North Star Investment Management in Chicago.

"Without a rate cut ... and with this renewed fear out there, it seems like it's going to be a much more difficult holiday season than we had hoped before."

Volatility picked up dramatically this week, with the Nasdaq and S&P 500 on Thursday experiencing the biggest intraday swings since U.S. President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff announcement in April sent



▲ A trader works on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York City, U.S.

markets spiraling. Despite a modest retreat on Friday, the Cboe Volatility Index (.VIX), opens new tab, known as Wall Street's "fear gauge," remains above the key 20-level, suggesting persistent investor anxiety.

The VIX futures curve - a snapshot of volatility expectations over coming months - also appears unusually flat, signaling market expectation for lingering volatility.

Still, many investors have said a pullback was overdue after the S&P 500 soared 38%

from its April year-to-date low through late October. Following Thursday's tumble, the index was 5% down from its October high, its first 5% pullback in 149 days, said Keith Lerner, chief investment officer at Truist Advisory Services. By comparison, there has been an average of 77 days between pullbacks of at least 5% since 2010, Lerner said.

The S&P 500's price-to-earnings ratio, based on earnings estimates for the next 12 months, had dipped to 21.8 as of Thursday,

down from 23.5 about a month ago, according to LSEG Datastream. But that current valuation still stood well above its 10-year average of 18.8.

"You're resetting those high expectations," Lerner said. "That likely has maybe a little bit more to go as far as just people having more doubts and uncertainties."

Meanwhile, retail investors who bought the dip following April's tariff swoon and have helped the market bounce back from selloffs, are showing signs of fatigue.

"While we are not seeing retail investors contributing to the selloff, they are also not showing strong buy-the-dip interest," JP-Morgan analysts wrote in a note on Thursday.

A crucial uncertainty set to dog markets in coming days is whether the Fed will cut rates at its December 9-10 meeting, a move seen as a done deal up until late last month.

Investors were divided over the implications of Thursday's delayed jobs data release for September, the last employment report before next month's meeting. It showed payrolls growth accelerated but the unemployment rate also hit a four-year high.

New York Fed President John Williams appeared to lift hopes on Friday, saying the central bank can still cut "in the near term," but by late Friday market bets of a cut next month were barely higher than a coin flip.

(Reuters)



# SA hails G20 summit a multilateral success despite absence

SOUTH AFRICA'S President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Sunday that the declaration from this weekend's Group of 20 summit reflected a "renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation", concluding a meeting that pitted him against his U.S. counterpart.

Ramaphosa, host of the Johannesburg summit, pushed through the declaration addressing challenges like the climate crisis despite objections from the United States, which boycotted the event.

Addressing the closing ceremony, Ramaphosa said the declaration showed world leaders' "shared goals outweigh our differences".

U.S. President Donald Trump boycotted the November 22-23 summit on the grounds of allegations, which have been comprehensively falsified, that the host country's Black majority government persecutes its white minority.

## TENSIONS OVER UKRAINE, CLIMATE CRISIS

Trump had also rejected South Africa's agenda of helping developing nations transition to clean energy, cut their crippling debt costs and adapt to climate change-induced weather disasters.

But Ramaphosa secured consensus from the leaders present, aside from Argentina, which did not object to a declaration being made without it. It was the first G20 summit in Africa and the joint declaration used the kind of language long disliked by the U.S. administration.

The document stressed the seriousness of climate change and the need for adaptation, praised ambitious renewable energy targets and decried hefty debt service charges suffered by poor countries.



▲ South African President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the opening session of the G20 leaders' summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The summit came as tensions over Russia's war in Ukraine fracture the transatlantic alliance, and after unavailing climate talks at COP30 in Brazil, in which oil-producing and high-consuming nations prevented mention of fossil fuels driving the crisis going in the final declaration.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Sunday that both the G20 and COP30 summits showed multilateralism was very much alive.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the United States was mentioned only in passing at the G20 summit and that it played only a minor role as new connections are being forged and the world reorganises itself.

"It wasn't a good decision for the American government to be absent. But that's something the American government has to decide for itself," he said.

## SOUTH AFRICA'S SPAT WITH WHITE HOUSE

The U.S. takes over the rotating

G20 presidency after Johannesburg, but South Africa rejected a U.S. proposal to send an embassy official for the handover in Trump's place as a breach of protocol.

The White House has accused Ramaphosa of refusing to facilitate a smooth transition of the G20 presidency.

"We have not yet received any formal communication at this stage," South Africa's Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola told media on Sunday. "But we remain open ... It's up to them."

He counted it a great success that the declaration acknowledged the need for climate finance for developing countries.

Aside from the surprise agreement on the declaration, world leaders used the G20 to discuss the Russia-Ukraine war and Trump's plan to end it, on the sidelines, the first of several meetings expected over the coming days.

(Reuters)

# Pope Leo appeals for release of 315 kidnapped from Nigeria school

POPE Leo asked on Sunday for the immediate release of children and staff abducted this week from a Catholic school in Nigeria, one of the worst mass kidnappings ever recorded there.

Gunmen in Nigeria kidnapped students and teachers from St. Mary's school in the northwest of the country on Friday, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) said, the latest in a spate of school attacks this week that has forced the government to shut 47 colleges.

CAN said on Saturday it had raised its estimate of those taken from the school to 315 from an earlier estimate of 227, following a "verification exercise".

## POPE MAKES HEARTFELT PLEA FOR RELEASE

"I was deeply saddened to learn of the kidnappings of priests, faithful, and students in Nigeria and Cameroon. I feel great pain, especially for the many young men and women who have been abducted and for their anguished families," Pope Leo said at the end of a mass in St. Pe-



▲ Pope Leo XIV celebrates a Mass for the Jubilee of Choirs, in Saint Peter's Square, at the Vatican.

ter's Square.

"I make a heartfelt appeal for the immediate release of the hostages and urge the competent authorities to take appropriate and timely decisions to ensure their release," he

added.

"Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours and that churches and schools may always and everywhere remain places of safety and hope."

(Reuters)

# Guinea-Bissau holds close vote, Embalo seeks rare second term

POLLS OPENED on Sunday for presidential and legislative elections in coup-prone Guinea-Bissau, with President Umaro Sissoco Embalo trying to become the first leader in three decades to win a second consecutive term in the West African nation.

He is up against 11 other candidates, the strongest of them relative political newcomer Fernando Dias who has the backing of the party that led the fight for independence from Portugal in the 1960s and 1970s.

That party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, was barred from fielding its own candidates for the first time after authorities said it filed papers late.

Analysts are predicting a close race between Embalo and Dias, and a runoff will be held if no candidate gets more than 50% of the vote.

Wearing his customary red keffiyeh, Embalo voted on Sunday in the eastern city of Gabu, expressing confidence he would win.

"I call on everyone to vote massively, to elect the person who will bring stability and progress to Guinea-Bissau, to build this country," he said.

## BOOMING COCAINE TRADE

The small coastal nation between Senegal and Guinea saw at least nine coups between 1974, when it gained independence from Portugal, and 2020, when Embalo took office.

Embalo says he has survived another three since then, though his opponents have accused him of manufacturing crises as an excuse for crack-downs - charges he dismisses.

He has vowed to bring stability, build more roads and expand water access if given a second term. However, he has been dogged by questions about his legitimacy all year, with opponents saying his mandate expired in February.

Dias has accused Embalo of planning to undermine Guinea-Bissau's institutions to strengthen the power of the

presidency if re-elected.

In an interview with Reuters on the eve of the vote, Dias criticised Embalo for failing to curtail the drug trade in Guinea-Bissau, which remains a key transit point for cocaine travelling from South America to Europe.

Embalo has rejected allegations that his government has anything to do with the drug trade.

In a report in August, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) said the cocaine trade in Guinea-Bissau could be more profitable now than at any point in the country's history.

"Regarding drug trafficking, only the political will of our leaders can help our country wage a crusade against this scourge," Jorge Monteiro, a 38-year-old customs officer, said as he cast his ballot in the capital Bissau.

## POLARISED POLITICAL CLIMATE

Most polling stations in Bissau opened on time and voting proceeded without incident on Sunday morning.

Nearly half of Guinea-Bissau's roughly two million people are registered to vote.

"The current electoral climate is extremely tense, with a very polarised political landscape," said Lucia Bird Ruiz-Benitez de Lugo, director of the Observatory of Illicit Economies in West Africa, which is part of GI-TOC.

"The opposition have significant and longstanding popular support, however their campaigning efforts have been very restricted, and it is not an even playing field."

Voters appeared divided as the campaigns held their final rallies on Friday.

Saico Cande, a tailor, expressed confidence that Embalo would find a solution to the country's security and food crises.

But Berta da Goya, a businesswoman, said she was troubled by Embalo's decision to dissolve parliament after what his government described as a coup attempt in late 2023.

(Reuters)



▲ Supporters of Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo take part in his final campaign rally in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau.



# Investors eye holiday season turbulence amid AI and rate cut doubts

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## LINGERING VOLATILITY EXPECTED

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Still, many investors have said a pullback

## Judge in Google ad tech case seeks quick fix for web giant's monopolies

The U.S. judge considering whether to order a breakup of Google's advertising technology business asked the Department of Justice on Friday how quickly such a remedy would take effect, saying, "time is of the essence." Google has so far come away largely unscathed from a bipartisan government legal crackdown on the dominance of Big Tech - a push that began during the first term of President Donald Trump.

But that could change, depending on what U.S. District Court Judge Leonie Brinkema in Alexandria, Virginia, decides in the DOJ's case over Google's ad tech.

At closing arguments in the case on Friday, the judge brought up the fact that Google will seek to appeal the case, a move that would likely push any forced sale years down the road.

"The kind of request you are making most likely would not be as easily enforceable while an appeal is pending," the judge said.

Brinkema ruled in April that Google holds two illegal ad tech monopolies, and is now considering what the company must do to restore competition.

Google is "in an impossible situation" and very likely to appeal that ruling, Brinkema said, given the fact that publishers and rival ad tech companies are relying on the ruling to seek damages in several new lawsuits.

The DOJ and a coalition of states have



▲ A billboard advertising artificial intelligence services is visible by a highway in downtown San Francisco, California, U.S.

was overdue after the S&P 500 soared 38% from its April year-to-date low through late October. Following Thursday's tumble, the index was 5% down from its October high, its first 5% pullback in 149 days, said Keith Lerner, chief investment officer at Truist Advisory Services. By comparison, there has been an average of 77 days between pullbacks of at least 5% since 2010, Lerner said.

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## FED RATE CUT UNCERTAINTY

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for September, the last employment report before next month's meeting. It show

New York Fed President John Williams appeared to lift hopes on Friday, saying the central bank can still cut "in the near term," but by late Friday market bets of a cut next month were barely higher than a coin flip.

"It could very well be the case that we don't get a change in the overall tenor until the Fed is more in a clear rate-cutting mode again," said Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment strategist at PNC Financial Services Group. "That's going to happen sooner rather than later, but it may not happen by the end of the year."

Tech stocks, which have led the bull market that began over three years ago, have been at the heart of the recent selling, with heavy declines in stocks such as Oracle and Palantir Technologies that had been big winners of the AI trade.

Strong earnings on Wednesday from AI bellwether Nvidia whose chips have been central to the AI infrastructure buildout, failed to calm nerves, with the stock even falling on Thursday after its report.

"That tells me that investors have been a little bit skittish and I think they just need to regroup here," said Don Nesbitt, senior portfolio manager at F/m Investments.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The year-end period typically has been upbeat for stocks and some investors say there still could be reason for holiday cheer. December has ranked as the third-best-performing month of the year, with the S&P 500 rising an average of 1.28% since 1928, according to LSEG data.

December's performance has been even stronger whenever November, historically the strongest month, has posted declines, according to data since World War Two tracked by Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA. In such cases, December has shown nearly double its average historical gains.

(Reuters)



asked the judge to make Google sell its ad exchange, AdX, where online publishers pay Google a 20% fee to sell ads in auctions that happen instantly when users load websites.

DOJ attorney Matthew Huppert argued on Friday that nothing short of a forced sale would bring a "brighter, more competitive future for the open web."

The court's remedy "needs to eradicate

Google's illegally acquired monopolies root and branch," he said.

Google's attorney, Karen Dunn, argued a forced sale would be too extreme a measure.

"Lawfully acquired monopoly power is the foundation of the American economy," she said, citing a 2004 Supreme Court ruling.

A breakup would be technically difficult, resulting in a long and painful transition that

would hurt customers, Dunn argued.

The closing arguments on Friday mark the end of evidentiary hearings in Google's years-long battle with the DOJ over its dominance in online advertising and search. Next, Google has said it will file appeals.

The U.S. still has antitrust cases pending against Amazon and Apple

(Reuters)



# US, Ukrainian and European officials meet in Geneva for talks on peace plan

UKRAINIAN, U.S. and European officials gathered in Geneva on Sunday to discuss a draft plan presented by Washington to end the war in Ukraine, after Kyiv and its allies voiced alarm over what they saw as major concessions to the aggressor Russia.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy had until Thursday to approve the 28-point plan, which calls on Ukraine to cede territory, accept limits on its military and renounce ambitions to join NATO.

For many Ukrainians, including soldiers fighting on the front lines, such terms would amount to capitulation after nearly four years of fighting in Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two. On Saturday, Trump said the current proposal for ending the war is not his final offer.

Since the plan was announced, there has been considerable confusion about who was involved in drawing it up. European allies said they had not been consulted.

As the officials gathered in Geneva, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the goal was to craft a plan acceptable to Ukraine which could be used in a negotiation with Russia. That would likely take time, he

"Right now, I'm not yet convinced we're going to get the solution President Trump wants in the next few days," Merz said on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in Johannesburg.

Before heading to Geneva, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted in a post on X that Washington had authored the plan. He posted the remark after Republican Senator



▲ A Ukrainian serviceman of the National Police Special Purpose Battalion prepares to fire a howitzer towards Russian troops at a position in a front line, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, near the town of Pokrovsk in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

Mike Rounds said Rubio had called him and other senators and explained it was a proposal the U.S. had received and passed on to Ukraine.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X that Ukraine's allies were ready to work on the plan, but that it was important to know how it had come together.

## TOP OFFICIALS ARRIVE IN GENEVA

Rubio and U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff arrived on Sunday for the hastily convened Geneva meeting.

"We hope to iron out the final details... to draft a deal that is advantageous to them (Ukraine)," a U.S. official said. "Nothing will be agreed on until the two presidents get together," the official said, referring to Trump and Zelenskiy.

Zelenskiy welcomed the diplomatic efforts in Geneva, saying that he hoped they would lead to a result. Before the gathering, U.S. and Ukrainian officials held constructive talks, a U.S. official said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he would speak to his Russian counterpart

Vladimir Putin on Monday about Ukraine and share the outcome with European and U.S. allies.

## A PERILOUS MOMENT FOR UKRAINE

The draft plan, which includes many of Russia's key demands and offers only vague assurances to Ukraine of "robust security guarantees", comes at a perilous moment for the countrrmission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Sunday that Ukraine's borders cannot be changed by force, its army cannot be left vulnerable to attack and that the European Union must have a central role in a Ukraine peace deal.

Russia has been making gains on parts of the front, albeit slowly and, according to Western and Ukrainian officials, the advances have been extremely costly in terms of lives lost.

The transportation hub of Pokrovsk has been partially taken by Russian forces and Ukrainian commanders say they do not have enough soldiers to prevent small, persistent incursions.

Ukraine's power and gas facilities have been pummelled by drone and missile attacks, meaning millions of people are without water, heating and power for hours each day.

Zelenskiy himself has been under pressure domestically after a major corruption scandal broke, ensnaring some of his ministers and people in his close entourage.

(Reuters)

# DOGE 'doesn't exist' with eight months left on its charter



▲ Elon Musk holds up a chainsaw onstage during the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in National Harbor, Maryland, U.S.

U.S. President Donald Trump's Department of Government Efficiency has disbanded with eight months left to its mandate, ending an initiative launched with fanfare as a symbol of Trump's pledge to slash the government's size but which critics say delivered few measurable savings.

"That doesn't exist," Office of Personnel Management Director Scott Kuper told Reuters earlier this month when asked about DOGE's status.

It is no longer a "centralized entity," Kuper added, in the first public comments from the Trump administration on the end of DOGE.

The agency, set up in January, made dra-

matic forays across Washington in the early months of Trump's second term to rapidly shrink federal agencies, cut their budgets or redirect their work to Trump priorities. The OPM, the federal government's human resources office, has since taken over many of DOGE's functions, according to Kuper and documents reviewed by Reuters.

At least two prominent DOGE employees are now involved with the National Design Studio, a new body created through an executive order signed by Trump in August. That body is headed by Joe Gebbia, co-founder of Airbnb, and Trump's order directed him to beautify government websites.

Gebbia was part of billionaire Elon Musk's DOGE team while DOGE employee Edward

Coristine, nicknamed "Big Balls," encouraged followers on his X account to apply to join.

The fading away of DOGE is in sharp contrast to the government-wide effort over months to draw attention to it, with Trump, his advisers and cabinet secretaries posting about it on social media. Musk, who led DOGE initially, regularly touted its work on his X platform and at one point brandished a chainsaw to advertise his efforts to cut government jobs.

"This is the chainsaw for bureaucracy," Musk said, holding the tool above his head at the Conservative Political Action Conference in National Harbor, Maryland, in February.

DOGE claimed to have slashed tens of billions of dollars in expenditures, but it was impossible for outside financial experts to verify that because the unit did not provide detailed public accounting of its work.

"President Trump was given a clear mandate to reduce waste, fraud and abuse across the federal government, and he continues to actively deliver on that commitment," said White House spokeswoman Liz Huston in an email to Reuters.

## TRUMP OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SIGNALING DOGE'S DEMISE

Trump administration officials have not openly said that DOGE no longer exists, even after Musk's public feud with Trump in May. Musk has since left Washington.

Trump and his team have nevertheless signaled its demise in public since this summer, even though the U.S. president signed an executive order earlier in his term decreeing that DOGE would last through July 2026.

In statements to reporters, Trump often talks about DOGE, opens new tab in the past tense. Acting DOGE Administrator Amy Gleason, whose background is in healthcare

tech, formally became an adviser to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy in March, according to a court filing, opens new tab, in addition to her role with DOGE. Her public statements have largely focused on her HHS role.

Republican-led states, including Idaho, opens new tab and Florida, opens new tab, meanwhile are creating local entities similar to DOGE.

A government-wide hiring freeze - another hallmark of DOGE - is also over, Kuper said.

Trump on his first day in office barred federal agencies from bringing on new employees, with exceptions for positions his team deemed necessary to enforce immigration laws and protect public safety. He later said DOGE representatives must approve any other exceptions, adding that agencies should hire "no more than one employee for every four" that depart.

"There is no target around reductions" anymore, Kuper said.

## FORMER DOGE EMPLOYEES MOVE ON TO NEW ROLES

DOGE staff have also taken on other roles in the administration. Most prominent is Gebbia, whom Trump tasked with improving the "visual presentation" of government websites.

So far, his design studio has launched websites to recruit law enforcement officers to patrol Washington, D.C., and advertise the president's drug pricing program. Gebbia declined an interview with Reuters via a spokesperson.

Zachary Terrell, part of the DOGE team given access to government health systems in the early days of Trump's second term, is now chief technology officer at the Department of Health and Human Services.

(Reuters)



By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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MDZIMBA View Shisanyama transformed into a living, breathing organism of rhythm and celebration on November 21, 2025, as the much-anticipated Ultimate Shutdown event unfolded under the cool summer night sky.

Mdzimba View Shisanyama, usually a serene escape perched below the majestic Mdzimba Mountains, transformed into a pulsating shrine of dance, culture, and pure sonic ecstasy.

What began as an eagerly anticipated concert soon erupted into a full-blown cultural spectacle, drawing in music lovers from across Eswatini and neighbouring countries.

The energy that surged through the venue felt less like a normal performance and more like a festival wrapped inside a volcano, vibrant, explosive, and impossible to ignore.

Long before South Africa’s acclaimed duo Jazzworx and Thukuthela stepped onto the stage, Eswatini’s own army of musical talent had already laid a powerful foundation. Local artists Obsession, Bongiswa, MaWillies, Sbud, Castle, Slim Deep, Sade, and MaTenTen each arrived with their own flavour and flair, turning the buildup into an unfolding celebration of Eswatini’s creative heartbeat.

Their performances formed a rich tapestry of sound that moved effortlessly from soulful vocals to heavy basslines, from deep-house grooves to amapiano fireworks. Every act stepped up with intention, proving once again that Eswatini’s music landscape is layered, thriving, and boldly stepping into regional relevance.

As the night matured, anticipation reached a boiling point. When the lights dimmed and the opening keys of the 3-step set rolled in, the atmosphere snapped into an electric silence that lasted only a second, before erupting into a wave of excitement that swept across the entire venue.

Jazzworx and Thukuthela emerged with the command of seasoned generals walking onto a familiar battlefield. The duo wasted no time unleashing a performance that was equal parts technical finesse and pure emotional power.

Their set moved like a well-crafted story. “Bengicela” filled the space with warmth, drawing people closer to the stage as they sang along, while “Isaka” hit with a thunderous blend of percussion and melody that rippled through the crowd like a shockwave. The transition into “uValo” pulled everyone into a shared moment of joyful nostalgia, and when “Tholukuthi” and “Uzizwa Kanjani” dropped, the venue became a sea of movement.

All around the grounds, groups formed circles, friends lifted each other onto shoulders, and strangers danced together as though they had known each other for years. Even those who tried to resist the rhythm eventually found themselves swaying, nodding, or shouting along with the rest.

Jazzworx, Kamohelo Monese, and Thukuthela, Kgotso Dube, delivered their set with the confidence of artists who understand their own power.

Their fusion of house, kwaito, and Afrobeat has reshaped dance floors across the continent, and at Mdzimba View Shisanyama, that sound reached its fullest

# Jazzworx & Thukuthela rock Mdzimba View Shisanyama



▲Thukuthela enticing fun lovers.



▲Jazzworx and Thukuthela shutting down Mdzimba View Shisanyama.

expression. The pulsating beats layered electronic textures, and deeply rooted African rhythms created a sonic landscape that pulled people into a trance-like state.

Their journey from rising producers to continental powerhouses was written all over their performance, reflected in the precision of their mixes, the flow of their transitions, and the energy they injected into every moment. As the night deepened, the event evolved into something far greater than mere entertainment. The crowd danced not just to escape but to celebrate, to connect, and to embrace a collective moment that felt both historic and powerfully present.

The air at Mdzimba View carried an unspoken understanding that this gathering represented more than a concert, it symbolised the unity of African music, the growing strength of Eswatini’s artistic identity, and the seamless cultural exchange between local and international talent. It was a remind-

er that music remains one of the few places where borders fade and common ground forms effortlessly.

When the final beat of the night faded and the lights brightened, the venue remained alive with lingering energy.

Groups stayed behind replaying their favourite moments, vendors served late-night plates to exhausted but fulfilled patrons, and artists exchanged nods of mutual respect backstage. The entire space seemed to vibrate with the memory of what had just happened, as if the walls, the ground, and even the nearby hills had absorbed the night’s intensity.

Jazzworx and Thukuthela may have headlined the night with their signature 3-step mastery, but the entire event thrived because of the collective energy of everyone present, from the local artists who opened the stage, to the fans who refused to let the night sit quietly.



▲Ceejay on the ones and twos.



▲Lady Zee delivering her set.



▲DJ Nkanyeti was a joy to watch.



By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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SOUTH African rapper Tony Dayimane is set to headline a special event at Berachah Kitchen.

The ‘Pens Down’ event, scheduled for December 5, 2025, from 11 am to 3 pm, is set to be a powerful gathering that honours those who have completed their schooling while raising funds for charitable causes.

Tony Dayimane, born Ssongakonke Mfundo Mchunu, is rapidly reshaping the South African rap scene with his dynamic style and commanding presence. At just 21 years old, this Durban-born artist from Umlazi has earned the nickname ‘Ivikel Mbus’ for his raw vernacular lyricism and larger-than-life persona.

His rise to fame began in high school when his TikTok freestyles gained widespread attention, culminating in his breakout single ‘Zulu Girl’ in 2022. The momentum continued with the 2023 hit ‘Ifilimu,’ a collaboration with Usimaman, which solidified his place in the industry.

In 2024, Tony released his debut album ‘Red October: Induction,’ which made history as the third highest first-day streamed South African album on Spotify.

The album earned him nominations at both the Metro FM Awards and the SAMAs. His 2025 Big Boy EP achieved triple platinum

# Tony Dayimane to headline Berachah Kitchen’s ‘Pens Down’

status, followed by the release of its sequel, ‘Big Boy II.’

Mbukiso Dlamini, the event organiser, emphasised the deeper purpose behind the ‘Pens Down’ event. He explained that the show is designed as a heartfelt tribute to those who have completed their secondary education, celebrating their health and survival throughout the year. “This event is about unity and grace from January to December,” Dlamini said. It is also a charity fundraiser aimed at supporting those in need through the ongoing efforts of Berachah Kitchen.

Dlamini further highlighted the event’s mission to tackle poverty in South Africa. “We want to conquer poverty in this country,” he stated, underscoring the importance of patience, especially among students. “While results are essential, being patient is the key to success from January to December.”



▲ Tony Dayimane.



▲ Musician iYA.

## iYa to ignite Swazi Plaza Nights

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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SWAZI Plaza will once again light up with the much-anticipated “Swazi Plaza Nights” event, headlined by the soulful singer-songwriter iYa.

Scheduled for the evening of November 28, 2025, at the bustling Food Court of Swazi Plaza, this free event promises an unforgettable night filled with music, dance, and community spirit. iYa, a rising star in Eswatini’s music landscape, will take centre stage to deliver an emotional and captivating performance.

Known for her rich vocal tones and heartfelt songwriting, iYa recently released her debut album ‘I Feel Deeply,’ a project crafted in collaboration with the Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Manana.

The event will not only showcase iYa’s powerful artistry but also feature the dynamic Uncle Karly, a beloved multi-genre entertainer and DJ renowned for his ability to energise any crowd. Uncle Karly’s set will set the perfect tone for the evening, blending various musical styles to keep the energy high and the audience engaged.

Complementing this lineup is the resident DJ Twanas, a crowd favourite known for his electrifying mixes that promise to carry attendees well into the night.

Swazi Plaza’s social media channels have been abuzz with excitement, inviting the public to “join us next Friday, November 28, 2025, from 8:30 pm, at the Food Court, for the best of late afternoon groove with an amazing lineup.”

The organisers have also encouraged guests to “pack your appetite along with your dancing shoes,” highlighting that while entry is free, food and drinks will be available for purchase at the venue, ensuring a full sensory experience.

The Food Court at Swazi Plaza provides an inviting and vibrant backdrop for the event, designed to appeal to all ages.

The family-friendly atmosphere encourages parents to unwind with sundowners or a relaxing dinner under the stars, while children enjoy a variety of group games organised by the different restaurants.

This thoughtful approach transforms Swazi Plaza Nights into more than just a music event, it becomes a community celebration where entertainment, relaxation, and togetherness converge.

## Bholoja for Poetry & Acoustics

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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THE Bahle Gallery 112 is set to host an extraordinary evening of artistic celebration on December 4, 2025, featuring the acclaimed gold-selling musician Bholoja.

This event, titled ‘Poetry & Acoustics,’ will be a rich fusion of music, poetry, and visual art, offering attendees a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in Eswatini’s thriving creative scene.

The evening will begin with a guided tour of Bahle Gallery’s latest exhibition, inviting guests to engage deeply with a diverse collection of artwork.

This thoughtful introduction aims to inspire reflection and creativity, setting an intimate and contemplative atmosphere that will carry through the night. The gallery’s relaxed environment provides the perfect backdrop for an event designed to connect different forms of artistic expression.

Following the tour, the event will open its stage to emerging talents through an open mic session.

Poets, singers, and spoken word artists will have the chance to showcase their work, creating a dynamic and interactive platform that encourages community participation and artistic exchange.

The highlight of the evening will be Bholoja’s live performance. A household name in Eswatini and the broader region, Bholoja is celebrated for his masterful blend of traditional sounds with contemporary rhythms.

His music resonates with soulful depth and cultural authenticity, reflecting the rich heritage of his roots while appealing to modern audiences.

Poetry & Acoustics is organised by Umsamo we Culture, a key player in promoting Eswatini’s creative economy. The organisation’s mission is to create vibrant spaces where artists and audiences



▲ Eswatini artist Bholoja.

can connect, celebrate local talent, and contribute to the growth of the arts sector.

The choice of Bahle Gallery 112 as the venue underscores the event’s dedication to intimacy and artistic synergy. The gallery’s welcoming atmosphere encourages meaningful interactions between artists and attendees, making it an ideal setting for a night of cultural enrichment.



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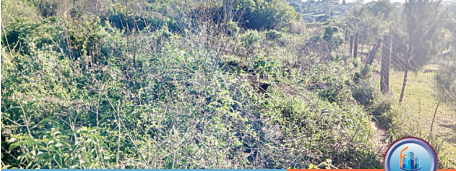
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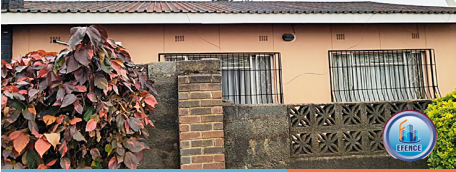
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NGWENYA E360 000



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DALRIACH E550 000



Mbabane,  
Vacant Plot  
2500sqm  
**Contact: 7870 3148**





NEARLY everyone has an answer to the question ‘what’s your favorite food?’

It’s easy to see why: humans are wired to derive pleasure from food. In fact, for many, eating ranks among the greatest pleasures in life!

Besides making mealtimes an enjoyable experience, taking pleasure from food also has significant benefits for health. Savoring food supports digestion, can help improve your relationship with food, can help overcome disordered eating and more.

In some cases, getting enough “vitamin P” (or perhaps vitamin mmmm) is just as important as the contents of your plate. Read on to dive into the tasty delights of why pleasure matters for food.

The psychology behind eating for pleasure For years, researchers have studied the science behind eating for pleasure. Their findings are intriguing and largely encouraging.

Physiologically, the pleasure people derive from food occurs both in our mouths and in our brains.

“Pleasure of any kind, including pleasure from food, leads to a release of dopamine in the brain,” explains therapist, dietitian, and Certified Body Trust provider Aleta Storch, RDN, MHC, of Wise Heart Nutrition and Wellness. “Dopamine is often referred to as the ‘feel good hormone’ because it activates the reward pathways in the brain, which helps to promote happiness, calmness, motivation, and focus,” she says.

In fact, some older 2011 researchTrusted Source indicates that people with obesity may have disrupted dopamine sensitivity, leading them to overeat to achieve adequate pleasure from food. When brain chemistry is working properly, however, our enjoyment of food can lead to physical benefits.

“When we enjoy the food we are eating and stimulate dopamine, we actually digest and metabolize it more effectively,” says Storch. “When we’re relaxed in response to having a pleasurable eating experience, our nervous system goes into rest and digest mode, which allows us to fully break down and utilize the nutrients from the foods we eat.”

Eating for pleasure could promote healthier eating too

A large systematic review from 2020Trusted Source examined 119 studies about the connection between food enjoyment and a healthy diet. Fifty-seven percent of the studies found favorable associations between eating pleasure and dietary outcomes.

One study from 2015Trusted Source, for example, associated greater eating pleasure with higher nutritional status. Other studiesTrusted Source have emphasized the importance of taking pleasure from healthy foods to promote a nourishing, balanced diet.

“There’s this belief that ‘healthy’ food has to be bland or it doesn’t taste good, but that’s just not true,” says dietitian and certified intuitive eating counselor Sarah Gold Anzlovar, MS, RDN, LDN. “When we eat food that we enjoy, satisfaction increases, which can actually improve diet quality and reduce the chance of overeating or binge episodes.”

The emotional nourishment of the foods we eat

Mealtimes would be pretty boring if food

# Get Your Vitamin P: Why pleasure matters when it comes to what you eat



was just fuel. Eating casts a wide net across the human experience, from bringing us together with loved ones to connecting us to our cultural heritage.

In short, food is emotional as well as physical nourishment. Here are some of the ways enjoying food can feed your spirit.

Food enjoyment increases social connection

What’s a party or family gathering without something to munch on?

As people enjoy meals with others, it often contributes to an increased sense of happiness, according to a 2015 studyTrusted Source on Thai social communities.

Food enjoyment offers physical and emotional comfort

Warm chicken soup when you’re sick, a pasta that reminds you of your grandmother, or the favorite dessert that always seems to hit the spot: foods like these have a way of lifting our spirits and soothing our bodies.

“Sometimes food even offers comfort at the end of a challenging day, which many people associate as negative emotional eating,” says Anzlovar. “But when we allow ourselves to connect with the food and enjoy it, there are many benefits.”

Food enjoyment breaks the hold of diet culture

Diet culture has multiple definitions, but one hallmark of this societal-level messaging is that you have to say no to foods you love, especially if they’re high in calories or fat.

Choosing to mindfully enjoy what you eat helps break this harmful mentality.

“When all foods are allowed without rules—including the most delicious ones, the body learns to trust that it will get what it needs,” says Storch.“Creating permission

for these foods that have been labeled as ‘bad’ or ‘off-limits’ is an important step in the healing process, and can help someone to feel more peace, confidence, and freedom around food.”

Food enjoyment connects us with our cultural heritage

For decades, researchTrusted Source has demonstrated that a sense of belonging is vital to mental health. What more beautiful place to experience belonging than within your family or cultural heritage?

Here’s where food enjoyment could play a major role.

“Culture and tradition serve as a form of connection with others and ourselves,” says Storch. “Restricting or denying foods that promote connection can lead to disengagement and loneliness. By omitting cultural foods, we are saying not only that the food is ‘bad’ but that the underlying identity associated with the food is ‘bad.’”

Embracing these foods could ultimately create a sense of freedom and belonging that elevate your mental health.

Eating for pleasure vs. emotional eating

You’ve probably heard that emotional eating isn’t ideal.

Turning to food to deal with difficult emotions like stress, anger, or sadness often results in mindless consumption and creates a fraught relationship with food. That said, it’s understandable if you’re wary of the idea of eating for pleasure.

Fortunately, emotional eating and eating for pleasure differ in both their intent and their outcomes.

“Emotional eating is when people are using food as a way to cope with both positive or negative emotions,” says Anzlovar. “Eating for pleasure is choosing a food to specifically

enjoy its taste, texture, and experience, such as when you go out for an ice cream cone in the summer or eat an apple straight from the tree at an apple orchard.”

Another major distinction between these two behaviors is the connection you feel toward your food.

“Often, though not always, there is a lack of connection or disassociation with the food when people emotionally eat,” Anzlovar explains.

“When eating for pleasure, there’s usually a true connection and enjoyment that you are getting from the food.”

Of course, there’s no perfectly drawn line between emotional eating and eating for enjoyment—and sometimes the two may overlap. One way to tell which you’re practicing: How do you feel afterward?

Making a point to mindfully enjoy your food won’t leave you with feelings of guilt or shame.

Pleasure + nourishment, a perfect pairing

Few things in life match the everyday joy of food enjoyment. The food we consume nourishes our bodies, comforts our spirits, and pleases our taste buds.

To bring more pleasure to your table, try starting small

“When you make a meal or snack, see if there is anything you could do to make it even 10 percent more enjoyable,” recommends Storch. “Sometimes, heating up a brownie, throwing some goat cheese on a salad, or adding more milk to thin out a bowl of oatmeal can take an eating experience from ‘meh’ to ‘yeah!’”

Finally, when mealtime is over, ask: How much pleasure did your food provide?

What positive feelings resulted from connecting emotionally with the items on your plate? The mental notes you gather could help make future food choices even more delicious. (Healthline)





STRESS is the body's natural response to a real or perceived threat. Anxiety is a symptom of the stress response and a natural process that every person experiences at one time or another.

When the stress response is constantly activated, anxiety may go from an occasional symptom to a chronic condition. Anxiety disorder is an umbrella term for a group of mental health conditions with slightly different manifestations and triggers but with anxiety as the core symptom.

Managing chronic or intense anxiety may require professional support, but developing certain coping skills is also essential.

#### 5 techniques for coping with anxiety in the moment

These tips may help you relieve anxiety symptoms as they arise and before they become more intense. They may require some practice but can become important tools in managing anxiety.

##### 1. Question your thought patterns

Unhelpful thoughts can take root in your mind and distort your assessment of a situation. This could involve negative self-talk and cognitive distortions.

One way to manage anxiety as you feel it rising is to challenge your thoughts and ask yourself what is fact and what is an assumption or emotional reaction.

##### 2. Practice focused, deep breathing

Deep breathing practices may help you manage immediate feelings of anxiety.

Try breathing in for 4 counts and breathing out for 4 counts for 5 minutes total. This type of breathing slows your heart rate, which in turn can help bring calm.

The 4-7-8 technique is another popular breathing pattern for immediate anxiety relief.

##### 3. Use aromatherapy

Some research suggests that aromatherapy can help relieve anxiety in some settings. Aromatherapy practitioners and supporters often report benefits of the practice.

You can use essential oil form, incense, or a candle at your workstation or bedroom. Natural scents like lavender, chamomile, and sandalwood can be soothing to the senses and help bring calm quickly.

##### 4. Move more and exercise

The stress response involves a rise in some hormones, such as cortisol. Physical activity offers many benefits, including hormone balance.

Stepping out of your thoughts by focusing on physical sensations and your body, even if momentarily, may also help with anxiety management.

Low impact exercises like brisk walking, yoga, and tai chi can help you reduce stress and anxiety symptoms. Even a little bit of physical activity can boost your moodTrusted Source and calm your mind. For example, try doing squats, pushups, or jumping jacks for 30 to 60 seconds.

##### 5. Use grounding techniques

Similar to physical activity, grounding techniques help you connect with physical sensations, taking your focus away from the stressor.

The 333 rule is an example of a grounding technique. It involves taking a few minutes to identify three things you can see, three



sounds you can hear, and three things you can touch. Try to spend at least 1 minute on each thing you see, hear, or touch before moving on to the next.

#### 6 strategies for managing anxiety long term

If you have anxiety that interferes with your life, consider working with a mental health care professional. They can help identify the root cause of your anxiety and work with you in developing a long-term plan based on your needs and lifestyle.

A mental health care professional may also suggest some of these anxiety management strategies, which you can use with them or on your own.

##### 1. Identify and learn to manage specific triggers

Some triggers or stressors may be obvious to you, and some may be less so. You may find yourself experiencing anxiety and be unsure about the cause.

- Common anxiety triggers may include:
- work deadlines or changes
  - relationship conflict
  - withdrawal from substances or certain medications
  - side effects of some medications
  - association with a past adverse experience
  - past trauma that led to hypervigilance
  - chronic pain and other health symptoms
  - caffeine intake
  - tobacco use

Triggers are personal and unique. What may cause anxiety for you may not for the next person. That's why it's important to learn to identify those situations that may be triggers for your anxiety.

##### 2. Learn more about medications

If you take medications, ask the prescribing healthcare professional if anxiety may be a side effect of those. Even if you've stopped taking medications, anxiety may result from withdrawal or similar physiological responses. Having this conversation with a doctor may help you identify the root cause of anxiety and the next steps for relief.

On the other hand, if you have severe symptoms of anxiety and feel they interfere with work, school, relationships, or life in general, consider asking a healthcare professional if medication can help.

- The most common anxiety medications include:
- selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)
  - serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)
  - benzodiazepines
  - tricyclic antidepressants

##### 3. Practice daily meditation

Building a daily mindful meditation practice may help train your brain to manage anxious thoughts when they arise. It could also help you prevent anxiety in some situations by reducing the anxiety response to known stressors.

If sitting still and concentrating is difficult, you can try walking meditation or yoga. Guided

imagery may also help you manage anxiety.

##### 4. Keep a journal

Writing down your thoughts and emotions in a journal every day can help you identify triggers and record effective coping strategies. The process of writing down thoughts itself can be calming for some people.

Journaling can also have long-term benefits. A small 2018 studyTrusted Source suggests that regular emotion-led journaling can help reduce anxiety, depression, and feelings of distress.

##### 5. Try to socialize more

Although everyone is different, and some people experience social anxiety, spending quality time with trusted friends and family may help you prevent and manage anxiety symptoms.

Socialization can relieve stress, encourage feelings of laughter and togetherness, and decrease a sense of loneliness.

Research has shown that social connectedness can help you become more resilient to stress in the long run.

##### 6. Stay active

Physical activity can help you manage anxiety. But its effect is not only immediate; regular activity has an accumulative effect that can have a lasting impact. Benefits include improved sleep, balanced appetite, mental clarity, and overall health.

Studies show that exercise, in particular, can have a lasting positive impact on managing anxiety. (Healthline)





# Around the world in pictures



▲ Cirque du Soleil artists perform during the world premiere of “Cirque du Soleil ALIZE” show in Berlin, Germany.



▲ Fatima Bosch of Mexico reacts next to other contestants after being crowned Miss Universe 2025 during the 74th Miss Universe pageant in Bangkok, Thailand.



▲ Members of the Cavalry Squadron of the Heroic Military College of Mexico hold birds of prey as they take part in celebrations to mark the 115th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, in Mexico City.



▲ Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and a South African official watches the Fire and Ivory Pantsula dance group perform as he arrives at OR Tambo International Airport in Ekurhuleni, South Africa, ahead of the G20 leaders' Summit.



▲ Firefighters work at the site of the Russian air strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Zaporizhzhia.



▲ Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his wife Olena attend a commemoration ceremony at a monument to the so-called “Heavenly Hundred”



# Liverpool is a ‘mess’ – Van Dijk

VIRGIL van Dijk said Liverpool’s players are letting manager Arne Slot down after the Premier League champions’ collapse continued with a 3-0 home defeat to Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool have lost six of their last seven league games to slide into the bottom half of the table, putting Slot under pressure after the club’s record spend of nearly £450 million (\$590 million) in the transfer market.

“We are definitely letting him (Slot) down, but we’ve let ourselves down as well,” said Van Dijk.

“You look at yourself first and then you help each other, you help each other get out of this mess because at the moment it is a mess – that’s just a fact.

“As the champions, we can’t be in the situation we are in right now. What are we going to do about it? We’re going to try to turn it around and that’s the mentality everyone should have.”

None of Liverpool’s big-money summer signings have yet to make a positive impact.

Alexander Isak, who cost a British transfer record £125 million, is yet to score a league goal for the Reds and looked a shadow of the player he was at Newcastle during an ineffectual 68 minutes against Forest.

But many of last season’s title winners have also suffered a slump in form, with Van Dijk’s centre-back



▲ Virgil van Dijk.

partner Ibrahima Konate also replaced early by Slot after another poor performance.

“What I want is for everyone to take responsibility on the pitch. We have to do that in order to push each other, to make each other better,” added Van Dijk.

“We have been through it together and won the league and everyone was part of it and happy and when

you go through a tough time you have to stick together and not point fingers.

“You have to be a man and face the toughness and go again, again and again because if you want to give up then you are at the wrong place in my eyes because this club has gone through much adversity over those years and we’ve always come out of it.” (Supersport)

# Tennis chief denies top players snubbing Davis Cup

THE head of the International Tennis Federation insisted on Sunday that top players are not snubbing the Davis Cup despite the absence of stars Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz.

“There’s this false feeling out there that top players don’t represent their nation. That’s not true,” David Haggerty told reporters ahead of Sunday’s final between Italy and Spain.

The international team event, this year being held in Bologna, is organised by the ITF.

“Some of those top players that played in the qualifier round or the second qualifier round didn’t make it to the finals. And so we had many top players that have played,” added Haggerty.

“And while Jannik and Carlos would be nice to have here, their teams are competing with the spirit of the strength that they provide to their teammates.”

American Taylor Fritz, Australian Alex De Minaur, Dane Holger Rune and Norwegian Casper Ruud – all in the top 20 of the men’s rankings – featured in the early rounds of the competition without managing to lead their country to finals in Bologna.

Spain’s Alcaraz pulled out injured on Tuesday morning while his Italian rival Sinner announced weeks ago that he wouldn’t participate in order to rest ahead of the 2026 sea-



▲ Jannik Sinner.

son, meaning Sunday’s final will be missing the world’s two best players.

Italian fans were also denied the chance to see Lorenzo Musetti play for his country after the world No 8 withdrew following his elimination from the ATP Finals earlier this

month.

Musetti cited his physical condition and the imminent birth of his second child as the reasons for him not taking part on home soil.

(Supersport)

# McLaren boss apologises to Norris, Piastri for Vegas disqualification

MCLAREN’S team principal Andrea Stella offered a forthright apology to Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri, who were both disqualified from the Las Vegas Grand Prix for technical infringements.

Championship leader Norris had finished second in the race behind Red Bull’s title-chasing Max Verstappen with Piastri in fourth.

However, in the post-race inspection, the skid blocks on both cars were found to be less than the minimum depth, resulting in both cars being disqualified.

“We apologise to Lando and Oscar for the loss of points today, at a critical time in their championship campaigns after two strong performances from them all weekend,” said Stella in a McLaren statement.

“During the race, both cars experienced unexpected, high levels of porpoising not seen in the practice sessions, which led to excessive contact with the ground

“We are investigating the reasons for this behaviour of the car, including the effect of accidental damage sustained by both cars, which we found after the race, and that led to an increase of movement of the floor.

“As the FIA noted, the breach was unintentional.”

Norris began on pole but lost the lead to Verstappen on the first turn. He then had to nurse his McLaren through the final few laps, allowing the Dutchman to finish more than 20

seconds clear.

But second place appeared to give him a valuable 30-point lead over Piastri going into the last two race weekends of the season.

“It’s frustrating to lose so many points,” said Norris, who now holds a 24-point lead over both Piastri and Verstappen.

“As a team, we’re always pushing to find as much performance as we can, and we clearly didn’t get that balance right today.

“Nothing I can do will change that now, instead full focus switches to Qatar, where we’ll aim to go out and deliver the best possible performance in every session.”

Piastri said it had been “disappointing” to leave Vegas empty-handed.

“We’re always looking at where we can gain performance, and we didn’t get it right this time,” said the Australian.

“We now need to reset, re-focus and push to get the best points possible in the final two rounds.”

With a maximum of 58 points available in the final two grands prix, Norris can win the title in Qatar if he earns two more points than both Verstappen and Piastri over the course of the weekend, which includes a sprint.

(Supersport)



▲ Andrea Stella.



FORMULA One world champion Max Verstappen produced a masterful drive to win the Las Vegas Grand Prix on Saturday and his title hopes were boosted further with the McLarens of championship leader Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri both being disqualified. Norris finished the race in second with Piastri fourth but the skid blocks on both cars were found after the race to be less than the minimum depth.

The disqualifications mean that with two race weekends remaining, four-time defending champion Verstappen is now level on points with Piastri in the title race, just 24 points behind Norris.

But Verstappen's chances of a fifth successive title will depend on another spectacular slip-up from Norris or his McLaren team.

With a maximum of 58 points available in the final two grands prix, the Briton just needs to score two more points than each of his rivals in next weekend's penultimate weekend in Qatar, which includes a sprint, to secure his first title.

Verstappen dominated in Vegas from the moment he pounced on a slip by pole-sitter Norris on the first turn of Sin City's street circuit to grab the lead.

Thereafter he controlled the race to claim the 69th Grand Prix win of his career, finishing more than 20 seconds clear.

The Dutchman said Red Bull's tyre strategy had laid the foundation for the win.

"Normally the race is always a tough one for us. We are not normally that great on tyres but today it seemed like we were more in control and I could push a little bit more," he said.

"We had a lot more pace and I could stay out a little bit longer and split the race in half and that definitely helped a lot.

"The car was working pretty well, much more to my liking and at the end it was quite a decent lap. Every lap I was just feeling

# Verstappen wins big in Vegas with McLarens disqualified



▲ Formula One world champion Max Verstappen.

comfortable and not taking too much out of the tyre."

Mercedes' George Russell finished third on the track but was upgraded to second with his teammate Kimi Antonelli, who finished in fifth, moving up to third.

After the drama of Friday's qualifying, when heavy rain made for a treacherous surface that Verstappen likened to driving

on ice, Saturday's 50-lap race under the glittering lights of Las Vegas got under way in cool, dry conditions.

Norris, who had arrived in Vegas fresh from back-to-back wins in Mexico and Sao Paulo, attempted an aggressive move to block Verstappen right from the start.

The move backfired and Norris ran off the track and allowed Verstappen to grab first place. Norris dropped back to third after he

was passed by Russell into second.

"I made the mistake into turn one," Norris said.

"You know you've got to be punchy into turn one, but I was just a bit too punchy and that cost me."

Piastri, who began in fifth place on the grid, was also ruing a challenging start which saw him bump wheels with RB's Liam Lawson.

The Australian had been desperately looking to make up ground in Vegas after surrendering a 34-point advantage in the drivers championship since his victory at the Dutch Grand Prix in August.

But the 24-year-old from Melbourne acknowledged that his hopes of catching Norris had taken a blow after Saturday's race.

"It would be nice to get some good results to finish the year but the championship picture is what it is," he said.

The McLarens are not the first team to fall foul of the rules on skid blocks which are intended to prevent the cars from running too low and gaining extra speed.

Russell was disqualified after winning in Belgium last season for the same technical infringement while Lewis Hamilton has been penalised twice.

In 2023, when he was still at Mercedes, Hamilton was disqualified from the US Grand Prix along with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

And this season, with new team Ferrari, it happened again after the Chinese Grand Prix in March.

(Supersport)

# Pep tight-lipped after Man City fall to Newcastle defeat

MANCHESTER City boss Pep Guardiola declined to blame the officials after his side were beaten 2-1 by Newcastle United in their Premier League clash on Saturday, despite plenty of controversial moments.

Guardiola and his staff were on their feet demanding a penalty for a first-half challenge on Phil Foden, and Newcastle's winning goal was the subject of a long review for a number of possible infractions in the build-up before it was allowed to stand.

"It is what it is after VAR decided. They know perfectly," Guardiola told the BBC, adding that he had "no questions" despite talking to the referee after the final whistle.

The opening 45 minutes saw both sides

miss plenty of opportunities and all the goals came between the 63rd and 70th minutes as Newcastle's Harvey Barnes struck twice either side of a Ruben Dias equaliser for City.

"Both keepers were good and after we missed chances," Guardiola said. "It was an entertaining game with many chances, we were closer in the beginning."

The defeat denied City the opportunity to close the gap on Arsenal, who top the table on 26 points, with City now third on 22 points having played one game more.

"Newcastle is a top side, top players, top manager so unfortunately tonight we could not make the momentum that we had," Guardiola said.

(Supersport)



▲ Paul Pogba.

# Pogba never doubted he would play again after returning from doping ban

PAUL Pogba described his emotional Monaco debut as a moment of relief and gratitude on Saturday after the French midfielder returned to the pitch for the first time in more than two years following a doping ban.

The former Juventus and Manchester United player, who joined the Ligue 1 side on a free transfer in June, had not played a competitive match since September 2023.

Pogba received a four-year ban in February 2024 after testing positive for the banned substance DHEA, which boosts testosterone levels. The suspension was cut to 18 months after an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The 32-year-old, who was nearing a return last month before suffering a right

ankle injury, came on in the 85th minute of Monaco's 4-1 defeat by Rennes at Roazhon Park and was met with a standing ovation.

"Seeing the crowd rise and applaud, I never imagined that would happen," Pogba told reporters. "I'm relieved to be playing football again, the thing I love most in the world."

"But there's still work to do to get back to full fitness and be able to play 90 minutes... If I don't perform well at Monaco, I can forget about the French national team."

"I believe in myself and in my qualities, and since I knew I had done nothing wrong and it was not my fault, I never lost hope."

Monaco face Pafos in the Champions League on Wednesday before hosting Paris St Germain in Ligue 1 on Saturday.

(Supersport)



▲ Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola.



# New kids on the block for cycling

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THERE are new kids on the block in local cycling. Mgcabho Cycling Club has joined the Eswatini Cycling fraternity.

The construction company cycling company was part of the 2025 MulaSport Lowveld challenge held on Saturday between Mhlume and Mananga road.

The club manager, Happy Chambers, said they are happy to be part of the cycling family.

“We are pleased to be part of the cycling value, and our main aim is to add value to the sport. We further want to nurture talent and contribute to the development of the sport in the country,” she said.

The race organiser, Mduduzi Kaudi, welcomed the club into the sport. “We are happy to have the Mgcabho cycling club in the sport. We are confident that they add value to the cycling fraternity,” he said.

Meanwhile, Eswatini Cycling Association President William Kelly said they are happy with the proceedings of the race. The race was sponsored by Mulasport Sport to the tune of E50 000.



▲ The newly formed Mgcabho cycling club.



▲ Kusekhaya cycling club Thandeka Vilane handing over a donation to Vuvulane town board representative Njabulo Ntshangase.

## Vuvulane cycling club on the cards

THE relationship between the Vuvulane Town board and the Kusekhaya cycling club could lead to the formation of a new cycling club in the small cycling town.

Vuvulane Town board care pont are the beneficiaries of the Kusekhaya cycling club Charity initiative, which looks after needy kids within the area.

Vuvulane Town board representative Njabulo Ntshangase revealed the news during the 2025 edition of the annual road race held on Saturday.

“We are grateful for the support from the Kusekhaya cycling club, which helps us to look after needy kids in the area. We are adamant that we will have our team next year,” he said.



▲ Riders in action during the 2025 Kusekhaya cycling club.

## MTN Khemani worried about the decline of female riders

MTN Khemani cycling club has noted concerns about the limited number of female riders in the country.

This was revealed by the club’s General Manager, Lincoln Motsa, during the 2025 Kusekhaya Mulasport cycling challenge held on Saturday.

“We are concerned about the decline of female cyclists in the country. We need to groom more female cyclists in clubs to address the growing concern,” he said.

Motsa also commended their youngster Hlelo Kunene for his continuous fine form

during local races.

This is after the youngster won the 60km category of the annual road race following his recent success in the 2Fast 2Furious road race.

“We are pleased with Hlelo’s performance and urge him to continue working in his career,” he said.

Hlelo, said he will continue working hard in his career.

“I am grateful for the support of my team and will continue pushing hard until I reach my full potential,” he said.



▲ Youngsters with MTN Khemani manager Lincoln Motsa.





▲ Eswatini Railway CEO Nixon Dlamini with golfers Sanele Khumalo, Gordon Bennett with Princes Ntokozo and Gwajumbe Zulu.



▲ Eswatini Railway staff members during the competition.

# I put up a good swing – ER CEO Nixon

**By Chris Dlamini**

“I want to thank the team that is managing the greens for a great job.” These are words by Eswatini Railway (ER) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nixon Dlamini. He was addressing their Golf

Day participants at the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club on Friday.

“This is the 7th annual Eswatini Railway Golf Day, and what an edition! I believe that even if I don’t get a prize, I still put up a good swing. I had the privilege of playing with the Zulu prince, and we put a good shift. We all did, actually,” he said, much to a huge round of applause.

Dlamini said the golf they had was seamless because of the beautiful greens. He said everyone who had the experience of the course would agree they all enjoyed themselves.

Dlamini played alongside his partner, Prince Mandla Ntokozo Zulu from the Zululand in South Africa. There was also Prince Gwajumbe, a Swati who graced the

prize-giving ceremony.

“As we reward the winners, I have a special prize for all the ladies we played with. We had 12 ladies on the course, and they all deserve to take a gift home,” said Dlamini.

The ladies came through, and all received their gift packs. These included Nikiwe Tsabedze, Nosimilo Kgomo, and Siphokazi Mamba.



▲ Veteran pool player Romeo da Silva..

## Romeo wins Sphana Masters Pool League

Decorated pool veteran Romeo Da Silva has cued his way to the inaugural Sphana Investments Masters Pool League title.

He was favourite for a long time after taking the top spot towards the end of the first round. As the league progressed, he looked even closer to it with three games to spare, and yes, he sealed it.

Da Silva has played all his 24 games and finished with an unassailable 66 points.

Second-placed David ‘Mdavu’ Masuku has 60 points with a game to spare while Vusi Masilela is on 57 points after 23 games as well.

Meanwhile, the open singles and seniors’ leagues are still ongoing but also edging closer to the end. Manzini Pool Club (MPC) star players Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane and Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula are on course to lifting those but they need to do just a little bit more before sealing it.



▲ Veteran pool player Romeo da Silva..

## Sizwe leads the Taekwondo national team to Ivory Coast

**By Chris Dlamini**

Seasoned Taekwondo national team member Sizwe Mabuza is leading the national team to the finals of the inaugural African Taekwondo series finals.

Mabuza is the Manager/ Coach for the ten-member squad that has left the country for the two days continental championships between November 27-29,2025, in Abijan.

The squad comprises male and female artists such as Saneliso Masuku , Nonhle Maduma and Siphwokuhle Ndlela,among others.

The National team qualified for the continental championships after conquering the zonal qualifiers held two months ago in

Mozambique.

Eswatini Taekwondo Federation Vice Secretary Mbongeni ‘Ndo’ Sibandze wished the team the best of luck in the continental assignment.

“We wish the team the best of luck in the continental finals and are confident that they will make us proud during the assignment,” he said.

The full squad

Manager/Coach Sizwe Mabuza

Juniors

1. Ndlela Siphwokuhle(F+63KG)
2. Macoo Mercy(F-55KG)
3. Mkhatjwa Bongumusa(M-55KG)

Seniors

1. Maduna Nonhle (F-46KG)
- 2.Mavimbela Sandzisile (F-67KG)
3. Dube Khaya ( M-54kg)
4. Nxumalo Gcinumuzi ( M-58kg)



By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

Ezulwini United..... @ 2,  
Siboniso Motsa 4th minute, 24 Alvin  
Shabashi 24th minute  
Mbabane Highlanders..... @ 2,  
Msimisi Zwane 34th minute, Vusi Vilaka-  
ti 58th minute

What a game!  
Over 1 500 were handed a performance  
worth the E50 entrance fee at Mavuso  
Sports Centre by Ezulwini United and  
Mbabane Highlanders.

The two sides shared the spoils in a 2-all  
draw in a pulsating clash played on Sunday.  
The ‘Stingers’ were able to maintain their  
unbeaten run in the league and maintain  
their winning momentum against the crowd  
pullers following their early cup success in  
the 8Bet Trade Fair.

‘The host drew first blood with the match  
four minutes into action through defensive  
midfielder Siboniso Motsa’s low shot, which  
resulted in a howler from the opposition  
goalkeeper Sisekelo Maseko.

Maseko spilled the ball into his own net,  
much to the disappointment to his team’s  
fans.

United nearly doubled the advantage 12  
minutes later when former Highlanders  
player Mpucuko ‘Smoothies’ Dlamini missed  
a sitter from a break attack.

Ezulwini doubled the advantage in the

# 4-goal thriller stalemate

24th minute through their Ghanaian import  
Alvin Shabashi from a goalmouth scramble.

Highlanders reduced the deficit in the  
34th minutes through a Msimisi Zwane re-  
bound from a Siyabonga Mkhonto low cross.

Highlanders coach Ernest Mavuso then  
rested Sisekelo Maseko for Ghanaian inter-  
national goalkeeper Innocent Adja.

The match to the break with ‘Stingers’ sit-  
ting in the driver’s seat.

The second half saw Highlanders coming  
out more recharged in search of an equaliser,  
with right back Ndumiso Dlamini missing  
a sitter two minutes into the restart from a  
Siwakhile Shongwe pass.

The crowd pullers levelled matters before  
the hour mark through a Vusi Vilakati spot  
kick .

The veteran defender sent United goal-  
keeper Siyabonga Magagula in the opposi-  
tion direction after Siyabonga Mkhonto was  
tripped inside the box.

Shabashi was unlucky not to snatch the  
winner in the 70th minutes when he hit the  
crossbar with a sublime strike from a break  
attack with his countryman Adja well beat-  
en.

Highlander’s captain Siphamandla Mase-  
ko missed a glorious opportunity two min-  
utes later after firing the ball wide from a  
crispy pass from second-half substitute Ma-  
jesibili Ndlovu.



▲ The two sides shared the spoils in a 2-all draw in a pulsating clash played on Sunday.

The result saw United remain third in the  
log table with 13 points after seven match-  
es, while Highlanders are sitting ninth with  
nine points after seven matches.

Other matches saw Mbabane Swallows

play to 1-all draw against Malanti Chiefs at  
Mayaluka Stadium while Rangers were held  
to a 1-all draw by Sisonkhe at King Sobhuza  
II Stadium.

## Malangeni nets brace in Wanderers 4-1 defeat

Stories by Chris Dlamini

M. Wanderers..... 1  
T. Celtics..... 4  
(At Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini)

Batoze Bavume!  
That is elite rookies Tabankulu Celtics  
tagline as they brought down yet another  
giant in the MTN Premier League.

The tagline loosely translates to ‘They will  
approve of us in the end’. A big scoreline of  
4-1, and it could have easily been more, but  
the maroon and white side goalkeeper Mario  
Jamine made crucial stops while three came  
off the woodwork.

It has to be mentioned that before Celtics  
increased their lead after going to the break  
1-0 up, it was Wanderers who had missed  
two good chances, one from under the goal-  
mouth and the other a top-shelf save from  
Celtics goalkeeper Nkosingiphile Mathe. It  
could have ended at 7-3 had the goalkeepers,



▲ Tabankulu Celtics players celebrating their 4-1 win over Manzini Wanderers at Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday.

particularly Jamine, not been brilliant on the  
day.

The visiting elite rookies, Celtics, took the  
lead as early as the 6th minute through Zweli  
Shabangu. They dominated the hub giants

until the break, living  
up to their giant-kill-  
ing tag. Early on in  
the second half, Celt-  
ics forced an early  
save from Jamine be-  
fore their own goalie  
had to stop two from  
eventual Wanderers  
goal scorer Manuel  
Silima.

The latter’s goal  
came very late. In the  
end, it was 4-1 after  
Hector Tshabangu  
was gifted the ball by  
defender Pius Baf-  
four. He simply had  
to put it past Jamine,  
which he did. Mak-  
ing it 3-0 was one of  
the league’s leading  
goalscorers Malan-  
geni Dlamini before  
he added a fourth in-

side the final 10 minutes. The brace took his  
goal tally to seven, level with Rangers Hleliso  
Gamedze.

Meanwhile, some of the struggling Wan-  
derers’ supporters could not hide their frus-  
tration, but one had the guts to even find  
himself in the team’s dugout, asking ques-  
tions about some decisions.

This invited the fan trouble from the other  
supporters and the police who escorted him  
out of the stadium. Wanderers have only  
won one game out of seven and linger at the  
bottom part of the table with just five points.

Celtics, on the other hand, has 12 points  
after this win, four short of leaders Manzini  
Sea Birds. The rookies have stunned Royal  
Leopard and Nsingizini Hotspurs with 3-0  
and 2-0 margins.

Starting Line-ups:

**M. Wanderers** - Mario Jamine, Pius Baf-  
four, Celucolo Simelane, Sibusiso Manana,  
Osman Halid, Siyabonga Xaba, Sikhumbuzo  
Mazibuko, Siyabonga Simelane, Mayibongwe  
Sacolo, Siyabonga Nkonyane, Linda Msibi.

**T. Celtics** - Nkosingiphile Mathe, Sakhile  
Ndlela, Oswell Mabalane, Senzo Mayeyane,  
Bonkhe Mamba, Vusi Mavuso, Zweli Sihlongo-  
nyane, Malangeni Dlamini, Jabulani Mavimbe-  
la, Phiwokuhle Shabangu, Mxolisi Bhembe

### We were punished – Gcina

MANZINI Wanderers head coach  
Gcina Dlamini has lamented their  
crippling 4-1 loss to Tambankulu  
Celtics.

Dlamini said this after the MTN Pre-  
mier League match played at Mavuso  
Sports Centre on Saturday in front of  
over 1500 fans.

“ We were punished by the opposi-  
tion due to a lapse of concentration. We  
couldn’t recover from the early set-  
back. We need to need to work go back  
to the drawing board and prepare for  
the next match. We are not yet panick-  
ing since the league is a marathon,” he  
said.

Meanwhile, the winning coach,  
Ncamiso Ndwandwe, congratulated his  
players for the win.

“ I am proud of my players’ perfor-  
mance . We came to the party and deliv-  
ered a five-star performance. We need  
to avoid complacency by taking one  
game at a time,” he said .

The defeat moved the crowd pullers  
to the relegation zone as they are now  
sitting at position 15 with five points af-  
ter seven matches.



▲ Manzini Wanderers head coach Gcina Dlamini.

PREMIER LEAGUE OF ESWATINI							
SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2025							
NO	TEAM	MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	MANZINI SEA BIRDS	7	5	1	1	7	16
2	NSINGIZINI HOTSPURS	7	5	0	2	5	15
3	YOUNG BUFFALOES	7	4	1	2	6	13
4	EZULWINI UNITED	7	3	4	0	3	13
5	TABANKULU CELTICS	7	4	0	3	8	12
6	RANGERS FC	7	3	3	1	4	12
7	GREEN MAMBA	7	3	2	2	1	11
8	MALANTI CHIEFS	7	2	4	1	-1	10
9	MBABANE SWALLOWS	7	3	1	3	-1	10
10	MBABANE HIGHLANDERS	7	2	3	2	1	9
11	MONENI PIRATES	7	2	1	4	-1	7
12	UBOMBO SUGAR	7	2	1	4	-3	7
13	AMAWELE FC	7	1	2	4	-3	5
14	ROYAL LEOPARD	7	1	2	4	-5	5
15	MANZINI WANDERERS	7	1	2	4	-9	5
16	SISONKHE FC	7	1	1	5	-12	4





**Liverpool  
is a ‘mess’ –  
Virgil Van Dijk**

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**Malangeni nets  
brace in Wanderers  
4-1 defeat**

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November, 2025  
**Daily News**  
**Sport**

**2-2**  
**4-goal thriller**  
**stalemate**

**... Ezulwini United and Mbabane Highlanders keep football fans captivated before settling for a 2-all draw in an enthralling league clash at Mavuso Sports Centre.**

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