



## Nothando Hlophe's celebratory luncheon



▲ Genesis Ekucaleni Media Founding Director, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Senator Pholile Shakantu with Gospel star Nothando Hlophe and Eswatini Mobile team posing for a group picture in honour of the award-winning gospel sensation, following her outstanding victory at the 18th Crown Gospel Music Awards held in Durban, South Africa. The event was held at Ramblas Restaurant. (Story on page 4)

As part of E85 million settlement ...

## Dave facilitates SDFF E10 mln payment to Status Capital



By Lwazi Dlamini

THE Status Capital Building Society (SCBS) and Swaziland Debt Factoring Firm (SDFF) have announced a successful settlement relating to the investment originally advanced to SDFF.

This was revealed by permanent member Dave Van Niekerk, who lived up to his commitment made two months ago to help facilitate repayment of the remaining monies owed to Status Capital Building Society. He pointed out that all investments made during his tenure as a non-executive board member have been settled now - The latest being SDFF.

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By Lwazi Dlamini

# Dave facilitates SDFF E10 mln payment to Status Capital

... Status Capital Building Society Permanent member, Dave van Niekerk says as part of the settlement, SDFF has agreed to start the repayment of a total amount of E85 million, which is capital and inclusive of interest

THE Status Capital Building Society (SCBS) and Swaziland Debt Factoring Firm (SDFF) have announced a successful settlement relating to the investment originally advanced to SDFF.

This was revealed by permanent member Dave Van Niekerk, who lived up to his commitment made two months ago to help facilitate repayment of the remaining monies owed to Status Capital Building Society.

A sum of E10 million has already been paid to Status Capital Building Society and furthermore, Van Niekerk has outlined that as part of the settlement SDFF has agreed to start the repayment of a total amount of E85 million, which is capital and inclusive of interest.

Niekerk explained that over the past few years, extensive engagement had taken place between himself, the previous companies that SCBS had invested in.

He pointed out that all investments made during his tenure as a non-executive board member have been settled now - The latest being SDFF.

"I would have preferred that the parties

only settled once the curator's tenure was over and the society members were managing the society themselves. However, given the continued presence of the appointed curator and the position taken by the FSRA, SDFF was ultimately compelled to defend legal action initiated against it and to agree to the settlement." Van Niekerk said.

He also stated: "The first E10 million has already been paid and is reflected in SCBS bank statements. The remaining balance will be repaid progressively over the next few months."

Additionally, Niekerk cited that despite these repayments, members currently had no assurance regarding how the received funds will be managed

or allocated, as long as the Building Society remained under the control of the curator, and while members and key leadership, including Michael Mbetse, remained excluded from operational oversight.

"It is equally important to acknowledge that previous repayments from other investments - such as the E35 million remitted earlier this year - have not been transparently accounted for. This raises questions about governance, spending priorities, and the continued use of Society resources for unnecessary overheads and protracted legal battles that do not serve the interests of members."

"Notwithstanding these

concerns, the SDFF repayment represents a crucial milestone as this brings to a close all the investments made while I was still a board member," Van Niekerk said.

However, he also pointed out that as matters stood, the Building Society was still bound to face a financial shortfall due to historical mismanagement and wasteful expenditure. Niekerk went on to say that he had taken out adverts and put up billboards last year to warn members that the building society was being mismanaged. Most of that management team is now gone. However, the members are basically shut out of their own building society which has their money.

"I remain committed to supporting members in restoring proper governance, reinstating democratic control, and securing new investment capital for SCBS once a member-elected board is reinstated and the curator's role is brought to an end."



▲ Status Capital Building Society Permanent Member Dave Van Niekerk has facilitated the payment of E10 million by SDFF to Status Capital Building Society as part of the E85 million repayment

# Eswatini calls for Taiwan's Inclusion in Interpol General Assembly

By Thokozani Mazibuko

AS global security agencies gather in Marrakesh for the 93<sup>rd</sup> INTERPOL General Assembly, the Kingdom of Eswatini has issued a strong and clear message to the international community.

The country has reaffirmed its belief that global security efforts are only as strong as the partners involved, and that all capable contributors should have an opportunity to participate fully in international policing mechanisms. Central to Eswatini's statement is a renewed call for Taiwan's meaningful participation in INTERPOL, a subject that has long generated debate within international security circles.

The General Assembly, which runs from 24 to 27 November, has brought together police and security representatives from around the world to discuss strategies, policies and frameworks that guide global crime fighting. This year's meeting focuses on strengthening cooperation against transnational crime and enhancing intelligence sharing across borders. Against this backdrop, Eswatini has reiterated that excluding committed partners undermines collective efforts to safeguard nations and citizens.

Eswatini and Taiwan enjoy a long and close partnership that spans mutual legal assistance, prisoner transfers, police training and various capacity building programmes. According to Eswatini, these areas of cooperation have directly improved policing standards, professional skills and the overall security environment within the Kingdom. Officials say Taiwan has consistently demonstrated reliability, professionalism and a willingness to share technical expertise that benefits frontline officers and national institutions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has pointed out that Taiwan's support has extended beyond the exchange of personnel and knowledge. Taiwanese institutions have played a role in strengthening cybercrime detection, enhancing forensic capabilities and providing specialised training in areas such as border security and anti trafficking operations. These collaborative efforts have



▲ Royal Eswatini Police Services National Commissioner Vusi Manoma Masango (Right) with KZN Provincial Commissioner Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi.

helped Eswatini improve its ability to respond to emerging threats that transcend borders.

Despite this, Taiwan continues to be excluded from participating in INTERPOL activities, including training programmes, intelligence sharing systems and General Assembly proceedings. Eswatini views this exclusion as a missed opportunity for the global security network, stressing that effective policing depends on inclusiveness, information exchange and skilled partners working together without political barriers.

In its statement aligned with the start of the General Assembly, Eswatini emphasised that Taiwan's exclusion does not only affect bilateral partners but affects the entire international community. The country argued that Taiwan's policing institutions possess technical expertise that could strengthen INTERPOL platforms, particularly in areas such as cybersecurity, telecommunications fraud, digital forensics and humanitarian assistance in crisis environments. Taiwan has also repeatedly expressed its desire to contribute to international policing efforts, stating that it has both the capacity and the willingness to support global security. Over the years, several nations have echoed the senti-

ment that international crime fighting requires broad cooperation rather than selective participation. Eswatini has been one of the most consistent voices advocating for Taiwan's inclusion or at least access to INTERPOL mechanisms that would allow it to receive timely alerts and share essential information.

Eswatini's position is rooted in its broader foreign policy stance on cooperation and multilateralism. Officials argue that the world is facing increasingly sophisticated criminal networks, ranging from cybercrime syndicates and human trafficking rings to money laundering groups and narcotics networks. These threats require all capable partners to be part of the information chain, especially those located in strategic regions and possessing advanced technological capabilities.

According to Eswatini, Taiwan's absence from key INTERPOL systems such as the I 24 7 global police communication network creates vulnerabilities that criminals may exploit. Without access to real time databases, alert systems and intelligence platforms, authorities in Taiwan face limitations in detecting and responding to transnational criminal activities that may pass through their territory. Eswatini

believes that correcting this gap would contribute to a safer international environment.

The Kingdom has therefore urged all nations attending the General Assembly to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in INTERPOL activities. Officials clarified that the request does not seek to alter political debates about state recognition but focuses on practical co-operation for global safety. They stressed that international security should not be compromised by political considerations when the skills and resources of willing partners can help strengthen collective systems.

Eswatini's advocacy falls within a broader global conversation on inclusiveness in international organisations. Several international experts have argued that security agencies must prioritise effectiveness, information flow and operational collaboration above political disputes. They note that transnational threats operate outside borders and rely on gaps in international systems to evade law enforcement.

The INTERPOL General Assembly continues to be a crucial platform where these debates intersect with policy making. Delegates from around the world will spend the week reviewing resolutions, assessing technological advancements in policing and discussing the future of global criminal intelligence. Eswatini hopes that this year's gathering will encourage a renewed examination of how the organisation can widen its cooperation framework to include entities that are capable and committed to global safety.

Eswatini's call echoes a principle that has shaped much of its diplomatic engagement. The country maintains that effective multilateralism requires that all partners who can contribute positively should be welcomed at the table. In the context of global policing, the Kingdom believes Taiwan has repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to support collective security, and that its exclusion diminishes the world's overall ability to respond to crime.

As the General Assembly proceeds in Marrakesh, Eswatini remains firm in its message. A safer world can only be achieved when the global security community embraces cooperation without exception. In the eyes of the Kingdom, Taiwan deserves a meaningful role in INTERPOL and a chance to strengthen the shared mission of protecting nations and their people.



By Delisa Magagula

NINETEEN years after Eswatini last welcomed electoral bodies from across the Southern African region, the kingdom is preparing to once again host the prestigious Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC (ECF-SADC) Annual General Conference.

The ECF-SADC, which brings together electoral commissions from across the region, rotates its hosting duties among member states.

Eswatini first hosted the conference in 2006, becoming one of the earliest countries to provide a platform for electoral dialogue, capacity-building, and regional cooperation. Now, almost two decades later, the country is stepping back into that role, marking a significant moment for its electoral landscape and regional engagement.

Speaking during a briefing on the upcoming event, Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) Chairperson Bishop Siphso Bhembe described Eswatini's return as host as a reaffirmation of the kingdom's commitment to electoral excellence and regional collaboration.

"Hosting this conference again after 19 years is not just symbolic it shows our readiness, our growth, and our continued place within the region's electoral community. Eswatini made a strong contribution when we hosted in 2006, and we look forward to doing so again," he said.

Meanwhile, officials from ECF-SADC expressed confidence in the kingdom's preparedness, noting that Eswatini has remained an active participant in the Forum's programs, training sessions, and observer missions over the years.

"Eswatini has always been consistent. The only thing missing was the opportunity to host again, and now that moment has arrived. Rotations take time, and in this case, almost two decades have passed. The kingdom's return as host is well deserved," said Bhembe.

The conference, which typically brings together senior electoral officials, legal experts, data specialists, and observers, is expected to focus on emerging trends in election management including digitalisation, voter education strategies, cybersecurity, and youth participation.

For the first time since 2006 ...

# Eswatini set to host regional electoral conference



▲ EBC Chairperson Bishop Siphso Bhembe.

Local governance experts believe this is a crucial moment for Eswatini's own electoral reforms. Nolwazi Dlamini, an elections analyst and director of a civic engagement organisation, said hosting such a meeting could bolster domestic public confidence in the electoral process.

"People underestimate the power of visibility. For the EBC to host experts and counterparts from the region, to be able to discuss challenges openly and exchange knowledge, sends a strong message about transparency and willingness to evolve. Hosting after nineteen years is not just a logistical exercise; it is a statement," she said.

She added that the country stands to benefit from observing how neighbouring nations are leveraging technology, navigating electoral disputes, and engaging citizens in decision-making.

Beyond governance, the event is expected to inject life into Eswatini's hospitality and events sectors, which have struggled due to economic pressures in recent years.

Mandla Nkambule, speaking on behalf of the hospitality industry, said past conferences brought noticeable economic activity.

"When we hosted in 2006, local hotels, lodges, and restaurants were fully booked. Transport operators benefited. Even small

businesses selling crafts and food saw opportunities. These conferences don't just fill boardrooms they stimulate the economy from multiple angles," said Nkambule.

Diplomatic analysts also believe the event strengthens Eswatini's standing in SADC. Hosting a rotating regional forum signals reliability and organisational capacity, elements that influence how the country is viewed across the region.

Noteworthy, Eswatini's last hosting in 2006 took place during a vastly different regional environment. Social media had not yet transformed information ecosystems. Digital voter registration was barely a concept. Electoral misinformation, cyber risks, and youth disengagement were not the urgent challenges they are today.

"This is a different world, and the issues have evolved. The EBC will be hosting at a time when elections face new pressures online influence, data security, and rapid information flow. The insights Eswatini gains from this conference will be as important as the contributions it makes," said Bhembe.

For many civil society organisations, this return marks an opportunity to push for deeper dialogue around electoral law reform and civic participation.

"We cannot afford to treat this as routine. It has been nineteen years. Let's use this moment to listen, learn, and allow the regional community to challenge us," he said.

While detailed schedules will be released soon, officials have already confirmed that planning is underway, with the EBC coordinating logistics, protocols, and security arrangements in collaboration with government departments. The Chairperson emphasised that the kingdom is fully capable of hosting a conference of this scale again.

"We have done it before, and we will do it again with excellence. As Eswatini prepares to welcome electoral commissioners from across the region almost two decades after its last turn, the event is widely viewed as a moment of pride, responsibility, and renewal for the country's democratic processes," said the Chairperson.

## Soldiers seize E380k worth of illegal cigarettes at Mhlumeni checkpoint

By Thokozani Mazibuko

**SOLDIERS stationed at the Mhlumeni checkpoint in eastern Eswatini intercepted a large consignment of prohibited Mozambican cigarettes on Tuesday evening, resulting in the arrest of two taxi operators from Siteki.**

The confiscated goods, identified as GT branded cigarettes, are estimated to be worth E380 000. The suspects were promptly handed over to the police and are expected to appear before court on Wednesday.

According to information released by the army, the interception took place during a routine security operation aimed at strengthening border control and curbing the influx of illegal goods smuggled into the country. The soldiers noticed suspicious movements involving a vehicle approaching the checkpoint and conducted a thorough

search, leading to the discovery of several boxes concealed inside the taxi. The boxes were filled with GT cigarettes, a product prohibited from importation under national customs and excise laws.

Army officials said the suspects were travelling from Mozambique through the Mhlumeni border area and intended to distribute the cigarettes in various communities around Siteki and neighbouring towns. Investigators believe that the two taxi operators may be part of a larger network involved in smuggling contraband cigarettes into Eswatini. The matter has now been handed over to the police who will continue investigations to determine whether the suspects have connections to other smuggling operations or criminal groups.

GT cigarettes, along with several other low-cost brands produced in neighbouring countries, have long been associated with illegal cross

border trade. These products often enter the country without the payment of customs duties and excise taxes, undermining government revenue and providing unfair competition to legally compliant businesses. The Royal Eswatini Police Service and the army have been working jointly to reduce the circulation of such goods, especially along porous border points where smugglers frequently attempt to bypass official entry routes.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one security officer noted that smugglers have become increasingly bold in recent months, using hired taxis, small trucks and even private vehicles to transport illegal goods. He added that coordination between the army and police has been strengthened to counter these activities, with regular operations now taking

place at Mhlumeni, Lomahasha, and other strategic border areas.

The seizure has been welcomed by local authorities who praised the soldiers for their vigilance. Community leaders in the Lubombo region have repeatedly raised concerns about the rise in smuggling and the involvement of local drivers who are sometimes enticed by quick profits. They argue that the illegal tobacco trade not only harms legitimate businesses but also fuels other criminal activities as smuggling networks often overlap with syndicates involved in drug trafficking and human smuggling.

Police spokespersons are expected to issue a detailed statement once investigations are completed. For now, the two suspects remain in custody and will face charges related to the possession and transportation of prohibited goods. They may also be charged under customs and excise laws that carry hefty fines and possible jail time for offenders involved in the illegal movement of restricted products.





By Ncaba Ntshakala  
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ESWATINI Mobile hosted a celebratory luncheon at Ramblas on Tuesday in honour of award-winning gospel sensation Nothando Hlophe, following her outstanding victory at the 18th Crown Gospel Music Awards held in Durban, South Africa.

The gathering brought together leaders, partners and creatives to celebrate a moment that has become a national point of pride.

Nothando clinched the Best of Africa Award, a category reserved for exceptional talent whose artistic impact is witnessed across the continent. Her recognition comes at a time when her hit track “Methodist Medley” has reached an impressive three million views on YouTube, making it one of the most-watched gospel productions by a Swati artist and a true digital milestone for the country’s creative sector.

During the luncheon, Eswatini Mobile CEO Sydney Sichula expressed his profound admiration for Nothando’s achievements, noting that her work continues to “carry the Eswatini flag with grace and excellence.” He emphasised that the company’s support for Hlophe forms part of its commitment to contribute meaningfully to national development, highlighting His Majesty King Mswati III’s call to invest in local talent as a vehicle for economic growth.

Sichula explained that Eswatini Mobile’s sponsorship of the project aligns with its broader vision of becoming Africa’s Leading Integrated Business Partner, highlighting that the company’s values of Agility, Accountability, Commitment, Teamwork and Embracing Change guide their decision to stand behind creatives who embody excellence. “These values are not just words on paper,” he said. “They inform how we support people like Nothando, who represent progress and possibility.”

The event also heard remarks from Genesis Ekucaleni Media Founding Director and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Senator Pholile Shakantu, who could be seen beaming with pride as she highlighted on the magnitude of Nothando’s achievement.

Senator Shakantu explained that Genesis Ekucaleni Media was founded with a deep

# Eswatini Mobile honours gospel star Nothando Hlophe after continental win



▲ Award winning gospel sensation Nothando Hlophe speaking during the luncheon, seated on her left is Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Senator Pholile Shakantu.

passion for storytelling and a desire to present the Eswatini narrative on every possible platform. “Seeing Nothando shine across Africa reinforces the importance of platforms that lift local creatives,” she said. “This win is bigger than one artist. It is a reflection of what Eswatini can offer the world when talent is nurtured and supported.”

Genesis Ekucaleni Media served as Executive Producer of the A New Dawn album, working hand-in-hand with Lokuhle Media Group, led by Phindokuhle Sithole, the production company behind the project’s technical execution and overall delivery.

Nothando Hlophe extended heartfelt appreciation to Eswatini Mobile, Genesis Ekucaleni Media, Lokuhle Media Group, and the nation at large for their continued support throughout her journey. “This award is for the whole country,” she said. “I am just the vessel. Every view, every prayer, every word of encouragement has brought us here.”

Lokuhle Media Group Founder Phindokuhle Sithole also shared a message of gratitude, acknowledging the Minister’s vision and guidance.

He said the journey had not been easy,

but every challenge was worth the outcome. Sithole expressed appreciation to Eswatini Mobile for standing with the project, saying their support strengthened the entire production.

**Eswatini creatives are the best in the world — Senator Pholile Shakantu**

THE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Senator Pholile Shakantu, who also serves as the Founder of Genesis Ekucaleni Media, delivered a tribute to Eswatini’s creative sector during the celebratory luncheon honouring Nothando Hlophe. She asserted that Eswatini’s creatives are among the best in the world.

Senator Shakantu spoke passionately about the origins of Genesis Ekucaleni Media and her long-standing commitment to celebrating, preserving and elevating the Eswatini story. She explained that the company was born out of a desire to correct misconceptions, highlight historical truths and provide a platform for emaSwati to reconnect with their heritage. “My intention

was to tell the Eswatini story, realising the wrong narratives and listening to young people,” she said. “Our young people don’t even know who they are or the history of Eswatini.”

She recalled how this mission led her to begin researching and collaborating with writers and researchers to produce books and documentaries.

While serving as Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, she would often find herself explaining historical facts and correcting misinformation, but she felt that more needed to be done to reach the larger population, particularly the youth. “I wanted a way to tell emaSwati about their history, especially the young generation,” she said. “Some were even willing to give it away.”

This desire to preserve and re-tell Eswatini’s cultural identity soon expanded into creative media, leading her to launch a documentary project.

That initiative opened the door to broader involvement with the creative industry, eventually culminating in the production of the historic BakaNgwane film. “In working with the creative industry, I got to understand the problems faced by our creatives,” she said. “There is so much talent in Eswatini.”

Senator Shakantu highlighted that the excellence seen in the A New Dawn project is not by accident but the result of the hard work and dedication of Eswatini creatives who produced the entire project locally. She praised the technical expertise, production coordination and artistic vision of those behind the album. “Our local creatives worked very hard to ensure that the album was produced at the highest level possible,” she said, referencing the role of Lokuhle Media Group and music producer Phindokuhle Sithole. “The media is the engine running all of this. And that is talent—a creative talent that Phindokuhle is demonstrating, along with a lot of sacrifice.”

## Form Three pupil shines in Motshane army recruitment race

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Motshane Inkhundla recruitment exercise produced inspiring stories of determination, discipline and youthful ambition as candidates competed for places in the national army.

Among the standout participants was 26-year-old Siyabonga Khumalo who emerged as the overall winner in the male category.

His performance was described as commanding and consistent throughout the assessments which drew dozens of hopefuls from the surrounding communities.

Speaking shortly after his victory Siyabonga expressed heartfelt gratitude to his parents for their steadfast support. He said their encouragement had carried him through months of preparation and had been the driving force behind his decision to pursue

a career in the army.

He added that he hopes to make both his family and his country proud by serving with loyalty and commitment.

The female category also revealed an exceptional story of perseverance and youthful courage. 18-year-old Sebenele Mtsetfwa, a Form Three pupil at Londunduma High School, surprised many by outperforming older and more experienced participants. Her victory drew admiration from community members who noted the remarkable confidence she demonstrated throughout the recruitment stages.

Sebenele said she entered the exercise with a firm belief that commitment matters more than age. She praised her teachers and guardians for motivating her to believe in her abilities. She added that she hopes her success will inspire other young people to take advantage of national opportunities that allow them to contribute to the development of the country.

Another notable performance at Motshane came from 23-year old Phumlani Dlamini who secured the second position in the male category. Phumlani said he was grateful to his parents and everyone who has supported his dream of joining the army. He explained that the recruitment process had taught him valuable lessons about physical endurance and mental discipline.

He expressed hope that securing the runner up position would strengthen his chances of succeeding in the final stages of the national recruitment process.

The Motshane exercise attracted a significant turnout as residents rallied behind their preferred candidates. Elders and community leaders commended the youth for demonstrating respect, good conduct and a willingness to serve the nation.

They said the recruitment process not only identifies potential soldiers but also encourages the spirit of patriotism among young people.



▲ 18-year-old Sebenele Mtsetfwa, a Form 3 pupil at Londunduma High School.



By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has introduced the most significant shift to its customs declaration system in nearly two decades, raising the personal traveller allowance tenfold from E1,000 to E10,000.

This is a move aimed at easing border congestion, reducing disputes over receipts and encouraging citizens to declare goods honestly.

The change takes effect on November 28, a timing the Finance Ministry openly admits is deliberate, coming just as Black Friday triggers one of the busiest cross-border shopping periods of the year.

The announcement was delivered by Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg during his weekly Finance in Focus briefing, where he explained the practical challenges that had been building at the country's border posts for years.

The minister noted that the previous E1,000 threshold, introduced long before the current wave of consumer cross-border movement, had become outdated and almost unmanageable for both travellers and customs officials.

Rijkenberg said the ministry had been inundated with complaints from travellers who feared that minor technicalities on receipts faded ink, missing VAT numbers, or smudged print would result in their goods being rejected or charged unnecessarily.

"This fear had created a culture of concealment, with many citizens choosing to hide items in boots, repack new goods as old or avoid declaring altogether. This pattern was undermining both honest travel and proper record-keeping at the borders," said the Minister.

"We realised that people weren't dishonest because they wanted to break the law. They were hiding goods because they were scared that a small error on a slip which is not even their fault would cause problems. The new E10,000 threshold allows ordinary travellers to declare freely, without fear of unnecessary VAT charges when their receipts have minor issues," said the Minister.

The announcement marks the first major revision of this threshold since the early 2000s.

While Eswatini has long applied stricter allowances compared to its neighbours, many countries in the region including South Africa and Botswana apply more flexible personal import provisions based on value or category of goods.

Meanwhile, Regional customs experts note that while thresholds vary, the trend across SACU has been toward simplifying personal allowances to reduce small-scale smuggling and ease the administrative burden on officers. Eswatini's move now positions the country closer to these regional practices.

At the Oshoek-Ngwenya border, the country's busiest land crossing, the reaction was immediate.

Travellers standing in line welcomed the change as overdue, and several said they hoped it would reduce friction between the public and customs officers.

Gugu Mngomezulu, a 34-year-old mother from Manzini who travels to Nelspruit every few weeks for clothing and groceries, said the previous threshold had made ordinary shopping stressful.

"Sometimes the cashier gives you a receipt that's faint or has no tax number, and you start panicking. You end up hiding new shoes under the seat or wearing a jacket you just bought so it looks old. It's silly that we

# Eswatini increases personal traveller declaration threshold to E10 000

## ... Govt pushes for easier, more transparent border compliance



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg.

had to do that. With E10,000, at least we can breathe," said Mngomezulu.

For Siphelile Motsa, a young man from Mbabane who frequently orders personal electronics online via South Africa, the old threshold often left him feeling targeted.

"Those slips from online stores fade so fast. I have had officers say the ink is too light, or the code is not printed clearly. I think this new rule will save everyone a headache," said Motsa.

Customs officers themselves report that the old system placed them in constant conflict with travellers. A senior officer stationed at Oshoek, who requested anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the media, said the change may finally reduce the daily arguments at the border.

"Most of the fights we deal with come from misunderstanding slips or enforcing the E1,000 limit strictly. Someone buys clothes worth E1,500, brings a faint slip, and then you're forced to charge VAT. People get angry because they feel punished for bad printing. This new threshold gives us room to focus on bigger issues instead of fighting over R800 worth of groceries," said the senior officer.

The business community has also reacted to the announcement, though with a slightly different lens. While the new threshold applies purely to personal travellers, and not to traders or commercial importers, small-

scale resellers say the increase will indirectly ease their travel experience because it is likely to reduce border congestion.

Siphesihle Vilakati, a Mbabane-based clothing reseller, said traders still follow commercial declaration rules, but at least they won't be stuck behind long queues of people arguing about slips.

Economists say the move could have a significant impact on the country's revenue-tracking systems. Thabo Dlamini, an economist from a local research institute, said the policy is not just about convenience it is also a strategic attempt to improve the country's VAT recovery and SACU revenue receipts.

"When travellers declare goods properly, the government can claim VAT refunds from South Africa through the ERS-SARS mechanism," he explained.

"Second, SACU revenue is based on recorded trade values within the union. If many people are smuggling small goods or hiding things to avoid VAT disputes, Eswatini loses twice it loses VAT claims and it loses its rightful share of SACU revenue. Raising the threshold makes compliance easier and therefore boosts national revenue," he added.

Rijkenberg echoed this reasoning in his briefing, urging EmaSwati to understand their role in helping the country collect accurate data. He said the shift aims to make life easier while also protecting government

income.

One of the strongest elements of the new policy is its clarity on high-value goods. Rijkenberg stressed that goods above E10,000 such as refrigerators, stoves, large electronics or premium furniture are still eligible for VAT-free entry, but only if the invoice meets all documentation standards.

This includes the traveller's full name, physical address, ID or passport number, and the store's tax number, as well as a clear description of the goods and the VAT amount paid.

The minister explained that the purpose is not to create hardship but to ensure that high-value goods entering the country are properly recorded and verifiable, as required under SACU and ERS-SARS systems.

Several customs officers interviewed confirmed that incomplete invoices remain one of the biggest challenges at the border.

"People bring receipts with no tax number or no address. We can't process that. It's not about punishing people, it's about following regional and legal requirements," said the customs officer.

Despite the largely positive reaction, economists warn that the success of the new threshold will depend heavily on public honesty.

If travellers take advantage of the relaxed limit to hide goods above the threshold, the country risks losing more than it gains. Dlamini said the policy's effectiveness will rely on public cooperation, adding that customs officers will need to be supported with training and updated systems to manage the increased threshold smoothly.

Some members of the business sector say the government should eventually consider digitising receipts to reduce slip-related disputes entirely.

However, they welcomed the E10,000 threshold as a reasonable middle ground for now.

While Black Friday and the festive season approach typically the busiest cross-border shopping period in Southern Africa the Finance Ministry hopes the tenfold increase will reduce tension at border posts, speed up processing, and improve declaration rates.

With the new threshold set to take effect on November 28, Eswatini's border posts are preparing for a transition many hope will bring order, fairness and much-needed clarity.



▼ Ngwenya Border Post.



By Thokozani Mazibuko

A SOMBRE cloud has settled over Sithobelweni following the tragic death of a 20-year-old woman who was discovered murdered inside her rented flat on Monday morning.

The Royal Eswatini Police Service has launched a full-scale investigation into what they have described as a deeply disturbing case of intimate partner violence that escalated into a fatal crime.

The victim, whose identity is being withheld until all family members have been informed, was found at around 10am on 24 November 2025. Police officers who responded to the scene confirmed that she had visible strangulation marks on her neck, suggesting that she may have been killed during the night or early morning hours. The discovery was made after neighbours raised concern when they realised, she had not stepped out of her flat and was not responding to knocks on her door.

According to early accounts gathered by investigators, the incident appears to have been preceded by a heated argument between the victim and her boyfriend the previous night.

Sources close to the investigation said the suspect allegedly became enraged when the young woman did not answer his phone calls. The man reportedly accused her of being unfaithful and the confrontation quickly intensified.

Neighbours told police that the dispute began outside the victim's residence. One neighbour attempted to intervene when voices were heard rising, but the confrontation remained unresolved.

The victim is said to have insisted that they move inside her flat to speak privately and calm the situation. That was the last time she was seen alive.

When neighbours noticed unusual quiet the next morning and realised the victim had not emerged from her flat, they alerted community leaders who then contacted police. Officers arrived to find her lifeless body

## POLICE LAUNCH MANHUNT

# Tragedy in Siphofaneni after woman found murdered

inside the home she had rented for several months. A medical examination confirmed the presence of strangulation wounds and investigators immediately classified the case as murder.

The suspect, identified as the victim's boyfriend, has since disappeared and is believed to be on the run. Police launched an immediate manhunt and are appealing to members of the public to come forward with any information that may assist in locating him. Authorities have warned that he should not be confronted by civilians and that all leads should be passed directly to law enforcement.

Siphofaneni police described the case as heartbreaking and said it reflects an alarming pattern of domestic disputes escalating into violence. Officers have been interviewing neighbours, friends and family members to piece together a timeline of events leading up to the victim's death. They are also exploring whether the couple had a history of conflict that may have provided early warning signs.

Lubombo Regional Crime Branch Officer Mr Justice Mabuza urged the public to assist with the search. He emphasised that police are working tirelessly to bring the suspect to justice and ensure the victim's family receives closure. Sergeant Dlamini, the Siphofaneni Desk Officer, echoed this appeal and noted that even small pieces of information could prove vital for the investigation.

Gender based violence advocates in the region have reacted with deep concern to the news. Several community leaders lamented the rise in cases where intimate partner conflicts end in fatal outcomes, particularly among young couples.

They emphasised the need for families,



▲ Deputy PICO Nosipho Mnguni.

neighbours and friends to take signs of escalating violence seriously and seek assistance before situations reach dangerous levels.

The tragic death has stirred intense emotion within the Sithobelweni community, where the victim was described as a quiet and respectful young woman who had recently begun making plans for her future. Many residents gathered outside her flat on Monday afternoon as police processed the

scene. Several expressed shock, saying they had heard arguments the night before but had not anticipated that the dispute would end in such devastating loss.

Police say they will continue combing through evidence from the flat and reviewing any surveillance cameras in the neighbourhood that may help establish the suspect's movements after the crime. Officers are also checking nearby transport ranks, border points and known associates of the suspect.

Authorities reminded the public that the Royal Eswatini Police Service has several channels available for reporting crime, including emergency numbers, local police stations and community policing forums. They stressed that information can be provided confidentially and that the safety of the public remains their top priority.

As the investigation continues, police remain focused on locating the suspect and ensuring that justice is served. They also urged the nation to remain vigilant and to support efforts aimed at preventing domestic violence. Anyone with information that could help police is encouraged to contact Lubombo RCBO Mr Justice Mabuza on 7606 8572, Siphofaneni Desk Officer Sergeant Dlamini on 7617 7214, Siphofaneni Police Station on 2344 1222 or the emergency lines 999, 999 or 112.

The loss of a young life has once again highlighted the urgent need for deeper community involvement, stronger early intervention and sustained efforts to protect the most vulnerable. As Sithobelweni mourns, the Royal Eswatini Police Service has assured the public that they will not rest until the suspect is apprehended and the full truth behind the tragedy is uncovered.

## Man arrested after allegedly stabbing two neighbours

By Thokozani Mazibuko

A 42-YEAR-OLD man from Nhlangano has been arrested and charged after a violent confrontation at Sankolo left two people seriously injured in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Bhunya police confirmed that the suspect allegedly stabbed a 38-year-old woman from Ngogodla in Mhlangeni and a 43-year-old man from the Luhleko area shortly after midnight on 23 November 2025. Both victims were rushed to Mankayane Government Hospital where they were treated for multiple stab wounds.

According to information gathered by investigators, the suspect had been drinking with the victims earlier that evening. All three individuals reside within the same compound, and it is understood that the suspect's romantic partner was also present during the drinking session. The group had been socialising without incident until an argument broke out between the suspect and his lover. Witnesses told police that the couple is known for engaging in frequent and heated conflicts, particularly when alcohol is involved.

This time, however, the fight unfolded in the presence of their neighbours. As the argument grew louder and more aggressive, the two victims attempted to intervene,

fearing that the quarrel could escalate into violence. The woman reportedly stepped forward first to calm the suspect, while the man attempted to separate the couple and defuse the situation.

Instead of backing down, police say the suspect became increasingly hostile. In what investigators have described as a sudden and unprovoked escalation, the man allegedly armed himself with a sharp object and turned on the two good samaritans who were trying to stop the altercation. Officers reported that the woman sustained several stab wounds on her left arm, chest and below her left breast. The male victim was also stabbed repeatedly on his body and both arms as he tried to shield himself and assist the woman.

Neighbours who heard the commotion rushed to the scene after the victims cried for help. They immediately contacted emergency services and the police. Responding officers arrived quickly and launched a search for the suspect, who had fled from the compound moments after the attack. Bhunya police later managed to track him down and arrest him. He was taken into custody without resistance.

Paramedics transported both victims to Mankayane Government Hospital where they received urgent treatment. Hospital staff confirmed that the injuries were serious but not life threatening. The woman remains under medical observation due to the loca-



tion of her wounds, while the male victim has been reported as stable.

Police say the attack highlights a troubling pattern of alcohol influenced violence among couples and neighbours in certain communities. Officers noted that the couple involved in this case has been known to authorities due to previous domestic disputes, though none of those incidents had resulted in severe injuries until now. The victims had reportedly grown accustomed to witnessing quarrels between the couple, but this time felt compelled to intervene because the dispute was happening in their presence and appeared to be escalating rapidly.

Bhunya police have urged members of the public to exercise caution when attempting to intervene in heated domestic disputes, particularly when alcohol is involved. Authorities emphasised that while intervention often comes from a place of concern, situations can quickly become volatile and un-

predictable. Officers advised that the safest course of action in such cases is to call the police immediately and keep a safe distance until law enforcement arrives.

Community members in Sankolo expressed shock over the incident, describing the victims as peace loving individuals who were simply trying to prevent a domestic fight from spiralling out of control. Residents said tensions have been rising in the area due to the suspect's frequent arguments with his partner, but no one expected the violence to reach a point where neighbours would be attacked for trying to help.

The Royal Eswatini Police Service has confirmed that the suspect faces two counts of attempted murder. He was scheduled to appear before the Manzini Magistrates Court today to face the charges. Officers say investigations are ongoing and additional charges could be considered depending on further medical reports and forensic evidence.



BRIEFS

**Big buzz, small market**  
EARLY tech adopters are gobbling up smartglasses like Thanksgiving turkey - especially Meta's new, retro-chic version with a visual display in the lens. But concerns about price, privacy, and the comfort of wearing a computer on one's face are giving mainstream shoppers pause this holiday season.

**Transnet gets 300 mln euro loan**  
FRANCE'S development agency has agreed to give South African state-owned logistics group Transnet a 300 million euro (\$345.78 million) loan for clean energy initiatives. Transnet manages the freight rail network, ports and pipelines in Africa's biggest economy. The South African government is trying to revive the company after years of chronic underperformance that have stifled exports of commodities such as coal and iron ore, but turnaround efforts are only starting to bear fruit.

**Alphabet on pace to hit \$4 trillion market value**  
ALPHABET was on track to hit a historic \$4 trillion market valuation on Tuesday, powered by an impressive year-long rally fueled by the Google parent's sharpened focus on artificial intelligence tools. Shares of the company were up 4.1% at \$331.7 in premarket trading, putting the company on course to breach the key milestone at the open. (Reuters)

# Jonsson Workwear factory 100% complete

By Delisa Magagula

ON Monday, the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, held a progress review meeting with Jonsson Workwear's factory.

The meeting was had with the Head of Manufacturing, Marnie Gerber, to assess construction at the company's new factory in Eswatini.

The update confirmed a significant milestone: the factory is now almost 100 per cent complete, with final touches under way ahead of full operational readiness.

The project carries an investment value of E185.8 million and has been described by government as a strategic industrial development that positions Eswatini as a competitive destination for large-scale manufacturing. Construction Associates, the appointed contractor, has led the build of the more than 20,000-square-metre structure, which includes the main production floor, canteen, locker rooms, administrative sections and auxiliary buildings.

Minister Khumalo welcomed the near completion of the project, saying it firmly supports the national mandate of accelerating economic growth through industrial expansion.

"This project represents more than infrastructure, this reflects investor confidence in Eswatini and will create significant employment opportunities while boosting the country's manufacturing sector," said Khumalo.

The factory, located at Magidaneni Farm under Maseyisini Inkhundla in the Shiselweni region, is expected to create over 3,000 jobs once operations begin. The Minister noted that beyond direct employment, the project will support a broader ecosystem that includes supply chains, logistics, transport operators, local retailers, and small businesses that stand to benefit from increased economic activity in the area.

Gerber expressed the company's satisfaction with the progress made by the construction teams, noting that Jonsson Workwear is preparing for the next stage of operations.

She confirmed that once the facility is handed over, the company will begin commissioning equipment, on boarding staff and implementing manufacturing systems. She explained that the factory will operate according to Jonsson's global standards, with a focus on productivity, quality control and regional competitiveness.

Construction of the factory began after a series of tenders issued in 2022 under the MicroProjects Programme.

The bidding process outlined requirements for HVAC installation, security buildings, drainage systems, roads and other support infrastructure.

The project has since followed a structured rollout that included site preparation, structural works, roofing, mechanical installations and internal finishes. According to project supervisors, all major construction phases have now been completed, and only final inspections and finishing touches remain.

Noteworthy, this factory is also aligned with Eswatini's long-term strategy of decentralising economic development. By locating one of the country's largest manufacturing facilities in Nhlanguano, the government aims to stimulate growth in rural

... Marks major industrial milestone for Eswatini



▲ Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo touring the factory with the Jonsson Workwear team.



▲ Minister Khumalo and the team during the tour.

and semi-urban areas that historically did not attract heavy industrial investment.

The Minister has previously emphasised that industrial decentralisation is a central component of the country's development agenda, as it reduces pressure on Manzini and Matsapha while broadening economic participation across regions.

For Jonsson Workwear, the Eswatini expansion is designed to support the company's growing regional demand. The facility will supply both domestic markets and international customers, integrating Eswatini into Jonsson's wider manufacturing network. Gerber highlighted that this will require technical training, up skilling programmes and coordinated workforce development to ensure that local employees fully meet production requirements. In addition to infrastructure investment, the project has also benefited from government support through a Development Enterprise Order, which grants the company a 10-year tax incentive effective from July 2026.

The incentive is meant to encourage long-term investment and enable the factory to reinvest in operations, technology and job creation during its early years of production.

Local authorities in the Shiselweni region have also welcomed the project, calling it a transformative development with wide-reaching socio-economic implications.

The presence of one of the region's largest employers is expected to create demand for new housing, expand transport routes, and drive growth in small and medium businesses that support industrial output. With the project now nearing full completion, attention is shifting to the next operational phases. These include machinery installation, recruitment drives, manufacturing line setup and the rollout of company-wide training programmes.

Gerber indicated that the company is committed to integrating Eswatini workers into its systems and has put in place structured training plans aimed at ensuring strong performance from the start.

For Eswatini, the nearing completion of the Jonsson Workwear factory marks a major step forward in diversifying the economy, expanding industrial capacity and positioning the country as a manufacturing hub in the region. Both the Ministry and Jonsson Workwear have expressed confidence that operations will begin soon after the final construction checks are completed.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.7678	17.2329
G.B. Pound	21.9714	22.6442
EURO	19.4164	20.0276
Bank Rate (July 2023)	7.50%	
Prime Rate (July 2023)	11%	
Inflation (July 2023)	4.5%	
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	





By Delisa Magagula

# Eswatini steps up measures as more frequent droughts loom

AS climate models continue to indicate a future marked by more frequent and intense drought cycles across Southern Africa, Eswatini is intensifying efforts to enhance national preparedness.

A high-level workshop underway in Ezulwini is reviewing the country's National Drought Plan and refining a Drought Risk Financing Portfolio aimed at ensuring the country can respond quickly and effectively to emerging threats.

Government officials, development partners, and technical experts gathered for a multi-day session that focused on aligning drought-preparedness strategies with updated climate projections.

The meeting is part of a broader regional effort to strengthen resilience in countries that are increasingly vulnerable to erratic rainfall and prolonged dry spells.

Sydney Simelane, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, said the country is at a critical point in adjusting its preparedness systems.

"Predictions show that more frequent droughts are expected in the SADC region in the near future," Simelane told delegates.

"Our National Drought Plan must be updated, actionable, and backed by the necessary resources and coordination mechanisms to protect our communities and livelihoods," added Simelane.

Simelane said the review process is designed to ensure that every sector likely to be impacted by drought agriculture, water management, health, education, energy, and social protection has a clear plan in place.

According to him, fragmented or delayed responses can worsen the effects of droughts, particularly for rural communities and small-scale farmers whose livelihoods depend on seasonal rainfall.

Noteworthy the workshop brings together representatives from government departments, civil society organisations, meteorological experts, humanitarian agencies, and financial partners.

Among the key priorities is to identify gaps in institutional coordination, early-warning dissemination, and on-the-ground response mechanisms. Delegates are also examining how to align national drought planning with regional frameworks and global best practices.

## Funding

A central focus of the meeting is the development of a Drought Risk Financing Portfolio, a framework intended to secure predictable and sustainable funding for drought-related interventions.

Participants are exploring a range of financing tools, including drought insurance products, contingency funds, anticipatory financing instruments, and public-private partnerships. The goal is to ensure that the country has adequate and timely resources before, during, and after drought events.

According to technical experts attending the workshop, many countries in the region struggle with delayed funding, which often forces governments to redirect resources from other critical programs during drought emergencies. By establishing a dedicated financing portfolio, Eswatini aims to avoid such disruptions and ensure continuity of essential services.

Victor Lusekwane Mahlalela, Chief Executive Officer of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), said the country must shift from reactive to proactive drought management.

"Drought is the highest hazard in Eswatini, and it affects every citizen. We need coordinated systems and reliable funding to act be-



▲ The stakeholders during the meeting.



▲ Some of the attendees during the event.

fore droughts cause widespread damage," he said.

Mahlalela emphasised that early-warning systems will play a key role going forward. One of the tools being discussed is the Combined Drought Indicator for Eswatini (CDI-E), a system that integrates satellite observations with ground-level data to produce real-time drought signals.

Operationalising the CDI-E, he said, will improve the country's ability to detect early signs of drought stress and activate anticipatory actions. Meanwhile, the National Drought Plan, developed in 2020 with support from regional partners, is structured around three pillars: monitoring and early warning; vulnerability and impact assessment; and mitigation, preparedness, and response.

Each pillar outlines the responsibilities of various institutions and the processes required for coordinated action. However, stakeholders at the workshop noted that climate patterns have shifted significantly in re-

cent years, necessitating a review of the plan.

Rainfall has become increasingly unpredictable, and farmers in certain regions have reported reduced yields due to prolonged mid-season dry spells. Officials said these changes highlight the need for updated risk models, more localised early-warning information, and stronger community-level engagement. Historical droughts have had far-reaching impacts on Eswatini's economy, including reduced agricultural production, water shortages, declining hydropower output, and increased food-insecurity pressures.

Past emergencies have also shown that early-warning information does not always reach rural communities in a form that prompts action. Workshop participants identified communication gaps as a key area requiring improvement.

Delegates are also reviewing the role of traditional authorities, local disaster committees, and community networks in drought-preparedness efforts. Stakeholders say these structures often play a critical

role during emergencies but require more resources, training, and clearer guidance on when and how to act.

In addition to strengthening early-warning systems and institutional coordination, the workshop is expected to produce a detailed implementation roadmap.

According to organisers, this roadmap will include defined responsibilities, timelines, capacity-building needs, and financing strategies. It will also outline mechanisms for monitoring progress and updating the plan as climate science evolves.

As the workshop continues, officials say the ultimate goal is to ensure that the country is prepared for the increasing frequency of droughts projected for the region.

If effectively implemented, the updated National Drought Plan and Drought Risk Financing Portfolio will support Eswatini's transition from crisis-driven responses to long-term resilience. The measures aim to safeguard vulnerable communities, protect agricultural production, and ensure that na-





## Transnet gets 300 mln euro loan

FRANCE’S development agency has agreed to give South African state-owned logistics group Transnet a 300 million euro (\$345.78 million) loan for clean energy initiatives. Transnet manages the freight rail network, ports and pipelines in Africa’s biggest economy. The South African government is trying to revive the company after years of chronic underperformance that have stifled exports of commodities such as coal and iron ore, but turnaround efforts are only starting to bear fruit. Loan disbursements from France’s AFD agency will be tied to progress on sustainability targets, including Transnet increasing its use of renewable energy, Transnet and AFD said in a joint statement on Tuesday. The financing will also promote a shift from road transport to rail, including the rehabilitation of 550 kilometres of railway, and the modernisation of port infrastructure, the statement said. (Reuters)



## Alphabet on pace to hit \$4 trillion market value

ALPHABET was on track to hit a historic \$4 trillion market valuation on Tuesday, powered by an impressive year-long rally fueled by the Google parent’s sharpened focus on artificial intelligence tools. Shares of the company were up 4.1% at \$331.7 in premarket trading, putting the company on course to breach the key milestone at the open. The search and ad tech giant joins an elite club of Big Tech companies racing to dominate the booming technology as AI continues to captivate Wall Street this year. (Reuters)



# Big buzz, small market

... Meta’s smartglasses are a specialty gadget this holiday

EARLY tech adopters are gobbling up smartglasses like Thanksgiving turkey - especially Meta’s new, retro-chic version with a visual display in the lens. But concerns about price, privacy, and the comfort of wearing a computer on one’s face are giving mainstream shoppers pause this holiday season.

Meta and partner EssilorLuxottica’s “smart” Ray-Bans and Oakleys, which first launched in 2023, have captured the tech world’s attention by answering calls, taking pictures and playing music. The latest model - the Meta Ray-Ban Display - includes a visual display in the right lens, and connects users to AI.

U.S. smartglasses sales tripled year-over-year in 2025, according to market research firm Circana - great news for a type of gadget that crashed and burned after Google’s ill-fated ‘glass’ experiment in 2013, and which has been trying to regain respect ever since.

Holiday sales this season will likely dwarf the \$52.6 million U.S. shoppers spent on smart glasses in the final quarter of 2024, said Ben Arnold, a consumer technology industry analyst with Circana. Analysts expect tech companies like Apple and Samsung to release their own smartglass products soon.

John Paul Stewart, a New York City resident, was intrigued enough to visit a Meta Lab store in Manhattan last week, one of dozens of consumers crowding around display cases or receiving demos of the glasses from Meta workers. But he found the glasses a little heavy.

“I don’t know how comfortable it’s going to be, like, to wear them for a long period of time,” said Stewart, 51. “I feel like I’m going to wait for one more generation.”

About 25% of respondents surveyed by CivicScience - a consumer research firm that



▲ Meta and partner EssilorLuxottica’s “smart” Ray-Bans and Oakleys, which first launched in 2023, have captured the tech world’s attention by answering calls, taking pictures and playing music.

embeds survey questions in news, lifestyle and entertainment websites - recently said they are interested in trying smartglasses, up from 20% early this year.

Smartglasses ownership now is about where smartwatches were in 2017, and interest is rising, CivicScience surveys show.

Still, “We’re not quite there” in terms of mainstream adoption, said Avi Greengart, a tech industry analyst who runs market analysis firm Techsponential.

“Long term, who knows? We’ll all be cyborgs.”

A spokeswoman for Meta declined to comment on how many Displays have been sold, or how many will be produced for the holi-

days. The Displays - which sell for \$799 before adding prescription lenses - will not be discounted for Black Friday or Cyber Monday, the spokeswoman added.

EssilorLuxottica did not immediately respond to questions about the availability and pricing of the smartglasses this holiday season.

The Display - Meta’s most advanced AI-powered eyewear - comes with a smartphone-like display in the right lens, and an accompanying bracelet that tracks hand movements. With pinches and thumb flicks, users can scroll through apps to play music, converse with AI, record video, and even translate languages in real time. (Reuters)

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SECURITY forces in Uganda have detained more than 300 supporters and officials from the party of opposition presidential candidate Bobi Wine since campaigning for a January election kicked off last month, his party's spokesperson said on Tuesday.

Pop star-turned-politician Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, is challenging 81-year-old President Yoweri Museveni for the second time after coming second in the last election in 2021.

Now Africa's fourth longest-ruling leader, Museveni's government has changed the constitution twice to remove age and term limits, allowing him to remain in office since 1986.

The arrests included scores detained this week in the capital Kampala, where Wine began campaigning on Monday, Joel Ssenyonyi, spokesperson for Wine's party National Unity Platform (NUP), told Reuters.

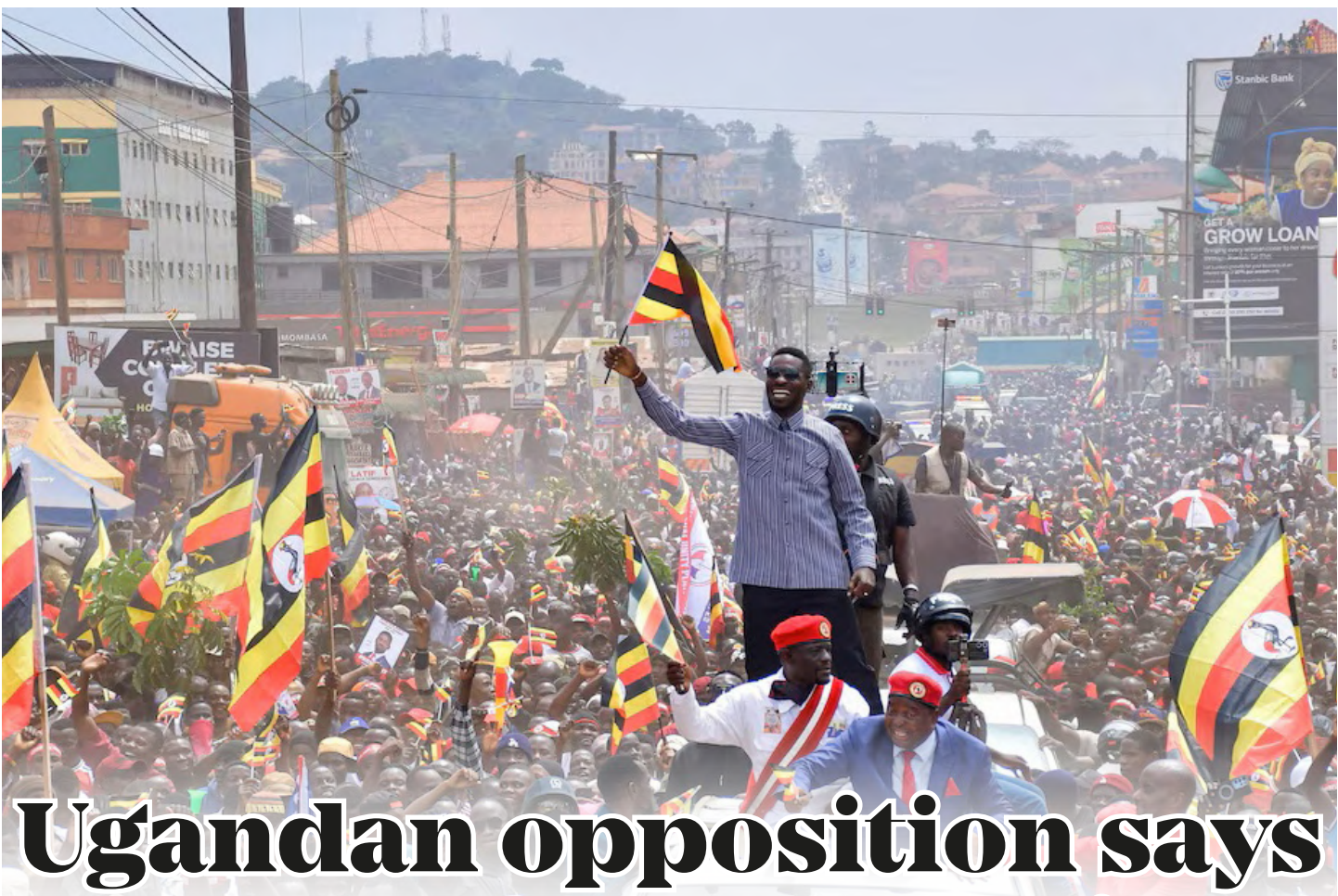
"Over 300 have been detained since the campaigns started. The regime is in panic, they are resorting to arrests to deter and instil fear in our people," Ssenyonyi said.

The majority of those detained are ordinary supporters but also include campaign coordinators, Wine's aides and other officials, he said.

Police spokesperson Rusoke Kituuma did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

At a rally in Kampala's Kawempe area on Monday security forces used tear gas and water cannon to disperse a crowd of Wine's supporters, video aired by local broadcaster NTV showed.

A video posted on Wine's X account late on Monday also showed police using pepper spray on his supporters. A man in plain clothes who approached from the side of the security personnel was seen beating sup-



# Ugandan opposition says 300 supporters detained

porters using a cane.

At least 100 people were arrested on Monday and dozens more detained on Tuesday at another rally on the outskirts of Kampala, Ssenyonyi said.

Police said in a statement late on Monday that they had detained seven people after

clashes with Wine's supporters, accusing them of throwing stones and injuring seven officers.

"Security personnel responded by using public order measures to control rowdy crowds," the statement said.

Wine says Museveni won the last election

through ballot-stuffing, intimidation of voters, bribery and other rigging tactics. Ruling party officials have dismissed the accusation.

If he wins a new five-year term, Museveni will extend his rule in the East African country to nearly half a century.

(Reuters)

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# Netflix sends off ‘Stranger Things’ with bike rides and product blitz



▲ Cast members Noah Schnapp and Millie Bobby Brown attend the screening for the final season of the television series “Stranger Things”, at Odeon Luxe Leicester Square in London, Britain

NETFLIX’S hit sci-fi series “Stranger Things” is about to ride to its conclusion with a marketing and merchandising blitz befitting a blockbuster movie.

Ahead of the fifth and final season’s debut on Wednesday, thousands turned out in Los Angeles at a cycling event dubbed “One Last Ride,” a nod to the show’s bike-riding teenagers in the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana.

Retailers are offering everything from De-

mogoron Crunch cereal to Hellfire Club backpacks for what is Netflix’s largest consumer products program to date, said Netflix Chief Marketing Officer Marian Lee.

Target stores are selling more than 150 “Stranger Things” products.

Many brands are leaning in to 1980s nostalgia. Gatorade brought back an ‘80s Citrus Cooler flavor, and Walmart (is selling a “Stranger Things” collection of Care Bears, one of the hot-selling toys of that era.

## France seeks three-month suspension of Shein over sex dolls

THE French government will ask a Paris judge on Wednesday to order the suspension of Chinese online platform Shein in the country for three months over sales of childlike sex dolls and banned weapons, a finance ministry official said on Tuesday.

Shein has already disabled its marketplace - where third-party sellers offer their products to shoppers around the world - in France since November 5, after the government found the dolls and weapons for sale on the site, but the part of its website offering Shein’s own clothing range is still accessible.

The government aims to secure a three-month suspension of Shein’s website as a whole, under an extraordinary judicial procedure, as it pushes the company to tighten controls over the products it sells.

RULING EXPECTED IN THE COM-

### ING WEEKS

The court of Paris is set to hold a hearing on Wednesday on the accelerated judicial procedure the government has started, summoning Infinite Styles Services Co Ltd, the Dublin-based company behind Shein’s business in Europe, with lawyers for the company also expected to attend.

France’s case rests on Article 6.3 of the digital economy law, which gives a judge powers to prescribe measures with the aim of preventing or halting harm caused by on-line content.

The court will have to decide whether a suspension is warranted, and whether it is in line with European Union law. Under EU law, online marketplaces, as intermediaries, are not directly liable for products sold by third parties, but have an obligation to remove illegal products as soon as they become aware of them.

(Reuters)



▲ A customer holds shopping bags with a Shein logo in the first physical space of Chinese online fast-fashion retailer Shein on the day of its opening inside the Le BHV Marais department store, the Bazar de l’Hotel de Ville, in Paris, France.

The promotional push extends around the world.

“This is a show that really resonates globally,” Lee said.

In Paris, visitors can browse a Hawkins Christmas market at the Galeries Lafayette department store. A “Stranger Things” experience featuring the Hawkins Lab has stopped in San Francisco, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Sydney. New Netflix Houses inside malls feature “Stranger Things” areas.

Instead of releasing all episodes at once, Netflix will stagger the final season’s episodes around major holidays. Four episodes debut on Wednesday, the day before the U.S. Thanksgiving Day holiday, three on Christmas Day in December and the final episode on New Year’s Eve.

“Stranger Things” - whose stars include Millie Bobby Brown, Finn Wolfhard and Noah Schnapp - will be hard to miss throughout the holiday season. A “Stranger Things” float featuring 1970s and ‘80s rock band Foreigner will appear in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade. More products will arrive to tempt holiday shoppers.

The all-in approach is similar to what movie studios employ for big-budget films such as “Barbie” or “Wicked,” said Amanda Cioletti, an expert on licensing trends and vice president of content and strategy at research firm Informa Markets Global Licensing Group. TV shows rarely receive such treatment.

“We see ‘Stranger Things’ everywhere,” said Cioletti. “When you are on social media you see it, and you see it in all the storefronts. You see it in every other placement that makes sense.”

Fans at the Los Angeles bike ride voiced anticipation for the final season of a series that began nine years ago.

“The (show) started when I was in about sixth grade, so I was the same age as the characters when it started,” said 21-year-old Chloe Allen. “It’s definitely been a huge part of my life.”

Netflix hopes to keep fans interested in the “Stranger Things” world for years. A play called “Stranger Things: The First Shadow” is running on Broadway and London’s West End, and an animated series is set for next year.

A live-action spinoff also is planned. “It’s not a continuation of the story of Hawkins, of these characters, but it’s still in the universe of ‘Stranger Things,’” Co-Creator Ross Duffer said.

Executive producer Shawn Levy revealed few details but said he and the Duffers would offer fans something new.

“We are never going to repeat ourselves,” Levy said.

(Reuters)



## Meta in talks to spend billions on Google’s chips

META Platforms is in talks with Google to spend billions of dollars on the Alphabet tab-owned company’s chips for use in its data centers starting from 2027, The Information reported, a move that would cast Google as a serious rival to semiconductor giant Nvidia The talks also involve Meta renting chips from Google Cloud as early as next year and are part of Google’s broader push to get customers to adopt its tensor processing units (TPUs) - used for AI workloads - in their own data centers, the report said, citing people involved in the talks.

The move would mark a departure from Google’s current strategy of using TPUs only in its own data centers and could

sharply expand the market for its chips, putting the company in direct competition for the hundreds of billions being spent on data-center processors to power AI services.

Some Google Cloud executives have suggested the strategy could help it capture as much as 10% of Nvidia’s annual revenue, a slice worth billions of dollars, according to the report.

### ALPHABET SHARES RISE, NVIDIA DECLINES

Alphabet shares rose more than 4% in premarket trading on Tuesday, putting it on course to hit a historic \$4 trillion valuation if the gains hold. Broadcom which helps Google make its AI chips, gained 2%, while Nvidia fell 3.2%.

Clinching a chip deal with Meta, one of the biggest Nvidia customers with up to \$72 billion planned in spending this year,

(Reuters)



U.S. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll held talks on late on Monday and Tuesday with Russian officials in Abu Dhabi as part of an intense new push by President Donald Trump’s administration to end the war in Ukraine, Driscoll’s spokesperson said.

U.S. and Ukrainian officials are trying to narrow the gaps between them over a peace plan, with core issues still unresolved and Ukraine wary of being strong-armed into accepting a deal largely on the Kremlin’s terms.

“Late Monday and throughout Tuesday, Secretary Driscoll and team have been in discussions with the Russian delegation to achieve a lasting peace in Ukraine. The talks are going well and we remain optimistic. Secretary Driscoll is closely synchronized with the White House...as these talks progress,” said U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Tolbert, a spokesperson for Driscoll.

The exact nature of the discussions was not immediately clear, and it was not known who was in the Russian delegation. A U.S. official said that Driscoll, who has emerged as a point man for U.S. diplomatic efforts on Ukraine, was also expected to meet Ukrainian officials while in Abu Dhabi.

Underlining the high stakes for Ukraine, its capital Kyiv was hit by a barrage of missiles and hundreds of drones overnight in a Russian strike that killed at least six people and disrupted power and heating systems. Residents were sheltering underground wearing winter jackets, some in tents.

**ZELENSKIY: WILL DISCUSS SENSITIVE ISSUES WITH TRUMP**

U.S. policy towards the war has zigzagged in recent months.

A hastily arranged summit between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska in August raised worries in Kyiv and European capitals that the Trump administration might accept many Russian demands, though ultimately resulted in more U.S. pressure on Russia.

in maths among G7 nations in 2022 tests, last in reading, and tied with Italy to come bottom in science — their worst scores yet, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data.

The education ministry insists spending on schools has increased since President Emmanuel Macron took office in 2017, but unions say that claim falls flat once pensions are stripped out and inflation is factored in.

French parents are outraged over swelling class sizes, ageing school buildings and absent teachers who are not replaced as the government tries to keep costs down.

“If the world’s seventh biggest economy

# US and Russia hold peace talks in Abu Dhabi as missiles pound Kyiv



▲ *An explosion of a Russian drone in the sky over the city during a Russian missile and drone strike in Kyiv, Ukraine.*

The latest U.S. peace proposal, a 28-point plan that emerged last week, caught many in the U.S. government, Kyiv and Europe off-guard and prompted fresh concerns that the Trump administration might be willing to push Ukraine to sign a peace deal heavily tilted toward Moscow.

The plan would require Kyiv to cede more territory, accept curbs on its military and bar it from ever joining NATO - conditions Kyiv has long rejected as tantamount to surrender.

The sudden push raises the pressure on Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who is now at his most vulnerable since the start of the war after a corruption scandal saw two of his ministers dismissed, and as Russia makes battlefield gains.

Zelenskiy could struggle to get Ukrainians to swallow a deal viewed as selling out their interests.

He said on Monday the latest peace plan incorporated “correct” points after talks over the weekend in Geneva.

“The sensitive issues, the most delicate points, I will discuss with President Trump,” Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.

Zelenskiy, who could visit the U.S. in the next few days, said the process of producing a final document would be difficult. Russia’s unrelenting attacks on Ukraine have left many sceptical about how peace can be achieved soon.

“There was a very loud explosion, our windows were falling apart, we got dressed and ran out,” said Nadiia Horodko, a 39-year-old accountant, after a residential building was struck in Kyiv overnight.

can’t fund education for its citizens, it’s incomprehensible and scandalous,” said Gregoire Ensel, parent of a high-school student and vice president of a national parents’ federation.

“We don’t want to hear the argument that ‘it costs too much’”, he said, with education an investment in the future.

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO MODEL UNDER PRESSURE**

Pensions are a highly charged issue in France, where the government has faced persistent threats to its survival since Macron’s snap election last year left him with a hung parliament.

Past attempts to overhaul the system have sparked protests, and just this month, lawmakers suspended the president’s flagship 2023 reform to raise the retirement age to 64 from 62 as part of negotiations to approve the 2026 budget.

France’s pay-as-you-go system, a post-war welfare legacy, relies almost entirely on payroll contributions. Most Western peers typically mix in private savings, which eases the pension burden on the public finances.

More than 28% of the 2026 education budget is earmarked for pension contributions, Reuters found, by analysing hundreds of pages of government data in next year’s budget.

France’s system is vulnerable to the same demographic trends rippling across ageing Europe, and faces growing pressure as the baby-boomer generation leaves the workforce and starts to draw their retirement income.

The demographic imbalance is particularly acute in the public sector where succes-

“There was horror, everything was already burning here, and a woman was screaming from the eighth floor, ‘Save the child, the child is on fire!’”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said an amended peace plan must reflect the “spirit and letter” of an understanding reached between Putin and Trump at their Alaska summit.

**MACRON WARNS AGAINST EUROPEAN CAPITULATION**

A group of countries supporting Ukraine, which is known as the coalition of the willing and includes Britain and France, was set to hold a virtual meeting on Tuesday.

“It’s an initiative that goes in the right direction: peace. However, there are aspects of that plan that deserve to be discussed, negotiated, improved,” French President Emmanuel Macron told RTL radio regarding the U.S.-proposed plan. “We want peace, but we don’t want a peace that would be a capitulation.”

He added that only the Ukrainians could decide what territorial concessions they are ready to make.

“What was put on the table gives us an idea of what would be acceptable for the Russians. Does that mean that it is what must be accepted by the Ukrainians and the Europeans? The answer is no,” Macron added.

In a separate development, Romania scrambled fighter jets to track drones that breached its territory near the border with Ukraine early on Tuesday, and one was still advancing deeper into the NATO-member country, the defence ministry said.

Tensions have risen along Europe’s eastern flank in recent months after suspected Russian drones breached the airspace of several NATO states. (Reuters)

sive pushes to keep civil servant numbers down mean there is less than one worker per retiree, versus 1.4 in the private sector.

And the impact is sharpest in the public education system, which employs over half of France’s more than 2 million civil servants in the state administration.

**THE FRENCH PARADOX**

At first glance, France’s headline spending on education, worth 5% of GDP, looks more generous than the 4.7% EU average. But after stripping out pensions, spending falls to 4.6%, said economist Helene Paris at Conseil d’Analyse Economique think tank.

Spending per primary school pupil falls to 7,726 euros a year without pensions from 8,450 with them, calculations by Institut des Politiques Publiques, another think tank, show.

Pension outlays explain the paradox of education spending that is higher than many peers but still results in bigger average class sizes and less well-paid teachers, said education economist Julien Grenet with the Paris School of Economics.

“French education spending is artificially inflated due to an accounting norm,” he said.

**DECLINING TEST SCORES**

France’s declining test scores have been a source of anguish in a country where education was once considered world-class.

However, experts say there is no quick fix.

Increasing teacher numbers or paying them more would be a costly solution as the state pays payroll contributions to the pension system equal to 78% on every public worker’s wages, compared with only 16.5% in the private sector.

(Reuters)



# The Hive Market returns with fresh experiences

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE Hive Market is set to host another edition this Saturday, November 29, at the Serendipity Complex in Mbabane.

Organisers say the market continues to position itself as more than a trading space, offering what they describe as a creative and community-driven experience for visitors and vendors alike.

Founder of the Hive Market Pinky Glover said this weekend's edition would feature a refreshed selection of small businesses and new entrants.

She explained that attendees could expect a mix of food, drinks, fashion, and craft stalls. Glover noted that the atmosphere had been designed to remain vibrant and immersive, with music from resident DJs and the possibility of surprise elements throughout the day.

She said the aim was to create a space that felt joyful, empowering, and full of discovery. Addressing the process of selecting vendors, Glover said The Hive did not curate in the traditional sense but was deliberate about maintaining diversity. She explained that the team looked for businesses that brought unique offerings, whether through product ideas, design approaches, or compelling stories.

"The market's intimate setup allowed visitors access to a broad range of products within a manageable space," she said.

Glover said community remained central to The Hive. She described the market as a gathering point for entrepreneurs who sought not only a selling platform but also an opportunity to build professional relationships.

According to Glover, the intention was to create an environment where collaboration and shared learning could take place



▲ Hive Market Founder Pinky Glover.

naturally among creatives and small-business owners.

She also acknowledged the challenges of maintaining consistency while expanding the platform. Glover said balancing growth with the market's original purpose required ongoing refinement.

She explained that the team had to ensure that the event continued to attract an audience interested in supporting local businesses, despite the entertainment

appeal that often drew crowds. She said remaining true to their mission helped guide decision-making as the platform evolved.

Glover confirmed that visitors would be able to meet the owners of several local brands, connect with other shoppers, and enjoy food and drink stalls.

Music for the day will be curated by Ntombs the DJ and her collaborators. The event is free and open to the public.

## NGMA announces new partnership with ESWACOS

THE National Gospel Music Awards (NGMA) has announced a new partnership with the Eswatini Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Society (ESWACOS), a collaboration expected to strengthen copyright protection and royalty systems for local artists.

The announcement comes ahead of the awards ceremony set for Saturday, November 29, at the TLC Auditorium in Sidvokodvo. The NGMA, which honours excellence across 25 categories, will feature top gospel artists competing for national recognition.

Through the new partnership, ESWACOS will provide specialised copyright registration support to all nominees and winners. The organisation will also set up a service point at the event to register creators, explain licensing processes, and offer guidance on safeguarding intellectual property. Meanwhile Stanley Dlamini, CEO of the Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture, welcomed the partnership, calling it an important step toward developing the creative sector. "We are thankful for this strategic partnership with ESWACOS. It falls directly within the Arts and Culture mandate to partner with organizations that share our vision of developing and empowering Eswatini artists. Having ESWACOS as a major player is key to the growth of the Eswatini arts economy," he said.

### Management

As Eswatini's official collective management organisation, ESWACOS oversees copyright protection and the collection and distribution of royalties.

The organisation administers rights such as mechanical rights, which cover the reproduction and distribution of musical works, and performing rights, which apply when music is broadcast or played publicly.

Dlamini noted that the collaboration will also help raise awareness among artists about the importance of registering their work. "This partnership strongly promotes artists to understand and protect their copyright. We are fully supporting this cause as the Government has officially endorsed this mission," he said. He added that Eswatini continues to make its mark in the regional gospel music landscape, citing the appearance of local artists Nothando Hlophe and Ndoni at the Crown Awards in South Africa. ESWACOS Executive Director Mmeli Hlanze said the partnership represents the beginning of broader engagement with the creative sector.

"This partnership marks the beginning of more collaboration. We invite all artists, whether gospel or any other genre. As long as you produce music, sing, or write, we are here to help," he said. He confirmed that ESWACOS specialists will be stationed at the venue on the day of the ceremony to assist with registration and membership information.

## Manana releases new album 'OBHM: Full Stop'

ESWATINI-born singer and songwriter Ndumiso Manana has released his latest album titled OBHM: Full Stop, marking what he described as the end of an important personal chapter.

Announcing the project on his social media platform, Manana said a great deal had changed since the release of his previous EP, noting that both his challenges and successes had shaped the direction of the new work.

He expressed gratitude to his supporters, saying their appreciation for his music continued to motivate him.

In his statement, Manana acknowledged the collaborators who have contributed to his artistic growth over the years.

He described them as teachers and long-time partners who had influenced not only his work but also the work of several other musicians.

He also thanked fellow artists and producers for contributing their creativity to the album. Reflecting on the project, he shared a line from the body of work.

"In the beginning was the end, but could

the moments in between, our broken hearts mend. Full stop," read a line from the Manana's new album. He added that the album was now officially out and encouraged listeners to spread the word.

Manana was born in Mbabane and began his musical journey at the Drakensberg Boys Choir School, where he studied for several years. His background in classical training later informed his approach to contemporary R and B and soul music. Beyond his own releases, he has written for well-known African artists, contributing to songs for acts such as Ami Faku, Amanda Black, and Sauti Sol.

He is also a Grammy Award winner through his contribution as a songwriter on Burna Boy's song 'Time Flies' which formed part of the album that won in the Best Global Music Album category.

Over the years, Manana has developed a reputation for crafting emotionally resonant music, and OBHM: Full Stop adds to his growing catalogue.



▲ Eswatini songwriter Ndumiso Manana.



# Eswatini Mobile honours

## Nothando Hlophe



▲ Eswatini Mobile hosted a celebratory luncheon at Rambals Restaurant to honour Nothando Hlophe for her recent award and the remarkable achievement of reaching 3 million YouTube views for her hit single ‘Methodist Medley’. From left, Eswatini Mobile CEO Sidney Sichula, Nothando Hlophe, Genesis Ekucaleni Media Founding Director, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Senator Pholile Shakantu and Lokuhle Media’s Phindokuhle Sithole.



▲ Nothando Hlophe’s father (far left) with some of the artist’s bandmates following proceedings.



▲ Phindokuhle Sithole making his remarks.

### Eswatini Financial Times

## Win a Dinner for Two at Rambla’s!

Buy a copy of **Eswatini Financial Times** and stand a chance to win an exclusive Dinner for Two at **Rambla’s Restaurant**.

**How to Enter:**

1. Purchase a copy of **Eswatini Financial Times**
2. Fill in your details below
3. Drop your **completed entry** form in the box provided
4. Keep your copy of the **Eswatini Financial Times** ready you could be our lucky winner!

**Stay Informed. Stay Rewarded.**



**Our Core Values**  
• Agility • Accountability • Commitment • Teamwork • Embrace Change



▲ Eswatini Mobile’s Nosipho Shongwe was the MC of the event.



▲ Eswatini Mobile Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sydney Sichula making his remarks.



# Ntsiki Mazwai claims Nicki Minaj copied her album cover

## ... but fans disagree

RETURNING to her usual controversial form on X (formerly Twitter), Ntsiki Mazwai, who is no stranger to on-line rants and controversy, has accused rapper Nicki Minaj of copying her 2018 album cover.

The author and musician shared a side-by-side picture of her album cover, “The Masterpiece”, and Minaj’s fourth studio album, “Queen”.

According to Mazwai, the cover for “The Masterpiece”, which she claims came out in April 2018, carried the same energy that Minaj used a few months later for “Queen”.

She said she remembers clearly how everything unfolded and still feels the industry tried to bury the moment. Mazwai claims her release dates were moved around to create the impression that she dropped her project after the “Super Bass” singer.

She told her followers on X that the original launch date lives on her YouTube page and that this is the only thing that stopped people from saying she was the one taking inspiration.

“I will never forget how she copied my album cover, and then the system changed my release dates to try to hide it and make it seem like I was inspired by her. Kanti, luckily, I had a launch that is on YouTube with the correct date,” she wrote.

On her cover, Mazwai is seated on the ground with her legs stretched out, featuring a dramatic background with flames, and dressed in her layered beadwork. Minaj’s cover shows the rapper on a large tree branch with her one leg stretched out and an orange backdrop behind her.

She is dressed in a detailed outfit with heavy accessories.

Mazwai insists that the similarities are not random and that people underestimate how often African artists are watched by bigger markets.

“Ufuna ukuthi (do you want to say) this was a coincidence? You really think Americans don’t check for South African creatives?” she asked an X user who disputed



▲ Ntsiki Mazwai’s The Masterpiece cover art and Nicki Minaj’s Queen artwork (inset).

her claims.

Her comments sparked mixed reactions as netizens tried to make sense of the comparison. As expected, not everyone agreed with her, and most met her with sarcasm.

@AwandeMokoena wrote: “Sometimes we just need to read her tweets and move on with life.”

@HimTV added: “Trust me, babe, you’re not the person she would copy, no shade.”

And @Vitorious said: “The way these two covers are so different? Are we taking

credit for poses now? They’re not even that similar.”

Despite the X community note that provided more context disputing her claims, Mazwai did not back down and still stood her ground and kept the conversation going.

The note read: “Nicki Minaj’s ‘Queen’ was released on August 10, 2018, and Ntsiki Mazwai’s ‘The Masterpiece’ on November 5, 2018. The timeline does not support claims of copying, and there is no verified evidence that release dates were altered or artwork was copied.” (IOL)

## Lauryn Hill shares highlights from her South African adventure at the DStv Delicious Festival

IN September, American musician and rapper Lauryn Hill was in South Africa for her performance at the DStv Delicious International Food and Music Festival.

During her visit to the country, the Grammy award-winning musician interacted with different South African from a fan meet and greet to even a surprise performance at a club.

Hill, took to Instagram to reflect on her time in the country, with a highlight video. In her caption she first apologised in isiZulu for the delay in her post. “Uxolo ngokubambezeleka” (Sorry for the delay).

“Dear South Africa,

“The South African people have always been a symbol of resistance, resilience, and inspiration for us. Ngiyabonga kakhulu!”

Hill explained that her experience in Johannesburg was transformative and remarkable for many reasons: “We made new connections and solidified new friendships



▲ Lauryn Hill.

— thank you for your hospitality.

“We got to spend time with legendary company — thank you Ndaba Mandela and family.

“We made new African and African Diaspora-forward business associations — siyabonga kakhulu. We were able to meet and engage with our Joburg appreciators directly during our merch pop-up — thank you Zaid

and @GradeAfrica.”

The “Ex-Factor” musician revealed that her daughter Sara got to visit and support young children at a Joburg school during the visit.

Hill also got to work with local renowned designers South Africa’s top designers Thebe Magugu and MaXhosa.

Hill wore a custom striking Sotho-inspired red and black suit, with ostrich feather sleeves and Isicholo headpiece. The print is part of the Mafeteng Capsule which launched in September.

African luxury brand MaXhosa Africa dressed the Hill’s backing vocalists and dancers.

“...and last but never least, we got to perform for the Joburg audience. We recognize the beautiful art and music coming out of South Africa and consider it a blessing to be able to share our art with you!

“Ngiyabonga Jozi! Thank you for the warmth, the spirit, and the love. Love, light, and ubuntu forever. Izandla zidlula ikhanda Mzansi.” (IOL)



▲ DJ Chymamusique.

## Chymamusique overwhelmed by generous support

SOUTH African DJ and award-winning producer DJ Chymamusique is feeling the love from fans after opening up about his ongoing recovery and taking bold steps to manage his medical expenses.

Collen Mmotla, better known as Chymamusique, recently shared that he underwent emergency brain surgery, a craniotomy, following a horrific collision in Polokwane on August 30 that claimed five lives, including that of his friend and fellow musician DJ Poizen.

The crash left him facing a long road to recovery, with his brain, speech and body still affected as he rests and heals.

Speaking to his followers on X earlier this month, he wrote: “I couldn’t share my journey for the past week due to emergency brain surgery called a craniotomy. My brain, speech and body are still disturbed, so I won’t be able to take calls or really talk in person for the next 2 to 3 weeks.

“See you on the other side.”

Hospital bills, especially after major surgery, can quickly pile up. To help cover the costs of ongoing medical treatment, Chymamusique launched his Bank A Buddy initiative and put several high-value belongings up for sale, including a Mercedes-Benz C63, motorbikes and DJ equipment.

The recovery has been intensive and costly. Chymamusique revealed he is on medication three times a day, taking nine tablets in total. “I hate them, and they are pricey,” he admitted, explaining that this was another reason he launched his GoFundMe-style campaign.

His social media posts shared the news with a touch of humour, showing the DJ’s determination to navigate his financial challenges while focusing on recovery.

The response from fans, friends, and family has been overwhelming. By 23 November 2025, Chymamusique revealed that the support had surpassed R100 000.

“They raised 50% now on Back A Buddy to gift me, they’ve passed R100 000. I’m blessed to have such generous friends, family & support,” he said.

Through the generosity of his community, Chymamusique is not only covering his medical costs but also finding strength in the encouragement of those around him.

What started as a tragic accident has turned into a testament to kindness and the power of people coming together to help one get back on their feet. (IOL)



# All about Magnesium

## What Is It?

**MAGNESIUM** is a mineral your body needs to work right.

It helps with hundreds of important body processes, including those that control how your muscles and nerves work. It helps to keep your bones strong, heart healthy, and blood sugar normal. It also plays a role in your energy level. You can get magnesium in many foods and drinks. But if your doctor thinks you need more, they may suggest that you add supplements.

## How Much Do You Need?

An adult woman needs about 310 milligrams of magnesium a day, and 320 milligrams after age 30. Pregnant women need an extra 40 milligrams. Adult men under 31 need 400 milligrams and 420 milligrams if they're older. Kids need anywhere from 30 to 410 milligrams, depending on their age and gender. Talk with your pediatrician about how much magnesium your child needs.

## Are You Getting Enough?

Almost half of Americans don't get enough magnesium from their diet. Over time, low levels of the mineral may set the stage for a variety of health issues, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and migraines. Older adults, alcoholics, and those with type 2 diabetes or digestive issues are more likely to lack it, either because their bodies get rid of too much magnesium or they don't take in enough in the first place.

## Can You Get Too Much?

If you're healthy, your kidneys flush out the extra magnesium you get from foods. Still, too much of it can bring on cramps or nausea. The same is true if you use laxatives or antacids that have magnesium. At really high doses, the mineral can make you very sick. Talk to your doctor about magnesium pills, because some conditions, such as myasthenia gravis, can get worse if you take them.

## Benefit: Strengthens Bones

Your body uses magnesium to build new bone cells. Research suggests that it may also protect against bone loss, broken bones, and the bone disease osteoporosis. Studies show that women with osteoporosis tend to have lower levels of magnesium than those who don't.

## Benefit: Fights Inflammation

Inflammation is your immune system's reaction to potential harm. In the short term, it helps your body fight off viruses and heal wounds. But if you have inflammation all the time, it can lead to health problems such as heart disease, arthritis, and diabetes. Magnesium can help keep that from happening.

## Benefit: Protects the Heart

Magnesium helps your heart pump blood. Right levels of the mineral can lower your chances of an irregular heartbeat, heart disease, or a heart attack. Magnesium relaxes the walls of your blood vessels, and that can help keep your blood pressure down. It also may help boost your HDL, or "good," cholesterol levels.

## Benefit: Prevents Migraines

Experts think magnesium helps to block or lower pain chemicals in your brain and keeps your blood vessels from tightening. You're more likely to get migraines if you don't get enough. A supplement may help keep these headaches away.

## Benefit: Lowers Odds of Diabetes

Magnesium helps a hormone called insulin work right. Insulin helps keep your blood sugar levels steady. In one study, people who got the most magnesium in their diet were less likely to get the disease than those who got the least.

## Source: Nuts and Seeds

Snack on an ounce of almonds or cashews, and you'll get about 80 milligrams of magnesium. Other good choices include pumpkin seeds, pecans, sunflower seeds, peanuts, and flax. Sprinkle them on a salad or toss them into a trail mix. You'll also get heart-healthy fats, fiber, and antioxidants.

## Source: Whole Grains

When it comes to nutrition, whole grains beat out white bread and other highly processed foods. Not only do they have lots of fiber, but they're also high in magnesium. Two slices of whole wheat bread pack 45 milligrams of the mineral, a half-cup of brown rice has about 40 milligrams, and a half-cup of cooked oatmeal gives you 30 milligrams.

## Source: Avocado

Any way you slice, dice, or mash it, this is a great source of magnesium. One cup of the diced fruit holds 44 milligrams. It also serves up heart-healthy fats, fiber, and folate. Try adding avocado to your sandwich, salad, or taco.

## Source: Dark Leafy Greens

Here's yet another reason to eat your veggies. You'll get about 150 milligrams from a cup of cooked spinach or Swiss chard. Besides those two standouts, other good magnesium sources are dark leafy greens such as collard greens and kale. Bonus: They're also loaded with calcium, potassium, iron, and vitamins A, C, and K. The vegetables don't all have to be leafy. Okra, for example, is magnesium-rich.

## Source: Soy Products

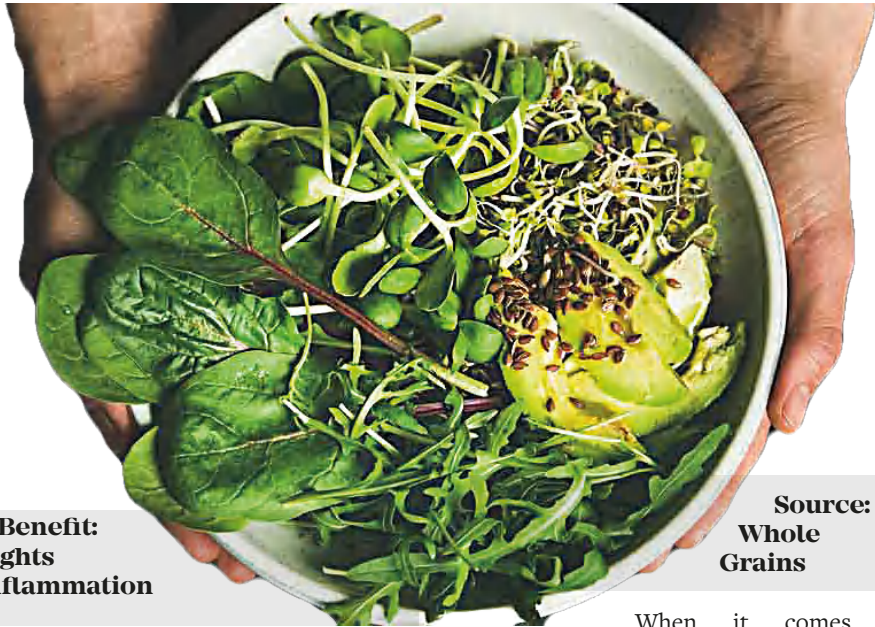
Soy is a staple among vegetarians for its plant-based protein. But it's no slouch in the magnesium department, either. A cup of soy milk rings up 60 milligrams, while a half-cup of firm tofu packs about 50 milligrams. Also check out tempeh, made with fermented soy, edamame, and soy yogurt.

## Source: Beans

On a given day, only 8% of Americans eat a serving of beans. That means most people are missing out on a healthy magnesium source. A half-cup of black beans has 60 milligrams and kidney beans has 35 milligrams. Other magnesium-rich legumes include chickpeas, white beans, and lentils. From stews to salads, you can add beans to nearly any dish. You'll get an extra dose of fiber, protein, iron, and zinc.

## Interactions With Medicines

Talk to your doctor before you take a magnesium supplement. And make sure they know everything else you take. Some drugs can make it harder for your body to absorb magnesium. And magnesium supplements can make some antibiotics and osteoporosis meds not work as well as they should. **WebMD**







What Is Tingling in Hands and Feet?

TINGLING in hands and feet is an extremely common and bothersome symptom. Paresthesia is the medical term for this, which in addition to tingling, can feel like pricks, numbness, or burning under the skin.

The tingling sensation can often be benign and temporary. For example, it might happen when there's weight or pressure on an arm under your head as you sleep. Or it could result from pressure on your nerves when you cross your legs for too long. In either case, the "pins and needles" effect, usually painless, is soon relieved by removing the pressure that caused it.

However, sometimes tingling in your hands and feet can be severe, episodic, or chronic. It can also come with other symptoms, such as pain, itching, numbness, and muscle wasting. In these cases, tingling may be a sign of nerve damage from causes as varied as traumatic or repetitive stress injuries, bacterial or viral infections, toxic exposures, or diseases such as diabetes. This type of nerve damage is known as peripheral neuropathy because it affects nerves distant from the brain and spinal cord, often in the hands and feet. There are more than 100 types of peripheral neuropathy. Over time, the condition can worsen, making you less mobile and even disabled. More than 20 million Americans, most of them older adults, are estimated to have peripheral neuropathy. It's important to get medical help right away for any tingling in your hands and feet that's lasted a while. The earlier the cause of your tingling is found and brought under control, the less likely you are to develop long-term problems.

Causes of Tingling in Hands and Feet

Diabetes is one of the most common causes of peripheral neuropathy, accounting for about 30% of cases. In diabetic neuropathy, tingling and other symptoms often first develop in both feet, then go up the legs, and subsequently affect both hands and go up the arms. About two-thirds of people with diabetes have mild to severe forms of nerve damage. In many cases, these symptoms are the first signs of diabetes.

In another 30% of peripheral neuropathy cases, the cause is unknown, or "idiopathic." The remaining 40% of cases have a variety of causes that produce tingling in the upper limbs, lower limbs, or both.

Tingling in hands

The following conditions can cause numbness and tingling in fingers, hands, and arms:

- **Carpal tunnel syndrome** occurs when your median nerve is squeezed at the wrist, causing fingers and forearms to tingle or become numb. Fluid retention and other bodily changes during pregnancy can compress the median nerve and cause carpal tunnel syndrome.
- **Ulnar nerve entrapment syndrome** can cause tingling in fingers and affects the nerve that supplies feeling to the inside of your forearm, some of your palm, and your last two fingers.
- **Radial nerve palsy** comes from stress on the nerve that runs along the bottom of your arm, such as when your arm is wedged between a hard surface and your head while you're asleep or intoxicated.

Tingling in feet

The following conditions typically cause tingling or numbness in feet, toes, and legs:

# Tingling in hands, feet



Peroneal nerve palsy, also called fibular neuropathy, comes from a damaged nerve that travels down your leg. It affects the outside of the leg or the top of the foot and may cause your foot to drop. Tarsal tunnel syndrome is the foot version of carpal tunnel syndrome. In this, the nerve that runs along the inside of your ankle is compressed. Sciatica is caused by herniated disks in the lower back that can compress nerves and cause tingling in the legs.

Tingling in both hands and feet

- **Anxiety.** It can trigger tingling in your hands, fingers, feet, and toes as well as on your face and around your mouth.
- **Fibromyalgia.** This chronic pain disorder can cause tingling in both sets of limbs.
- **Cervical spondylosis.** This typically occurs as the disks in your neck begin to wear with age and compress the nerves in your spinal column. Cervical spondylosis can cause numbness and tingling in your arms, legs, hands, and feet.
- **Systemic diseases.** These include kidney disorders, liver disease, vascular damage, blood-related diseases, amyloidosis, connective tissue disorders, chronic inflammation, hormonal imbalances (including hypothyroidism), as well as cancers and benign tumors that impinge on nerves.
- **Vitamin deficiencies.** You need vitamins E, B1, B6, B12, and niacin for healthy nerves. A B12 deficiency, for example, can lead to pernicious anemia, an important cause of peripheral neuropathy. But too much B6 can cause tingling in the hands and feet.
- **Alcoholism.** People with alcoholism are more likely to lack thiamine or other important vitamins because of poor dietary habits, a common cause of peripheral neuropathy. It's also possible that alcoholism itself can cause nerve damage, a condition some researchers call alcoholic neuropathy.
- **Toxins.** These include heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, mercury, and thallium, and some industrial and environmental chemicals. They also include certain medications, especially chemotherapy drugs used for lung cancer, as well as some antiviral

and antibiotic drugs.

- **Infections.** These include Lyme disease, shingles (varicella zoster), cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr, herpes simplex, and HIV and AIDS.
- **Autoimmune diseases.** These include chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, Guillain-Barre syndrome, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Inherited disorders.** These include a group that may have sensory and motor symptoms; the most common type is known as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease.
- **Injury.** Often related to trauma, nerves can be compressed, crushed, or damaged in other ways, resulting in nerve pain. Examples include nerve compression caused by a dislocated bone.
- **Multiple sclerosis.** The disease causes your body's immune system to attack the fatty myelin sheath around nerve fibers in your brain and spine. Tingling in the hands and feet is a common symptom.
- **Medications.** Certain medicines as well as street drugs, can cause tingling.

Diagnosis of Tingling Hands and Feet

If you seek care for your tingling hands or feet, your health care provider will do a physical exam and take an extensive medical history addressing your symptoms, work environment, social habits (including alcohol use), toxic exposure, risk of HIV or other infectious diseases, and family history of neurological disease.

- They also may perform other tests, such as:
- **Blood tests.** These can include tests to detect diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, liver or kidney dysfunction, other metabolic disorders, and signs of abnormal immune system activity.
  - **An examination of cerebrospinal fluid.** This can identify antibodies associated with peripheral neuropathy.
  - An electromyogram (EMG), a test of your muscles' electrical activity.
  - Nerve conduction velocity (NCV). Other tests may include:
    - CT scan
    - MRI

- Nerve biopsy
- Skin biopsy to look at nerve fiber endings

Treatments for Tingling Hands and Feet

Treatment of tingling in hands and feet depends on the underlying cause. As long as peripheral nerve cells have not been killed, they can regenerate. Although there are no treatments for inherited types of peripheral neuropathy, many of the acquired types can be improved with treatment. For example, good blood sugar control in diabetes can help keep diabetic neuropathy from getting worse, and vitamin supplements can correct peripheral neuropathy in people with vitamin deficiencies. In some cases, tingling and other symptoms of peripheral neuropathy may be eased with prescriptions developed for treating seizures and depression. You also may be prescribed physical therapy or undergo surgery to mend the underlying issue.

Therapies that ease symptoms

- Physical therapy can be prescribed as well as assistive devices such as canes, walkers, braces, and wheelchairs.
- Neurostimulation devices are placed inside the body to short-circuit pain signals before they reach the brain.
- Scrambler messages are electrical impulses that trick the brain into believing there's no pain. Plasma, intravenous immune globulin, and steroid injections can be used in the event your tingling nerves produce weakness or balance issues.
- At-home treatment for tingling in hands and feet
    - Rest
    - Splints
    - Cold or heat
    - Over-the-counter, prescription or topical pain relievers
    - Specific exercises

Preventing Tingling in Hands and Feet

If you have an underlying condition such as diabetes and peripheral neuropathy contributing to the tingling in your hands or feet, you should adopt lifestyle changes to safeguard your nerves.

- Generally, it helps to:
- Keep your weight in check
  - Eat a balanced diet
  - Avoid or limit alcohol
  - Follow a doctor-supervised exercise program
  - Avoid exposure to toxins
  - Stop smoking. It constricts blood supply to the blood vessels supplying nutrients to peripheral nerves.

When to See a Health Care Provider

- If the tingling in your hands and feet starts during repetitive motion, affects your quality of life, or causes muscle weakness or a rash, have your doctor take a look. However, some cases of tingling and numbness require more urgent attention. They include:
- Changes in speech, vision, or breathing
  - Numbness or tingling throughout an arm, leg, or area of your body, or that spreads rapidly across your body
  - Paralysis or loss of feeling in your face or chest
  - Loss of bladder or bowel control
  - Sudden onset of weakness or numbness
  - Confusion or losing consciousness
  - Symptoms in your thighs, genital area, or buttocks.
- WebMD**



# Around the world in pictures



▲ Fans garland a photo of late Bollywood actor Dharmendra outside a crematorium where his rites take place in Mumbai, India.



▲ A woman in a historical costume feeds birds as snow falls in central Saint Petersburg, Russia.



▲ A drone view shows cranes are used to assemble the Christmas tree at the Manager Square near the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.



▲ A man walks through floodwater as rain pours in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



▲ Britain's Chancellor Rachel Reeves returns to a back entrance of Downing Street, following a run, in London, Britain.



▲ A resident looks through a broken window of an apartment building hit by a Russian drone strike in Kyiv, Ukraine.



# Rashford ‘thriving in Barcelona sunshine’

BARCELONA manager Hansi Flick said on Monday Marcus Rashford is benefiting from a change of scene – including sunny skies in Spain – following his loan move from boyhood club Manchester United.

The England forward has recovered from the flu that kept him out of Saturday’s 4-0 LaLiga win over Athletic Bilbao and is available for Tuesday’s meeting with Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Four of Rashford’s six Barca goals so far have come in the Champions League, including two on the team’s previous visit to England to face Newcastle in September.

The move to Spain has helped Rashford, 28, resurrect a career that had stalled badly at Old Trafford.

“I’m happy to have him in the team, playing for Barca,” Flick said on Monday. “I’ve followed him throughout his whole career and I’ve always been impressed by his quality and what he can do in the box, and he’s showing that in Barcelona.

“That change for him, new football, in Barcelona, with good weather. For me it’s incredible to see how he’s always smiling. That’s the atmosphere we have and it’s very good for him.”

Barca and Chelsea are level on seven points after four matches in



▲ Marcus Rashford.

this season’s Champions League as they seek direct qualification to the last 16, which requires a top-eight finish.

Flick’s task will be aided by the return from injury of Raphinha, who made his first appearance in almost two months as a substitute in Saturday’s win.

“Step by step with Raphinha,” said Flick. “For me, the important thing is that he’s back. About the minutes

and how much he will play, we’ll decide.

“He’s had the same injury twice and that’s not good at this stage, so we’ll be careful.

“I’m very happy that he returned because as soon as he played on Saturday, we saw the difference. The dynamism, he created spaces and I’m very happy to have him.”

(Supersport)

## Maresca urges Chelsea’s Estevao to ignore Yamal comparisons

ENZO Maresca has played down comparisons between rival teenage wingers Estevao and Lamine Yamal on the eve of Chelsea’s Champions League clash against Barcelona on Tuesday.

Estevao, 18, has caught the eye since arriving at Stamford Bridge in July, with nine goals for club and country. Chelsea manager Maresca was asked at his pre-match press conference on Monday whether Spain international Yamal, just three months younger than Estevao, would be a good role model for his player.

But the Italian said the Brazilian was already established at the top level despite his tender years.

“Estevao is already playing at a high level, he is already in the starting eleven with Brazil,” Maresca told reporters. “For sure he is very young, he can do many things better, but we are very happy with him.

“It’s nice for people that love football to watch players like Estevao, like Lamine Yamal, like (Barcelona midfielder) Pedri. This is the beauty of football.”

Maresca said Estevao must shut out the noise.

“He is going to be for sure an important player for this club,” he said. “For the future, no doubt.

“He has to be happy. He has not to think about being better than this player or the other player.

“He has just to be better than him-



▲ Enzo Maresca.

self day by day. Try to work hard, improve.”

Maresca added Chelsea forward Cole Palmer was making good progress after suffering a toe injury but that he was unlikely to be available to face Barcelona or Arsenal this coming weekend.

“Cole is wearing a (protective) boot,” Maresca said. “We don’t know when he will be back but for sure it will be soon.

“He’s already on the pitch, he’s already touching the ball and the feeling (for him) is good.

Barcelona are 11th in the league phase of Europe’s top club competition with seven points after four matches — the same number as

Chelsea.

Maresca said he had been strongly influenced by the possession-based style of Pep Guardiola’s Barcelona, who were twice champions of Europe during the now Manchester City manager’s time in charge at the Nou Camp between 2008 and 2012.

“I decided to be a manager because of Pep’s team, Barcelona, years ago,” explained Maresca.

“Now, if clubs or teams decide with different style, I said many times that any club, any team can decide in the way they want to play. I chose mine years ago and this will be the way I like to watch my team in football and also in the future.”

(Supersport)

## Trial of man accused of Liverpool parade crash to open today

A British man is due to go on trial on Tuesday accused of driving his car into crowds at Liverpool Football Club’s Premier League victory parade in May and injuring dozens of people.

Paul Doyle, 54, has pleaded not guilty to 31 alleged offences, including charges of causing grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent, wounding with intent, affray and dangerous driving.

His trial in front of a jury, set to be sworn in on Tuesday, is expected to last three to four weeks.

Doyle, from a suburb of the northwest English city, is accused of driving into people as they were leaving the May 26 victory parade to celebrate Liverpool’s victory.

The club had claimed a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title when the Premier League season ended the previous day.

Its players had paraded the trophy along the city’s waterfront in front of hundreds of thousands of fans.

Some roads in the area had been closed to normal traffic to allow the parade to pass.

At his first hearing at Liverpool Magistrates’ Court on 30 May,

four days after the incident, prosecutors alleged that Doyle “used his vehicle deliberately as a weapon” and “drove deliberately at people”.

Doyle appeared emotional as he wiped away tears in the dock.

Merseyside Police swiftly declared that the incident was not terrorism.

But the circumstances behind the alleged attack remain unclear.

The force previously said 134

people – including infants, other children and adults – were injured when Doyle, reportedly a former Royal Marine, allegedly drove his Ford Galaxy Titanium into crowds in Liverpool city centre.

There were no fatalities, but 50 required hospital treatment.

According to initial police information, Doyle allegedly followed an ambulance down the closed Water Street in his Ford Galaxy when police cleared a path for a medical emergency.

Four people, including one child, were trapped under the vehicle, which had to be lifted to remove them, fire services said at the time.

### YOUNGEST VICTIM SIX MONTHS

The criminal charges relate to 29 victims, including at least six children. The youngest was six-months-old at the time.

Some of those set to give evidence will reportedly do so from behind screens.

A father-of-three, Doyle has been in custody since his arrest following the incident that turned a day of joy into a scene of chaos.

He was originally charged with seven offences, but 24 new counts were added to the indictment in August.

On 4 September, he appeared in court via videolink from prison, wearing glasses and a grey T-shirt, when he entered his not guilty pleas.

Doyle was not required to attend his latest court hearing last week which finalised preparations for the trial.

(Supersport)





ARNE Slot admitted he feels “guilty” over Liverpool’s “ridiculous” slump ahead of Wednesday’s Champions League tie against PSV Eindhoven.

Slot’s side suffered an eighth defeat in their last 11 matches on Saturday when Nottingham Forest won 3-0 at Anfield in the Premier League.

The Reds were expected to dominate this term after following last season’s Premier League title triumph with a summer spending spree on new signings.

Instead they have repeatedly been exposed defensively, while their midfield and forward play has been well below the standards set last seasons.

With Liverpool languishing 12th in the Premier League – the first time in more than a decade they have been in the bottom half of the table – it is likely that the Champions League represents a better chance of silverware.

But Slot knows Liverpool will have to improve dramatically to challenge for Europe’s elite club prize.

Asked to describe Liverpool’s predicament, Slot told reporters: “Ridiculous, almost. Something I didn’t expect to be in, not at any club I worked at let alone if you are manager of Liverpool.

“That is unbelievable. It is unexpected for the club, for me, for everyone, but if you ever needed to face this maybe this is the best club to face it because the harder it gets the more we are together, the more we are trying to do the things Liverpool usually achieves.

“These situations, it’s not really nice is it? I can tell you that. To be honest, I didn’t expect myself to be in this situation with the way we go about it tactically and the quality of players we have.

“You would never have expected us to have lost so much. For sure I take the res-

# Slot feels ‘guilty’ over Liverpool’s ‘ridiculous’ slump

pensibility and feel guilty for it. We’re busy working on it.”

Amid criticism of Liverpool’s perceived lack of desire during crucial moments, Reds captain Virgil van Dijk has called for the squad to take more individual responsibility.

Slot does not agree his players are shirking, instead claiming the tactics being employed against them are resulting in them lacking concentration at vital times.

‘WE HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY’

“No, no we haven’t,” Slot said when quizzed on the claims that Liverpool have lost their hunger. “But in moments of games we have lost too many duels.

“If I have to defend for half-an-hour I am in defend mode, so I just to throw myself at every ball.

“But when our defenders and maybe even including the goalkeeper are thinking about ball possession and then in the moment they have to defend we are not as switched on as we should be.”

Despite their domestic struggles, Liverpool are eighth in the Champions League table and in the final spot for automatic qualification for the last 16.

A victory over Dutch side PSV at Anfield would consolidate their top-eight position and provide a valuable morale boost after their sixth defeat in seven Premier League games.

Liverpool’s Dutch forward Cody Gakpo revealed the squad have been talking at length about ways to resolve their problems.

“After the game on Saturday it was a kind



▲ Arne Slot.

of embarrassment because we lost 3-0 at home in front of our own fans, which is not good,” the former PSV star said.

“In the days after that, we were, I don’t want to say angry, but we tried to speak together and be honest with each other what we have to do to perform better on the pitch.

“Everybody is aware we have to take res-

pensibility on and off the pitch. This was a conversation you have with a teammate.

“It wasn’t really a ‘meeting’ meeting but we are aware we have to take responsibility, that we have to do better with certain things on the pitch. That’s what we spoke about.”

(Supersport)

## ‘Old pro’ Scott looks for win on return to Queensland home

FORMER Masters champion Adam Scott says he still feels physically and mentally able to compete with the game’s best and is determined to prove he remains relevant at the Australian PGA Championship this week despite a long win drought.

Back on home soil, the 45-year-old concedes he has not had many chances to win in recent years but believes a strong couple of weeks could reignite his career.

“Yeah, it’d be really special, certainly at this point in my career,” 2013 Masters champion Scott told reporters on Tuesday at Royal Queensland.

“I feel like the chances have been kind of few and far between the last couple of years and I haven’t taken advantage of it when I’ve been there. So to put myself in that position this weekend will be great.”

The last of the former world No 1’s 32 professional wins came at the 2020 Genesis Invitational, and he has had a tough year at the majors.

He missed the cut at the Masters for the first time since 2009, then had an awful final round of 79 at the US Open after being in contention for a second major title.

His body remains strong, though, and he is at peace with being a veteran on the tour as he looks for a third Australian PGA Championship title to add to his 2013 and 2019 wins.



▲ Former Masters champion Adam Scott.

“I’m starting to turn into that kind of old golf pro,” said Scott, who skipped the event won by young Queenslander Elvis Smylie last year.

“I remember when I turned pro and I looked at some of those guys who are my age now and how old I thought they were and that’s me.

“But personally, I feel physically

and mentally able to do it still. Fortunately I’m not in aches-and-pains phases yet and I’m really motivated.

“I really think I just need to sharpen up my focus a little bit and get back in that winning circle.”

(Supersport)

## Agent clarifies Radiopane’s situation at Orlando Pirates

BOITUMELO Radiopane’s Mike Makaab of ProSport International, has opened up about the striker’s situation at Orlando Pirates. Radiopane was the preferred choice upfront at Pirates under new coach Abdeslam Ouaddou at the beginning of the season, but has now slipped down the pecking order at the club.

In fact, the 23-year-old striker has been reduced to a spectator at the Buccaneers and has failed to make the matchday squad in recent matches. He last featured for Pirates against Mamelodi Sundowns in the MTN8 first-leg at Orlando Stadium on 16 August.

His absence from the matchday squad has raised speculation that he could be sent out on loan in the January transfer window. However, Makaab, has

dismissed these reports saying Radiopane is in Ouaddou’s plans this season.

“Boitumelo Radiopane, unfortunately, got an injury a few weeks ago. He recently completed his rehabilitation and joined the team for full training,” Makaab told FARPost.

“You need to understand that Pirates is going to have a long season with a lot of games, so it’s the injury that kept him out; no discussions are happening around his future. As I said, he suffered an injury, and he is in the plans of the team, and surely he will compete for his place in the starting line-up.”

Radiopane, who is a product of the Pirates development academy, has also spent two years on loan at Cape Town Spurs.

(Supersport)



▲ Boitumelo Radiopane.



By Chris Dlamini

OF the eight MTN Premier League fixtures, our PICK OF THE WEEK has the fixture you are all probably be looking forward to.

Some of you want a draw, some a win and others a defeat for either side - that is the top-of-the-table clash between leaders Manzini Sea Birds and defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs who sit at number two in the current standings. This is a matchweek eight tie billed for Nhlangano at the King Sobhuza II Stadium. Besides this clash, which could go a long way in the first round's E120 000 incentive race, we also believe fans will be interested in Mbabane Highlanders and Rangers, as well as giant-slayers Tabankulu Celtics against Green Mamba. Here's a few titbits about these fixtures.

**It's a dog-eat-dog clash**

**Nsingizini Hotspurs vs. Manzini Sea Birds**  
**Venue:** King Sobhuza II Stadium, Nhlangano

Two of the league's best teams now collide this weekend. We can not wait, can you? This is one to watch with the league also reaching the first half of the opening round, and significantly the turning point to shift focus to the E120 000 'carrot' at stake for the first round leaders. If the round was ending this weekend, then this would just be the perfect finale. Interestingly, it is not just about the leaders, Sea Birds, and the defending champions, Nsingizini, but also the next two teams in the top four. That is Young Buffaloes and Ezulwini United, who both have 13 points and eyeing the top spot, at least in the next two matches as it can not happen this week, whatever the result between the top two. If Insingizi Yezulu (Nsingizini) and Izinyoni Zolwandle (Sea Birds) share the spoils, it will be 17 and 16 points apiece. If Sea Birds wins, they will go on 19 points, while the host stands to drop from second to even off the top four. If it is Sea Birds on the losing end, then they stand to drop to third. Both teams have been in winning form, particularly Sea Birds, who have won five consecutive games while their hosts lost one and won two in the last three. Previous meetings have been very contentious, but Insingizi has narrowly managed to win on three occasions out of four meetings in the previous two seasons. Sea Birds are in blistering form this time around, definitely their best run in their MTN Premier League history, and it will be interesting if they can finally get to beat Nsingizini.

**PLAYERS TO WATCH:**

**Joel Madondo (Ns. Hotspurs forward)**

- Madondo has scored twice in their last two wins against Malanti Chiefs and Moneni Pirates. He has said he wants more goals to help his team win games.

**Neliswa 'Tiger' Dlamini (Ns. Hotspurs defensive midfielder)**

- He sported a new hair cut last week - no more hair but a bald head. He scored a brace against Malanti and was influential in the last match against Moneni Pirates.

**Philani Mkhonto (M. Sea Birds attacking midfielder)**

- Valued at E1.4 million, the former Mbabane Highlanders star is one for goals and assists. He is on four goals and an influential member of Izinyoni Zolwandle (Sea Birds).

**Muzi Tsabedze (M. Sea Birds wing forward)**

- Talk about eliminating several rival players, Muzi Tsabedze's electric pace, combined with a great first touch and dribbling ability, is something for the league log

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE PICK OF THE WEEK

Top-of-the-table clash!  
... And more potential thriller matches as E120k first round 'carrot' race is on



▲ Sea Birds players.



▲ Tambankulu Celtics players celebrating.



▲ Green Mamba players Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa and Banele 'Pupu' Sikhondze.



▲ Hleliso Gamedze.



▲ Neliswa 'Tiger' Dlamini.



▲ Hopewell Cele.



▲ Rangers players.

leaders. He has the knack for special goals.

**HEAD-TO-HEAD:**

**26/04/25**  
**Ns. Hotspurs 1-0 M. Sea Birds**  
**09/11/24**  
**M. Sea Birds 1-2 Ns. Hotspurs**  
**04/02/24**  
**M. Sea Birds 0-1 Ns. Hotspurs**  
**24/09/23**  
**Ns. Hotspurs 1-1 M. Sea Birds**  
**PREVIOUS MATCH RESULT:**  
**Ns. Hotspurs 1-0 M. Pirates**  
**M. Sea Birds 2-0 R. Leopard**  
**PERFORMANCE GUIDE:**  
**Ns. Hotspurs**  
**L W L W W**  
**M. Sea Birds**  
**W W W W W**

A tricky reunion for Mthunzi, 'Bull'

**Mbabane Highlanders vs. Rangers**

History favours the black and gold Mbabane Highlanders, but form and results go with Bolova, as Rangers is fondly known. It is one game in with personal feelings involved as Rangers head coach Mthunzi 'Lomphofu' Ginindza coached Inkunz'emnyama (Highlanders) last season and signed most of the current players. It is not the kind of reunion he or Highlanders wants, but it is also an inevitable one. There are three points at stake here, and

for Rangers, even the first round 'carrot' is within reach and worth fighting for. Against Highlanders, Bolova have a tough task and also a revenge mission. Last season, Bolova lost both league ties to Highlanders with 3-0 and 2-1 margins. It is their form so far that is giving them the confidence and the fact that they have a player who has scored in all their seven matches in Hleliso 'Madlenya' Gamedze. He is on eight goals, one better than elite rookies Tabankulu Celtics' Malangeni Dlamini. Gamedze will be the man Inkunz'emnyama targets to put off the match by not allowing him the space. Highlanders have their own danger man, a real star from South Africa's (SA) Betway Premiership. That is now defunct Royal AM wing wizard Sphiwe Hopewell Cele. What a gem! The Highlanders star is one to watch. He has the ability to single-handedly lead Highlanders to glory if at his best, as he was against Ezulwini United. Rangers sit four places above their giant rivals on the sixth spot with 12 points. Highlanders, on the one hand, need the win after inconsistent results with no win in the last three matches and find themselves stagnant at number 10. They have nine points under their belt.

**PLAYERS TO WATCH:**

**Sphiwe Hopewell Cele (M. Highlanders wing forward)**

- He is a dribbling wizard with a purpose. He takes on his opponents with ease, oozes great ball control and artistry, and further

passes like no other. He also has pace and trickery.

**Hleliso Gamedze (Rangers attacking midfielder)**

- Pace, vision, and perfect ball control are his strengths. The goal-a-game star is maturing like sweet wine as he is having a stellar season early on in the league, with eight goals in seven games and the first Player of the Month Award was won by him last month.

**HEAD-TO-HEAD:**

**12/02/25**  
**M. Highlanders 3-0 Rangers**  
**24/09/24**  
**Rangers 1-2 M. Highlanders**  
**PREVIOUS MATCH RESULTS:**  
**Sisonkhe 1-1 Rangers**  
**Ez. United 2-2 M. Highlanders**  
**PERFORMANCE GUIDE:**  
**M. Highlanders**  
**W D D L D**  
**Rangers**  
**W W D W D**

The 'green' battle!

**Tabankulu Celtics vs. Green Mamba**

They all wear green and white, but which green is greener? Will it be the giant-killing elite rookies Tabankulu Celtics celebrating, or will it be Green Mamba? The latter must make amends from the security forces derby defeat at the hands of army team Young Buffaloes. There is so much quality and experience involved in Green Mamba, while Celtics mainly uses first timers at this stage. The home team has been the talk of the town because of who they have so far beaten, and these include both Eswatini's then CAF envoys Royal Leopard (3-0) and Nsingizini Hotspurs (2-0) before they pummelled a deflated Manzini Wanderers side 4-1 on Sunday. Celtics had been at the summit before and at 12 points and fifth place, they will fight to get back into the top four while Green Mamba is aiming for the top four as they dropped out of it to number seven on 11 points.

**PLAYERS TO WATCH:**

**Banele 'Pupu' Sikhondze (G. Mamba attacking midfielder)**

- He has not played many games, but the four he has played have been a moment for him and his team. The former South Africa (SA) Premier Soccer League (PSL) midfielder is back from Tanzania's Tabora United and already has three goals after scoring his first two in consecutive matches, his last was against Young Buffaloes in the 2-1 defeat last Saturday.

**Malangeni Dlamini (T. Celtics forward)**

- He is the only player with a hat-trick in the league and added a brace on Sunday when his team destroyed a hapless Manzini Wanderers 4-1. He has seven goals, second to Rangers' Hleliso Gamedze who has eight.

**HEAD-TO-HEAD:**

**PREVIOUS MATCH RESULTS:**  
**T. Celtics 4-1 M. Wanderers**  
**Y. Buffaloes 2-1 G. Mamba**  
**PERFORMANCE GUIDE:**  
**T. Celtics**  
**L W W L W**  
**G. Mamba**  
**D W W D L**



Stories By Sibusiso Masilela  
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THE Taekwondo National team is ready to compete in the continental stage.

This was revealed by the country’s top male athlete, Saneliso Masuku, ahead of the inaugural African series finals in Ivory Coast, between November 27-29, 2025, Abidjan.

The national team left the country on Sunday under the guidance of seasoned mentor Sizwe Mabuza.

“We are looking forward to the games and want to make the country proud. I believe we have done the necessary preparations for the tournament,” he said.

Other members of the national team include Siphwayinkhosi Ndlela, Nonhle Maduma, Sihlelwe Matsebula, and Khaya Dube, among others.

The members of the national team qualified for the continental glory after winning gold medals during the zonal qualifiers held two months ago in Mozambique.

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art and combat sport involving primarily kicking techniques and punching. Depending on the style, Hyeong, Pumsae, or Teul are patterns that demonstrate a range of kicking, punching, and blocking techniques, gyeokpa is the art of breaking wooden boards, and in the combat sport kyorugi involves the kind of sparring seen in the Olympics. Taekwondo also sometimes involves the use of weapons

# Taekwondo National team ready for continental challenge

such as swords and nunchucks (nunchaku). Taekwondo practitioners wear a uniform known as a dobok.

Taekwondo is originally a martial art that was developed during the 1940s and 1950s by Korean martial artists with experience in martial arts such as karate and Chinese martial arts.

In the early 1970s, a new style of Taekwondo was developed to promote it as a competitive sport, alongside its traditional martial arts form.

### The full squad

#### Juniors

1. Ndlela Siphiwokuhle (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)
5. Matsebula Sihlelelwe (M-63kg)
6. Masuku Saneliso (M-68kg).



▲ The Taekwondo national team.



▲ Dvokolwako Buffaloes in a jovial mood after the finals.

## Dvokolwako Buffs snatch MulaSport 10s title

DVOKOLWAKO Buffaloes are the winners of the MulaSport 10s tournament held over the weekend at Malkerns Country Club.

Buffaloes pipped Malkerns Knights 37-12 to take home the E4 000 first prize money courtesy of the betting company.

Knights received E2 500 for their efforts, while Mbabane Cheetahs walked away E1 500 for finishing third.

The tournament was sponsored to the tune of E15 000 by MulaSport.

Eswatini Rugby Union Communications Officer Phumlani Gumedze congratulated the champions for their achievement.

“Kudos to the champions for their achievement, and we urge them to continue working hard in future. We commend the

other teams for their effort on the day and the fans for attending the games in numbers,” he said.

Gumedze also thanked the sponsor continued support.

“We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which plays a key role to the development of the sport in the country,” he said.

The recent domestic tournament helped local players to prepare for the sevens tournament scheduled for December in South Africa.

### The prize breakdown

- |                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. Dvokolwako Buffaloes | E4000   |
| 2. Malkerns Knights     | E2 500. |
| 3. Mbabane Cheetahs     | E1 500  |

## Luve, Ncabaneni Eagles through to Volleyball Premier division

LUVE and Ncabaneni Eagles are through to the national volleyball league premier division.

The two sides finished in the top two bracket of the 2024/25 Sandza Construction B Division league, which was concluded over the weekend.

Luve finished the campaign on 38 points after beating Fire Flames 3-0 during the grand closing held at Mavuso Sports Centre.

Eagles secured the ticket to the elite league with 36 points after 14 matches.

They will now compete in the elite league for the 2025/26 campaign under the auspices of the Eswatini National Volleyball Association (ENVA).

ENVA Vice Secretary Philile Lokotfwako

congratulated the two teams for their achievement.

“Congratulations to the two teams for their achievement, and we wish them the best of luck in the elite league. We thank our sponsor, Sandza Construction, for supporting the elite league,” she said.

### The full results

- Tigers 0- 3 Mshinande.  
Dragons 0 -3 Eagles.  
Eagles 3- 0 Sithobela.  
Mshinande 3- 0 Sithobela.  
Zakhele 2- 3 VillaPark.  
Luve 3- 0 Fire Flames.  
VillaPark 3- 0 Sidvashini.



▲ Volleyball B Division teams in action during the Sandza Construction League.



# Ennin linked with Bucs’ return

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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GHANAIAAN mentor Christopher Ennin is linked with an emotional return to Moneni Pirates.

The former Mbabane Swallows mentor is a frontrunner for the ‘Buccaneers’ hot seat following the exit of Malawian gaffer Meck Mwase.

Ennin once had a stint with the black and white ensemble during the 2024/25 season, where he led the black and white ensemble to the finals of the 8Bet Trade Fair cup.

He is currently in the books of Ghana premier league side Smartex FC.

A source based in Ghana revealed that Ennin has been contacted by Pirates.

“Ennin could return to Eswatini after receiving a call from his former team in Eswatini, and the talks could be concluded before the end of the week,” the source said.

Pirates Public Relations Officer Meluleki Simelane said they are still in the process of recruiting a new coach when contacted.

“We are in the process of securing the services of a top coach, which I cannot reveal at the moment until we conclude the exercise,” he said.

Pirates will take on Malanti Chiefs in their next MTN Premier League assignment following the recent 1-0 defeat to defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs.

The crowd pullers are sitting at position 11 in the log standings with seven points after the same number of matches.



▲ Christopher Ennin.



▲ Malanti Coach Humphrey Mlwane.

## Mlwane part with Motsepe Foundation outfit

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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FORMER Malanti Chiefs coach Humphrey Mlwane has parted ways with Motsepe Foundation side the Bees.

The former Kaizer Chiefs defender helped the Mpumalanga based side gain promotion to the South African first division league from the third-tier league.

The team confirmed the news through a press statement.

“It is with our heavy heart to we announce the departure of head coach Humprey Mlwane. We sincerely appreciate and leadership towards the development of the team. We wish him success in his future endeavours,” the club said.

Meanwhile, Mlwane accepted the club’s decision.

“I believe that maybe things would have turned around. But it’s not a train smash. I believe this was close to getting better in two or three games.

Mlwane also had a stint with the defunct Mbabane Citizens in the country.

# Go, make us proud – ESRC implores Oyama team

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
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THE Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council has implored the Oyama national team to make the country proud in the 2025 Oyama World Cup.

The national body Chief Executive Officer Darius Dlomo mandated the duo of Nelisiwe Gama and Mpendulo Maxonga during the farewell function held at their offices in Mbabane on Tuesday.

Dlomo commissioned the duo through his representative and Finance Manager Nqobile

Dlamini ahead of the annual international cup scheduled for November 29-30,2025, in Japan.

The duo will be under the guidance of sensei Zweli Thwala, who will be attending grading at the Asian nation.

“We wish the team the best of luck during the assignment, and we hope they will make us proud so that they can be rewarded under the podium incentive. We would like to thank the sponsors for assisting the team during the trip.”

Gama will be competing in the open weight category while compete in the light weight under 70 Division.



▲ BMG Director Rudolph Hitzereth presenting tracksuit ESRC CEO Rrepresentative Nqobile Dlamini while Oyama President Mfanafuthi Vilakati looks on.

## BMG E15 000 boost for Oyama team

THE Japan bound Oyama national team has received E15 000 worth of tracksuits local company BMG.

The pair of Cebile Gama and Mpendulo Maxonga were presented with brand new tracksuits by the sponsor Hitzereth at the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council offices on Tuesday. Hitzereth said the sponsorship was part of their corporate social responsibility. “We are pleased to partner with the Oyama national team and believe that the donation will motivate the

team during the international assignment,” he said. Oyama Kyokushikaikan Karate of Eswatini president Shihan Mfanafuthi Vilakati thanked the sponsor for the kind gesture. “We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which plays a key role in the development of the sport in the country. We also appreciate the continuous support of the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council towards our programs,” he said

BMG is a Matsapha based company which deals with Industrial products.



▲ Japan-bound karatekas Cebile Gama and Mpendulo Maxonga displaying the national flag.



