



▲ Lavumisa Border Post. (Inset) Minister of Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe.



Minister Princess Lindiwe tells Parliament:

24-hour Lavumisa Border Post in motion

By Ncaba Ntshakala

MINISTER for Home Affairs Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe has reported to Parliament on her ongoing high-level discussions with South African authorities about transitioning the Lavumisa Border Post to a 24-hour operation. She indicated that talks are at an advanced stage, aimed at facilitating easier movement of people and goods between Eswatini and South Africa. Princess Lindiwe made the remarks when responding to a question posed by Gege Member of Parliament Magesi Dlamini, who asked why the border gate was still not operating around the clock

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Over 20 receive Lenacapavir PrEP as Eswatini celebrates World AIDS Day
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Eswatini emerges as Key Investment Hub at Malaysia
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MINISTER PRINCESS LINDIWE TELLS PARLIAMENT:

24-hour Lavumisa Border in motion

Stories By Noaba Ntshakala
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MINISTER for Home Affairs Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe has reported to Parliament on her ongoing high-level discussions with South African authorities about transitioning the Lavumisa Border Post to a 24-hour operation.

She indicated that talks are at an advanced stage, aimed at facilitating easier movement of people and goods between Eswatini and South Africa.

Princess Lindiwe made the remarks when responding to a question posed by Gege Member of Parliament Magesi Dlamini, who asked why the border gate was still not operating around the clock. The minister explained that Eswatini had already expressed its readiness and was now finalising cross-border operational agreements with South Africa's Ministry of Home Affairs. She indicated that discussions are progressing well, with the aim of easing the movement of people and goods between the two countries. She emphasised that Lavumisa is a strategic entry point whose upgrade to a 24-hour operation will significantly enhance regional trade and travel. "We recognise the importance of ensuring our border operates efficiently to promote

economic activity and provide convenience for our citizens," Princess Lindiwe said. She highlighted the potential benefits of the shift, including shorter waiting times for travellers, improved logistics for transport operators and strengthened economic ties with South Africa.

The minister assured MPs that her ministry is committed to resolving any logistical and procedural issues related to the transition. She confirmed that ongoing negotiations include enhanced security arrangements and customs procedures to ensure the border can operate safely throughout the night. She added that she has also engaged South African Revenue Authority officials to ensure that all stakeholders are fully aligned. When finally achieved, this move will follow the successful extension of operating hours at the Ngwenya Border Post, which now runs 24 hours for light vehicles and pedestrians. This was one of the significant milestones achieved by her ministry in 2021, when she worked with her South African counterpart to ensure that both the Ngwenya and Oshoek border posts moved to full-time operations. The Minister for Home Affairs further committed to keeping Parliament informed as talks progress, emphasising that the Ministry of Home Affairs remains focused on modernising border management. "We are confident that this initiative will significantly impact the lives of our citizens," she said.



▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs who also serves as Defence Minister, Pholile Shakantu.

THE Kingdom of Eswatini took centre stage at the United Economic Summit 2025, hosted by the United Diplomatic Council (UDC) in Klang, Malaysia which is an event that drew diplomats, business leaders, and global policy influencers from across continents.

Among the distinguished participants was His Excellency Ambassador Menzie Siphos Dlamini, High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Eswatini to Malaysia, whose involvement reinforced the country's growing diplomatic and economic presence within the ASEAN and South Asian regions.

Eswatini's longstanding partnerships with India and Malaysia formed a strong foundation for the discussions held at the summit. India and Eswatini share decades of warm, development-focused cooperation across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, ICT, agriculture, textiles, and education. India's continued support through training and technical assistance has played a vital role in strengthening Eswatini's development trajectory and economic resilience. Malaysia, meanwhile, has cultivated steadily expanding ties with Eswatini, particularly in agro-processing, tourism, trade facilitation, and major investment-led initiatives within

Southern Africa.

These relationships provided a fitting backdrop to a summit that placed strategic economic collaboration at its core. As global investors increasingly look toward Southern Africa for growth opportunities, Eswatini has positioned itself as a stable and attractive destination. With membership in SACU and SADC, as well as preferential access to major global markets, including the United States under AGOA and the European Union; Eswatini offers meaningful advantages for companies seeking to establish or expand their presence in the region. Complementing these access points are the country's ongoing economic reforms, predictable policy environment, and competitive workforce.

During the summit, delegates explored a range of sectors presenting strong prospects for international partnerships. These included agro-processing, sugar and ethanol production, textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, mining, forestry,

timber, renewable energy, infrastructure development, tourism, and ICT. Eswatini's well-developed agro-industrial base, particularly in sugar and citrus, offers significant potential for joint ventures with Asian partners. Meanwhile, the country's ambitions in renewable energy development align closely with Malaysia's and India's advancements in engineering, technology transfer, and low-carbon solutions. The textile and apparel sector, one of Eswatini's largest employers, also stands out due to favourable export regimes and expanding global demand.

Much of the dialogue centred on opportunities for trilateral cooperation between Asia and Southern Africa. The convergence of India's manufacturing capabilities, Malaysia's industrial expertise, and Eswatini's resource-rich landscape opened pathways for collaboration in agribusiness, healthcare manufacturing, capacity-building programmes, renewable energy projects, and broader industrial

development. Delegates emphasised the potential for these partnerships to deliver sustainable, long-term economic outcomes for all participating regions.

Moreover, when reflecting on the significance of the summit, UDC President Dr. Asif Iqbal stated, "Africa is not just the future but it is the present. Eswatini stands at a unique intersection of opportunity and readiness. Our shared efforts must unlock growth that benefits all parties and builds lasting prosperity across continents."

In line with these aspirations, the UDC announced plans to dispatch a high-level business delegation to Eswatini. The visit aims to identify sector-specific investment opportunities, strengthen trade ties, and support the country's development priorities, while paving the way for deeper engagement with India, Malaysia, and the wider ASEAN economic network.



▲ Eswatini has been hailed as a key investment hub.



▲ His Excellency Menzie Dlamini, High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Eswatini to Malaysia (l) receiving a gift from Dr. PB Boss.

Minister Pholile reports progress on new defence force forward bases

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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MINISTER of Foreign Affairs who also serves as Defence Minister Pholile Shakantu has updated Parliament on the ongoing construction of forward bases for the Eswatini Defence Force (EDF), describing the project as a crucial step in strengthening military operations and improving conditions for soldiers.

She delivered the update in response to a question from Lomahasha Member of Parliament Zanele Mashaba, who sought clarity on the state of military infrastructure.

Minister Shakantu confirmed that seven forward bases are currently under construction across the country, with four of them already completed in the Shiselweni region. She said the government's intention is to ensure that soldiers deployed in remote and high-pressure areas have access to proper facilities and support systems. "We are committed to providing improved working conditions for our army," she told Parliament.

According to the minister, the new bases



▲ The government's intention is to ensure that soldiers deployed in remote and high-pressure areas have access to proper facilities and support systems.

will play a pivotal role in enhancing logistics for the EDF. They are designed to securely store and distribute essential supplies such as food, fuel, ammunition and operational equipment. This development directly responds to concerns raised by MP Mashaba, who highlighted risks faced by soldiers when depending on assistance from nearby homesteads during deployments.

The Minister said the forward bases will also provide safe spaces for troops to rest,

regroup and plan operations without compromising their security. "The well-being of our soldiers is a top priority," she emphasised, adding that the new facilities will support both daily operations and long-term strategic capacity.

She informed Members of Parliament that government is committed to strengthening military infrastructure beyond the current projects. Barracks with deteriorating structures are already receiving semi-permanent



▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs who also serves as Defence Minister, Pholile Shakantu.

upgrades to improve living standards for personnel. Shakantu further encouraged Parliament to consider an increased budget allocation for the next financial year, which would allow for additional permanent structures to be constructed.

Eswatini presses forward in strengthening HIV response

By Thokozani Mazibuko

ESWATINI has emphasized its national commitment to ending AIDS as a public health threat during the World AIDS Day commemoration at Hhukwini, where Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini encouraged the nation to build on progress and intensify prevention efforts.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Prime Minister acknowledged the strides the country has made in expanding treatment access, increasing awareness and exceeding the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets. He noted, however, that the latest figures of 4,000 new HIV infections and 2,800 AIDS-related deaths recorded annually serve as a reminder that continued vigilance and proactive action are still necessary.

"These numbers remind us that our work is not finished," he said, urging the nation to continue strengthening prevention, treatment and community support systems. "We have made significant progress as a country, and with renewed focus, we can reduce these figures even further."

This year's commemoration brought together government leaders, health experts, youth representatives and civil society organisations to promote collective responsibility in addressing HIV, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

Prime Minister Dlamini stressed the importance of empowering young people with accurate information, life skills and supportive environments. "Our young people must be guided and encouraged to make informed and responsible choices," he said, highlighting the role of education and mentorship in reducing vulnerability among adolescents.

Health experts at the event echoed the



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini addressing the gathering at Hhukwini.

Prime Minister's call for strengthened prevention strategies. Dr. Nomsa Dlamini, Director of NERCHA, noted that while antiretroviral therapy continues to save lives and improve health outcomes, prevention efforts must keep pace. "We must invest equally in prevention and treatment. Education, awareness and behavioural change remain essential pillars of the national response," she said.

The event also showcased community-driven approaches that are making a difference on the ground. Youth-friendly health services, peer support networks, and



▲ The Premier receiving the injectable PreP from Marc Weinstock, U.S. Embassy Eswatini Deputy Chief of Mission.

school-based awareness campaigns were highlighted as effective tools for reducing new infections and expanding access to testing and counselling.

The Prime Minister emphasized that all sectors of society—including families, communities, educators and faith-based organisations—have a role in guiding and supporting young people. "Prevention begins at home and is strengthened in our schools and communities," he said.

He also made strong emphasis on government's commitment to scaling up voluntary testing services, strengthening sexual and reproductive health programmes, expanding youth engagement platforms, and deepening partnerships with development agencies.

● The latest figures of 4,000 new HIV infections and 2,800 AIDS-related deaths recorded annually serve as a reminder that continued vigilance and proactive action are still necessary.

Over 20 people receive new PrEP drug

... as Eswatini celebrates World AIDS Day

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

ESWATINI stepped confidently into a new era of HIV prevention as the long-awaited long-acting injectable PrEP, known as lenacapavir, was officially introduced during the World AIDS Day 2025 commemoration at Hhukwini Inkhundla.

The milestone launch, led by Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini and Minister of Health Mduduzi Matsebula, highlighted a major advancement in the country's HIV response.

Lenacapavir, administered only twice a year, offers a discreet and convenient alternative to daily oral PrEP. Its long-acting nature is expected to ease many of the challenges individuals have faced with adherence, privacy, stigma and busy schedules. Health officials confirmed that more than 20 people received the injection on Monday, signalling strong early interest and acceptance among the public.

Prime Minister described the rollout as a significant stride toward His Majesty King Mswati III's vision of a healthier nation supported by modern health innovations. He noted that expanding prevention options is crucial in meeting the needs of diverse groups, especially young people, adolescent girls and young women, and key populations who remain disproportionately vulnerable to HIV. He emphasised that the new tool strengthens the country's push toward achieving an AIDS-free Eswatini by 2030.

The scientific breakthrough behind lenacapavir has been widely celebrated globally. The injection, by blocking the virus from multiplying and establishing infection, offers highly effective protection with minimal clinic visits. Minister Matsebula highlighted that lenacapavir addresses one of the biggest challenges associated with oral PrEP adherence by requiring only two doses per year.

Healthcare workers at the commemoration expressed optimism that the new in-



▲ A section of emaSwati who attended the commemoration.

jectable will reduce both client and facility burden. With fewer clinic visits required, health workers can dedicate more time to counselling, follow-up and reaching underserved communities. This shift is expected to improve the overall quality of prevention services and deepen trust between communities and the health system.

Young people who attended the event welcomed the new option, saying it offers privacy and relief from the pressure of daily medication. Many noted that stigma and fear of judgment often discourage them from accessing prevention services. A twice-yearly injection, they said, gives them more control and confidence in protecting themselves.

The introduction of lenacapavir also reinforces Eswatini's position as a global leader in HIV control. The country has surpassed the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets and continues to invest in innovations that strengthen its health response. The government and its partners view the rollout as part of a broader strategy to widen HIV prevention choices, rather than replace existing methods. Condoms, oral PrEP, behavioural interventions, community education and gender empowerment programmes will continue to play essential roles.



▲ Senate President Lindiwe Dlamini following proceedings during the commemoration at Hhukwini.

The Ministry of Health announced a phased rollout to ensure facilities are adequately prepared, healthcare workers trained and communities well informed. Awareness campaigns will accompany the implementation to educate the public on eligibility, availability and safe use. Community leaders and youth groups endorsed the

approach, urging continuous engagement to reach even the most remote areas.

A candle-lighting ceremony closed the commemoration, honouring lives lost to AIDS-related illnesses and reaffirming commitment to supporting those living with HIV.

THE Chairperson of the National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) Ntsika Fakudze has emphasised the need for pragmatic action guided by evidence and community realities. Fakudze said this during the World AIDS Day held at Hhukwini which was attended by the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini and Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula.

In his remarks, Fakudze said, "The data presented here today reminds us that our fight is far from over. When only half of our young people have sufficient knowledge about HIV prevention, we must strengthen education. When poverty and unemployment push our youth into risky situations, we must build supportive systems. We cannot ignore the root causes driving new infections."

He referred to the worrying statistics reflected in national reports. Only 51 percent of young women and 47 percent of young men aged 15 to 24 have comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention. Young people continue to experience early sexual debut, with five percent of females and twelve percent of males initiating sex between the ages of 18 and 24. Intergenerational relationships remain widespread, affecting about

NERCHA Chairperson calls for decisive action on HIV drivers

32 percent of females in Eswatini. Fakudze stressed that these behavioural and social patterns must be confronted with honesty, community dialogue and stronger intervention programmes.

He also echoed the Prime Minister's firm message directed at families, schools and community leaders. Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini had earlier reminded the nation that "A school child is not expected to attend or expected to indulge in sexual intercourse." He expressed deep concern over the country's persistent 4,000 new HIV infections annually and the estimated 2,800 AIDS related deaths recorded each year. The Prime Minister urged communities to protect the youth and strengthen moral, educational and social guidance to shield them from high risk behaviour.

Fakudze called on traditional leaders, teachers, parents and youth groups to collaborate with NERCHA as the new board begins its national mandate. "Every community structure represented here today has a role to play. We must rebuild an environment where young people are informed, protected and empowered. Ending AIDS in



▲ NERCHA Chairperson Ntsika Fakudze during the World AIDS Day Commemoration.

Eswatini demands shared responsibility, not just from government but from every Liswati," he said.

He further highlighted the need to address gaps in prevention and treatment uptake.

The image presented during the ceremony noted that only 21 percent of young people are aware of oral PrEP and that viral suppression among adolescent girls and young women stands at approximately 76 percent. Fakudze welcomed the introduction of lenacapavir, the new long acting injectable PrEP launched during the event. He described it as a vital addition to the HIV prevention toolbox that will benefit young people who struggle with daily medication.

"The arrival of long acting PrEP gives us a real opportunity to reach groups we have struggled to protect. When a person only needs two injections a year, the barriers of daily pills and stigma begin to fall away. This is innovation that speaks directly to our national needs," he said.

Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula praised the new NERCHA board and expressed confidence that Fakudze's leadership will strengthen coordination across sectors. He emphasised that the fight against HIV requires continued investment in health workers, improved service delivery, reliable data and strong partnerships with development organisations.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini addressed the House of Assembly on Monday, unveiling plans to enhance the welfare of police officers.

This initiative comes in response to growing concerns raised by legislators regarding the inadequate support systems in place for police officers, particularly those in junior ranks, who operate under challenging and often dangerous conditions.

During his address, Prime Minister acknowledged the critical role that police officers play in maintaining law and order, emphasizing that their welfare is paramount to the effectiveness of the police force. He stated, "The men and women in blue are our first line of defense against crime and violence in our society."

It is our duty to ensure that they are adequately supported in their roles, so they can carry out their responsibilities without fear for their own well-being."

The Prime Minister's remarks come as lawmakers highlighted alarming issues related to the welfare of police personnel. Many officers, especially those at junior levels, are reportedly without essential benefits such as medical aid and insurance. This lack of support has raised serious concerns about their ability to perform their duties effectively, given the inherent risks involved in police work.

Officers are often exposed to dangerous situations that can lead to physical harm and mental health challenges, making adequate support an urgent necessity.

Moreover, the Prime Minister pointed out that insufficient medical aid could deter individuals from seeking necessary medical attention following incidents on duty. This

PM Responds to Alarming Gaps in Support for Officers

could lead to long-term health issues that not only affect the officers personally but also compromise their operational readiness. "We cannot afford to have our officers hesitant to seek medical assistance due to unfavourable circumstances. We must build a system that encourages them to prioritize their health and well-being," Dlamini stressed.

In addition to addressing healthcare concerns, the Prime Minister also touched upon the need for improved training and professional development opportunities for police officers. He articulated that a well-trained force is crucial to effectively tackle the complexities of modern-day policing, including cybercrime and community relations. "Continuous professional development should be a priority for our police force."

We must equip our officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the evolving landscape of crime," Dlamini remarked.

The Prime Minister's commitment to police welfare has also been well received by various stakeholders, including police unions and community organizations. Many of these groups have long advocated for better working conditions and support for law enforcement personnel.

Their leaders have expressed cautious optimism regarding the government's dedication to addressing these issues. "We appreciate the recognition that the welfare of our officers needs urgent attention. We hope that this commitment translates into tangible benefits for those who serve and protect



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini speaking in the House of Assembly.

our communities," said a police officer when engaged by this publication.

Further, as part of the new initiative, the government plans to conduct a thorough review of existing welfare programs and identify areas for improvement. Dlamini indicated that engaging with police personnel to better understand their needs will be an essential part of this process. "Listening to our officers is crucial. They are the ones on the ground, and their feedback will guide our efforts to create a supportive work environment that fosters their well-being," he

noted.

Budgetary allocations for police welfare will also be a focal point of the government's plan. The Premier assured Parliament that ensuring sufficient funding for welfare initiatives will be prioritized in the upcoming fiscal budget.

"We recognize that investing in our police force is investing in our safety and security as a nation. We are committed to making sure our officers have the resources they need to carry out their duties effectively," he explained.

Churches reinforce support during 16 Days of Activism

By Delisa Magagula

THE 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), an annual international campaign, serves as a crucial period for heightened awareness and action.

This year, local churches in Eswatini are being called upon to actively strengthen their internal support systems to combat the pervasive issue of GBV. This focus on faith-based organisations underscores their vital role in community safety and healing.

The imperative for religious institutions to lead this charge was highlighted recently by Nonhlanhla Motsa of the Pastors' Wives Foundation during an appearance on Eswatini TV's Kusile Breakfast Show, signalling a unified commitment within the spiritual community to address and ultimately eradicate gender-based violence.

Motsa highlighted the importance of awareness and reporting mechanisms in all community spaces, including churches.

According to Motsa, while faith-based organisations are often seen as safe spaces, instances of abuse particularly sexual and emotional abuse can occur unnoticed. Many of these cases go unreported due to social stigma or the belief that abuse does not happen within religious settings.

"The church is a cornerstone of community life, and its leadership plays a key role in protecting vulnerable members. Awareness, education, and clear reporting channels are essential to ensuring that support is available when needed," she said.

The Pastors' Wives Foundation, an organi-



▲ Eswatini has over the years ramped up action and calls for 16 Days of Activism.

sation dedicated to supporting pastors' families and promoting safe environments in faith communities, has been active in training leaders and congregants on recognising and addressing abuse.

Motsa emphasised that the aim is not to single out any particular group but to strengthen systems of care within all churches.

Meanwhile, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is observed annually from November 25 to December 10. The campaign, initiated by the United Nations, seeks to raise awareness about gender-based violence, mobilise communities, and encourage prevention measures. Activities during this period include workshops, media campaigns, public discussions, and community outreach programs.

In Eswatini, the campaign has grown to

involve government agencies, civil society organisations, and faith-based groups. Through joint initiatives, participants aim to highlight practical measures that families, institutions, and communities can take to reduce vulnerability and ensure prompt assistance for victims of abuse.

Officials from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs have also noted the value of partnerships between religious organisations and local authorities.

"Faith leaders are influential in shaping community behaviour. Their engagement in campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism helps create safe spaces where individuals feel empowered to speak up," read the Ministry's commitment statement.

During her appearance, Motsa encouraged members of congregations to familiarise themselves with their church's support



▲ Pastor's Wives Foundation Nonhlanhla Motsa

structures, including pastoral care teams and external referral networks.

She also highlighted the role of education in preventing abuse, noting that understanding the signs and impact of emotional and sexual abuse can help families and communities respond effectively.



▲ EU Head of Cooperation Eva-Maria Engdahl making her remarks.



▲ Civil Sector Organisations who attended the engagement.

EU spotlights civil society's role in Eswatini development

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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THE European Union (EU) in Eswatini convened a high-level consultative meeting recently, bringing together civil society organisations (CSOs) to discuss the promotion of good governance, human rights, and social inclusion.

The event, hosted at the Royal Villas in Ezulwini, aimed to strengthen collaboration be-

tween CSOs, government, and international partners in advancing national development priorities.

The dialogue focused on key areas including women's rights and gender equality, youth and vulnerable groups' inclusion in decision-making, advocacy for policy development, and the promotion of social, cultural, and economic rights, alongside climate justice initiatives. Participants explored ways to ensure that marginalized voices are represented in shaping national policies and programs. Speaking at the occasion, EU Head of Cooperation Eva-Maria Engdahl ex-

pressed the European Union's commitment to supporting civil society as a cornerstone of sustainable development. "Civil society organisations play a critical role in ensuring that governance is inclusive, policies are effective, and human rights are respected," she said.

The EU has allocated up to E60 million to support CSOs in Eswatini for the period 2021-2027 under its Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP). This funding targets human development and social inclusion, reflecting the EU's strategic partnership with the Kingdom in strengthening civic engage-

ment and promoting equitable development outcomes.

The meeting highlighted the importance of collaboration between CSOs, government, and international partners to foster a society where all citizens, particularly women, youth, and vulnerable groups, can participate actively in shaping the country's social and economic future.

Through initiatives like this, the EU asserted that it continues to demonstrate its commitment to empowering civil society, enhancing governance, and promoting inclusive development across Eswatini.

Zombodze Emuva hosts men's dialogue to break silence on GBV

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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A VITAL community dialogue held at Mpandeni, under the Ngwenyame-ni Chiefdom in Zombodze Emuva Inkhundla, has brought men and young men together to openly confront the realities of gender-based violence (GBV) and its root causes.

The session, hosted as part of the national 16 Days of Activism Against GBV campaign, was led by the Nhlanguano AIDS Training Information and Counselling Centre (NATICC).

The engagement created a safe and supportive environment where participants reflected on pressing issues affecting families. Men spoke candidly about money-related conflicts, the weight of societal expectations placed on them, unemployment pressures, and household power dynamics which are all factors that often fuel violence when communication and emotional support are lacking.

Participants acknowledged that while men are often perceived only as perpetrators, many also suffer in silence. They highlighted the stigma and ridicule men face when attempting to report abuse, a barrier that prevents them from seeking help and perpetuates cycles of unreported violence.

The dialogue also unpacked key domestic offences outlined in the Sexual Offences and



▲ A section of young and old men from Mpandeni who attended the NATICC led engagement.

Domestic Violence Act (SODVA) of 2018. Facilitators clarified legal implications surrounding cases involving persons under 18 and shed light on the rarely discussed issue of men experiencing sexual abuse.

NATICC reported that by the end of the session, a collective message had emerged which was strengthening communication within families is essential in preventing violence. Participants were encouraged to engage in open, honest conversations in their

homes and communities, fostering mutual respect and creating safer spaces for all.

The Nhlanguano AIDS Training Information and Counselling Centre (NATICC) was founded in 2002 by the Free Evangelical Christian Fellowship in Eswatini. The organisation began by providing HIV prevention, care, support, information and counselling services especially in the Shiselweni region. Over time, NATICC expanded its mission to include gender-based violence (GBV)

prevention and response, as well as teenage pregnancy prevention and other community-support services. Its work includes community dialogues, school and church programmes, awareness-raising campaigns, counselling and support for survivors of abuse, child-protection services, and legal/court support for abuse survivors. NATICC operates in collaboration with the Government of Eswatini and other non-governmental and community organisations.

BRIEFS

Britain withdraws \$1.15 bln backing from LNG

THE British government has decided to withdraw its \$1.15 billion backing for the TotalEnergies-led Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas project, it said on Monday. Britain had promised financial support for the \$20 billion project via UK Export Finance in 2020, shortly before it pledged to stop providing direct government support for overseas fossil fuel projects.

Dangote Refinery says it can deliver 1.5 bln litres of petrol

NIGERIA'S Dangote Refinery said on Monday it is able to deliver 1.5 billion litres of petrol a month and invited the sector regulator to validate daily volumes after the watchdog published data saying it was supplying only around a third of that.

The argument that refineries in Nigeria are unable to meet national demand was part of the reason the government last month dropped plans to ban imports of refined petroleum products.

SA's Pick n Pay CFO to step down in 2026

SOUTH Africa's Pick n Pay said on Monday its chief financial officer, Lerena Olivier, will step down after the retailer's annual general meeting next year, as the retailer battles mounting losses and fierce competition.

The company has appointed Tina Rookledge, a former regional managing partner at EY Western Cape, to join in February 2026 and take over as CFO in August following a structured handover period. (Reuters)

Govt plans massive GHG reduction

By Delisa Magagula

PRIME Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini has called for accelerated national action on climate resilience as Eswatini moves to implement its strengthened pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2.24 million tonnes by 2035.

The Prime Minister delivered the message during the 2025 Temvelo Awards ceremony held at the Royal Swazi Spa, where he urged government institutions, the private sector, development partners and communities to support the Kingdom's transition toward a more sustainable and climate-secure economy. Dlamini described Eswatini's updated climate commitments as a deliberate shift from broad environmental awareness to measurable implementation.

He stated that the country's participation in multilateral environmental agreements, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, is tied to a national obligation to protect ecosystems and preserve the Kingdom's biodiversity.

"Eswatini is entering a critical phase in its environmental response, one defined by reforms such as the new Ozone Depleting Substances and Hydrofluorocarbons Regulations of 2025 and improvements in meteorological capacity and early detection systems," said the Premier.

The Prime Minister further highlighted Eswatini's status among the first ten countries globally to submit a new round of climate pledges under the Paris Agreement, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 3.0.

He said the submission reflected a readiness to move beyond commitments on paper and into concrete action. Noteworthy Eswatini's updated NDC outlines sector-wide mitigation measures across energy, waste, industry and land use, combined with adaptation plans covering water security, health systems, ecosystems, and infrastructure protection.

"Under the 2035 target, the government intends to cut 2.24 million tonnes of greenhouse gases relative to projected emissions. A portion of this reduction will be achieved through domestic resources, while the balance is conditional on international support through climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building," he said.

In addition, he said, the NDC places emphasis on strengthening renewable-energy adoption, scaling up clean-cooking solutions, restoring degraded land and expanding afforestation efforts, alongside improvements in agricultural practices and waste-management systems.

Worth noting, Eswatini's new climate plan was developed through a nationwide consultative process led by the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Stakeholders included government agencies, municipalities, private-sector representatives, non-governmental organisations, youth groups and community structures.

The document aligns climate actions with national development priorities and introduces mechanisms for improved financial tracking, including climate-budget tagging and potential use of green-financing instruments.

According to the NDC, the country intends to limit climate-related economic losses,



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini has called for accelerated national action on climate resilience as Eswatini moves to implement its strengthened pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

strengthen early-warning systems and ensure the continued operation of health facilities during climate shocks.

It also sets long-term objectives to restore degraded ecosystems, secure water sources, reinforce infrastructure and expand access to sustainable energy.

Meanwhile, Dlamini said the Temvelo Awards illustrate the level of innovation and community participation required to fulfil these national goals.

He recognised the award recipients for their environmental stewardship, stating that their work demonstrates what is possible when institutions and individuals adopt sustainable practices.

The 2025 ceremony recognised a range of winners across multiple categories, including the Municipal Council of Mbabane as Green Municipality, Swazi Organics as Green Business in the SME segment, Malandela's Lifestyle Centre as the leading Large Business, and Olive Country Lodge in the Sustainable Eco-Tourism category.

Additional awards went to Enhlanhlani Methodist Primary School as Green Primary School, Motjane Inkhundla as Green Inkhundla and Sibusiso Dlamini as Environmentally Responsive Journalist.

Inclusive

Other categories included Environmentally Responsive Digital Media House, Climate Change Champion (Group and Individual), Young Eco-Hero, Innovative Waste Management, UNDP SDG recognition for the most inclusive institution, Ecosystem Restoration Hero, the FNB Sustainable Manufacturing Industry Award, Green High School, Green Parastatal and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

While the Temvelo Awards focused on national achievements, Eswatini's climate ambitions form part of a broader global landscape in which many countries have begun setting 2035 targets.

A number of early submitters in the 2025 NDC cycle have outlined comparable or more aggressive goals. Among them is Brazil, which announced a target to cut emissions by 59 to 67 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035.

The United Kingdom adopted a statutory goal to reduce emissions by at least 81 per cent by the same year, and New Zealand reaffirmed its pathway toward a 51 to 55 per cent reduction below 2005 levels by 2035. The United Arab Emirates also set a 2035 emissions target, committing to reduce its emissions by 47 per cent relative to 2019 levels.

These developments illustrate the growing use of 2035 as a benchmark year for global climate planning under the Paris Agreement, following the initial focus on 2030.

For many countries, including Eswatini, 2035 targets offer a medium-term horizon that allows governments to integrate new technologies, adopt climate-finance mechanisms and align environmental policies with economic-development strategies.

According to the PM, Eswatini's progress will depend on how successfully the country mobilises domestic and international support for its mitigation and adaptation measures.

The government has already outlined plans to expand renewable-energy capacity, improve climate-risk governance and scale up land-restoration projects. The extent of international climate finance, however, will play a key role in determining whether the full target can be achieved.

Meanwhile, many developing countries face similar constraints and have tied a portion of their targets to global partnerships through institutions such as the Green Climate Fund, regional development banks and bilateral cooperation programmes.

The Prime Minister emphasised the need for each sector of society to assume responsibility for advancing the Kingdom's environmental agenda.

He said future progress will depend on collaboration among regulators, industries, farmers, community organisations and the media. He added that environmental protection cannot be limited to policies and legislation, but must be reflected in everyday practices, investment decisions and long-term planning across the economy.

Dlamini concluded by reaffirming that the Temvelo Awards represent a national call to shift from intention to measurable impact. He said the recognition given to institutions and individuals across this year's categories reflects the type of innovation and commitment required as Eswatini moves to implement its 2035 climate target.

The Prime Minister said the Kingdom remains determined to follow a path that protects its natural environment, strengthens its resilience and contributes to global climate efforts.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.8802	17.1437
G.B. Pound	22.0354	22.7141
EURO	19.3989	20.0064
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	



New YERF board prioritises strengthened support for young entrepreneurs

Stories By Delisa Magagula

THE Minister for Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs, Bongani Muzi Nzima, has outlined a renewed mandate for the Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund (YERF). This follows the appointment of Zitsile Dlamini as the new Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the reappointment of Banele Manyatsi as a director.

The Minister announced the appointments on November 27, 2025, emphasising that the Government of Eswatini expects the strengthened leadership to accelerate youth economic empowerment and broaden access to enterprise funding.

He reaffirmed the government’s trust in the Board and expressed full support for its work with Management and Staff in delivering the Fund’s strategy.

Dlamini brings over 20 years of experience in financial services, insurance, logistics, and corporate operations. Her career includes senior positions at Safrican Financial Services, DHL Eswatini, and Old Mutual Eswatini, where she served as Group Chief Operating Officer. She also serves on the Board of Esicojeni Foundation. In her acceptance, Dlamini stated that her immediate priority is to work hard with the rest of the Board to ensure the Fund meets its mandate. She noted that the focus will be on strengthening systems, improving operational efficiency, and supporting programmes that directly reach young entrepreneurs. She added that collaboration with stakeholders will be central to the Board’s approach as it seeks to improve the Fund’s reach and impact.

Meanwhile, Manyatsi’s reappointment provides continuity within the Board, particularly in areas relating to oversight and governance of the Fund’s financial and



▲ The Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund Board Leadership.

developmental programmes. He has previously contributed to youth development initiatives connected to YERF and other national structures. The Ministry emphasised that youth enterprise remains a critical component of the national development agenda. YERF is mandated to provide financial support to young people who struggle to access capital through formal financial institutions. Through loans and business development services, the Fund supports enterprises in agriculture, retail, services, creative industries, and other sectors contributing to economic growth.

“The new Board is expected to guide the implementation of upcoming programmes aimed at widening access to funding, improving repayment systems to sustain the revolving nature of the Fund, and strengthening monitoring of funded projects,” said Nzima.



▲ Zitsile Dlamini and the Minister Bongani Nzima.

ENACTUS Eswatini opens nominations for first Alumni Executive Committee

ENACTUS Eswatini is in the process of establishing its first Alumni Association, a move aimed at strengthening governance, mentorship, and long-term engagement among former student leaders.

The organisation has launched a structured nomination process to elect its inaugural executive committee, marking a major step in unifying alumni efforts across the country.

Nominations opened last week. Alumni from all former and current ENACTUS partner institutions are encouraged to participate. The call covers all generations of members, including those who were active in the early 2000s when the organisation operated under the name Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE).

The establishment of the Association follows increased interest from former ENACTUS students seeking coordinated support and a platform that connects them to ongoing national initiatives.

According to the Country Office, the Alumni Association will serve as a central body supporting current project teams through mentorship while amplifying the role of ENACTUS graduates in Eswatini’s socio-economic development.

Acting Programmes Manager Temalangen Dlamini said the goal is to build a leadership team that reflects the diversity and



▲ ENACTUS Eswatini team.

professionalism of the ENACTUS network. Alumni are encouraged to nominate candidates who demonstrate integrity, leadership experience, and commitment to advancing sustainable development through entrepreneurial action.

Dlamini noted that the creation of the Association is a significant milestone for the ENACTUS community. She said the

organisation aims to develop a structure that will support current students, strengthen partnerships, and enhance Eswatini’s visibility within the global ENACTUS network.

“The association is intended to include graduates who participated in SIFE more than two decades ago, ensuring they remain connected and supported in their academic,

professional, or business pursuits,” said Dlamini.

She further said, once nominations close, the submissions will undergo a verification process before voting begins. The founding executive committee will be responsible for establishing governance frameworks, coordinating national programmes, and developing partnerships with industry, development organisations, and civic institutions.

“As part of the preparations for the new support structure, ENACTUS has been actively recruiting alumni. Since October, the organisation has hosted one Alumni engagement event, where former student leaders shared their experiences, challenges, and expectations. Management also gathered insights into the barriers faced by alumni in business, employment, and entrepreneurship,” assured Dlamini.

Meanwhile, the Association is expected to play a key role in harnessing the skills and networks of ENACTUS graduates and strengthening continuity between campuses, communities, and national development initiatives.

Nominations are open to Alumni and current team CEOs. The nomination form is available at <https://forms.gle/dneAg8w1FzqmQnhc6>.

Britain withdraws \$1.15 bln backing from TotalEnergies-led Mozambique LNG

THE British government has decided to withdraw its \$1.15 billion backing for the TotalEnergies-led Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas project, it said on Monday.

Britain had promised financial support for the \$20 billion project via UK Export Finance in 2020, shortly before it pledged to stop providing direct government support for overseas fossil fuel projects.

The development has been slated to make Mozambique a major LNG exporter to Europe and Asia, but was halted in 2021 due to an Islamist insurgency.

Total lifted force majeure on the project in November, but made restarting construction conditional on the Mozambican government's approval of a new budget, which the president said he may dispute.

"In preparation to restart the project, UKEF was presented with a proposal to amend the financing terms it had agreed originally," British business minister Peter Kyle said in a statement.

"My officials have evaluated the risks

around the project, and it is the view of His Majesty's Government that these risks have increased since 2020."

"This view is based on a comprehensive assessment of the project and the interests of UK taxpayers, which are best served by ending our participation in the project at this time."

TotalEnergies declined to comment.

In February TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanne told investors that Mozambique LNG shareholders were ready to exercise their contractual rights to ensure UKEF and Atradius, the Netherlands' export finance arm, approved the funds initially promised.

Kyle said UKEF would pay back the project for any premium paid. A UKEF spokesperson declined to name the amount.

A spokesperson for Dutch export arm Atradius said in July an independent human rights due diligence review was ongoing, but that "there is no clearly defined deadline" for that review.

In March, the U.S. Export-Import Bank approved a nearly \$5 billion loan for the pro-

ject.

The project has been criticised by environmental and human rights groups.

Human rights nonprofit ECCHR last month filed a criminal complaint against TotalEnergies, alleging it was complicit in torture and enforced disappearances allegedly carried out by government soldiers in Mozambique. The company has said there is no evidence.

In April UKEF hired law firm Beyond Human Rights Compliance LLP to investigate risks around Mozambique LNG following media reports of the alleged torture, three people interviewed by the firm told Reuters.

A London court in 2023 dismissed a court challenge by environmental group Friends of the Earth against the British government's funding for the project.

TotalEnergies holds a 26.5% operating stake in Mozambique LNG. Japan's Mitsui owns 20% in the project and Mozambique state firm ENH 15%, alongside smaller stakeholders including India's ONGS and Oil India. (Reuters)

Dangote Refinery says it can deliver 1.5 bln litres of petrol

NIGERIA'S Dangote Refinery said on Monday it is able to deliver 1.5 billion litres of petrol a month and invited the sector regulator to validate daily volumes after the watchdog published data saying it was supplying only around a third of that.

The argument that refineries in Nigeria are unable to meet national demand was part of the reason the government last month dropped plans to ban imports of refined petroleum products.

The regulator estimates national demand at 55 million litres per day, or around 1.67 billion litres a month.

The refinery said it is "ready and able" to deliver 1.5 billion litres of petrol per month in December and January, with output rising to 1.7 billion litres monthly from February 2026 onward.

Dangote said that to ensure transparency, it is inviting officials from sector regulator the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority to its site from December 1 to validate and publish daily supply volumes.

The invitation follows data published by the NMDPRA over the weekend which said the Dangote Petroleum Refinery was supplying about 18.03 million litres daily.

Dangote said it is willing to make its daily production and stock figures public so the regulator can directly confirm the volumes it processes.

(Reuters)



▲The logo of French oil and gas company TotalEnergies is seen on a building in Rueil-Malmaison, near Paris, France.



▲A view of the Mild Hydrocracking Unit at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in Lagos, Nigeria.

SA's Pick n Pay CFO Lerena Olivier to step down in 2026

SOUTH Africa's Pick n Pay said on Monday its chief financial officer, Lerena Olivier, will step down after the retailer's annual general meeting next year, as the retailer battles mounting losses and fierce competition.

The company has appointed Tina Rookledge, a former regional managing partner at EY Western Cape, to join in February 2026 and take over as CFO in August following a structured handover period.

Pick n Pay, one of South Africa's biggest grocery chains, is working to cut losses and aims to break even by 2028 as it faces stiff competition from Shoprite and Woolworths.

The leadership change comes as the group pursues a turnaround

strategy focused on operational performance, sustainable growth and long-term value creation.

Olivier, CFO since 2019, will remain in an executive role overseeing priority projects critical to that strategy, the retailer said. She helped steer the company through the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 KwaZulu-Natal riots and a two-step recapitalisation, opens new tab programme in 2025.

"In her new role at Pick n Pay, Ms Rookledge will leverage her experience to support the Group's turnaround strategy, focusing on operational performance, sustainable growth, and long-term value creation for stakeholders," Pick n Pay said.

(Reuters)



▲ A woman uses a trolley as she shops at a Pick n Pay store at the Dobson Point Shopping Centre, in Soweto, South Africa.

India orders smartphone makers to preload state-owned cyber safety app

INDIA'S telecoms ministry has privately asked smartphone makers to preload all new devices with a state-owned cyber security app that cannot be deleted, a government order showed, a move likely to antagonise Apple and privacy advocates.

In tackling a recent surge of cyber crime and hacking, India is joining authorities worldwide, most recently in Russia, to frame rules blocking the use of stolen phones for fraud or promoting state-backed government service apps.

Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab, which has previously locked horns with the telecoms regulator over development of a government anti-spam mobile app, is among the companies, such as Samsung (005930.KS), opens new tab, Vivo, Oppo and Xiaomi (1810.HK), opens new tab bound by the new order.

The November 28 order, seen by Reuters, gives major smartphone companies 90 days to ensure that the government's Sanchar Saathi app is pre-installed on new mobile phones, with a provision that users cannot disable it.

For devices already in the supply chain, manufacturers should push the app to phones via software updates, the ministry said in its order, which was not made public and was sent privately to select companies.

A lawyer specialising in technology matters said India's move was cause for concern, however.

"The government effectively removes user consent as a meaningful choice," said Mishi Choudhary, who works on internet advocacy



▲ Apple iPhones are seen inside India's first Apple retail store during a media preview, a day ahead of its launch in Mumbai, India.

issues.

Privacy advocates criticised a similar requirement by Russia in August for a state-backed messenger app called MAX to be pre-installed on phones.

One of the world's largest telephone markets, India has more than 1.2 billion subscribers, and government figures show the app, launched in January, has helped recover more than 700,000 lost phones, including

50,000 in October alone.

APPLE OFTEN REFUSES SUCH REQUESTS

The government said the app was essential to combat "serious endangerment" of telecom cyber security from duplicate or spoofed IMEI numbers, which enable scams and network misuse.

Apple's iOS powered an estimated 4.5% of 735 million smartphones in India by mid-

2025, with the rest using Android, Counterpoint Research says.

While Apple pre-installs its own proprietary apps on phones, its internal policies prohibit installation of any government or third-party app before sale of a smartphone, a source with direct knowledge of the matter said.

"Apple has historically refused such requests from governments," said Tarun Pathak, a research director at Counterpoint.

"It's likely to seek a middle ground: instead of a mandatory pre-install, they might negotiate and ask for an option to nudge users towards installing the app."

Apple, Google, Samsung and Xiaomi did not respond to requests for comment. India's telecoms ministry also did not respond.

A 14- to 17-digit number unique to each handset, the IMEI, or International Mobile Equipment Identity, is most commonly used to cut off network access for phones reported to have been stolen.

The app is mainly designed to help users block and track lost or stolen smartphones across all telecom networks, using a central registry. It also lets them identify, and disconnect, fraudulent mobile connections.

With more than 5 million downloads since its launch, the app has helped block more than 3.7 million stolen or lost mobile phones, while more than 30 million fraudulent connections have also been terminated.

The government says it helps prevent cyber threats and assists tracking and blocking of lost or stolen phones, helping police to trace devices, while keeping counterfeits out of the black market.

(Reuters)

Amazon and Google launch multicloud service for faster connectivity

AMAZON and Google introduced a jointly developed multicloud networking service on Sunday to meet growing demand for reliable connectivity the companies said in a statement, at a time when even brief internet disruptions can cause major outages.

The initiative will enable customers to establish private, high-speed links between the two companies' computing platforms in minutes instead of weeks.

The new service is being unveiled a little over a month after an Amazon Web Services outage on October 20 disrupted thousands of websites worldwide, knocking offline some of the internet's most popular apps, including Snapchat and Reddit. That outage will cost U.S. companies between \$500 million and \$650 million in losses, according to analytics firm Parametrix.

The new offering combines AWS' Interconnect-multicloud with Google Cloud's Cross-Cloud Interconnect, to improve network interoperability, according to announcements by the two cloud providers.

"This collaboration between AWS and Google Cloud represents a fundamental shift in multicloud connectivity," said Robert Kennedy, vice president of network services at



▲ Amazon logo outside an Amazon warehouse in Manchester, Britain.

AWS.

Rob Enns, vice president and general manager of cloud networking at Google Cloud, said the joint network is intended to make it easier for customers to move data and applications between clouds.

Salesforce is among the early users of the new approach, Google Cloud said in a statement.

AWS provides computing power, data storage and other digital services to companies, governments and individuals and is the world's largest cloud provider, followed by Microsoft's tab Azure and Google Cloud.

Tech companies including Alphabet, Microsoft and Amazon are investing billions to build infrastructure that can handle surging internet traffic with the growing demands of artificial intelligence, as the need for computing power to support these services accelerates.

Amazon's cloud business delivered robust growth in the third quarter, generating \$33 billion in revenue; more than double that of Google's \$15.16 billion.

(Reuters)

South Korean police probe massive data leak at Coupang

SOUTH Korean police said on Monday they were tracing IP addresses and looking into possible tech vulnerabilities at Coupang after the e-commerce giant suffered the country's worst data breach in over a decade.

Shares of the company were down around 9% in premarket trading.

The personal data of more than 33 million customers was leaked in a breach believed to have started on June 24 through overseas servers, though the company did not learn of the problem until November 18. South Korea's Science Minister Bae Kyung-hoon said on Sunday the perpetrator had "abused authentication vulnerabilities" in Coupang's servers, and that authorities would be investigating whether the company violated rules regarding the protection of personal information.

Coupang, which is backed by Japan's SoftBank Group (9984.T), opens new tab, has said the breach exposed customers' names, email addresses, phone numbers, shipping addresses and certain order histories, but not payment details or login credentials.

Broadcaster JTBC has reported that after conducting an internal investigation, Coupang suspects that a Chinese former employee, who was responsible for authentication tasks, was a key figure in the data breach.

A former employee used their authentication key that was still active after the termination of the person's contract to get access to customer information, lawmaker Choi Min-hee said in a statement on Monday.

Police and Coupang declined to comment on possible suspects.

As of Monday afternoon, internet postings showed that more than 10,000 people planned to join a possible class action lawsuit against Coupang. Lawyer Ha Hee-bong said the potential class action could seek compensation of more than 100,000 won (\$68) per person.

Coupang, founded by Korean-American Harvard graduate Bom Kim in 2010, is the country's most popular e-commerce platform. It has overtaken family-owned conglomerates like Shinsegae in South Korean e-commerce and is also expanding into food delivery, streaming and fintech.

(Reuters)

Ukraine's Zelenskiy says 'tough issues' still need to be resolved after Florida talks

TOUGH issues have yet to be resolved after U.S.-Ukrainian talks in Florida, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday, as he and other Ukrainian officials toured Europe to rally allies and Donald Trump's envoy headed to Moscow to brief the Kremlin.

Intensified diplomacy to end Europe's deadliest war in generations jumped across the Atlantic on Monday after U.S. and Ukrainian officials held talks at a golf resort built by Trump's envoy and fellow real estate magnate Steve Witkoff.

Zelenskiy, in Paris, received a show of support from French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday, and will head to Ireland on Tuesday. Ukraine's defence minister was due in Brussels for meetings with NATO. Witkoff, meanwhile, was headed to Moscow, where he will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday.

Kyiv and its European allies have been pushing Washington to revise a proposed U.S. peace plan that initially endorsed Russia's main demands: that Ukraine give up more territory, curb the size of its army, renounce joining NATO and be barred from hosting Western troops.

Ukraine says those terms would amount to capitulation, and leave it prone to eventual conquest by Russia, which invaded in 2014 and 2022.

RUBIO SAYS 'WE'VE MADE PROGRESS'

"There are some tough issues that still have to be worked through," Zelenskiy said on X, describing a packed agenda of meetings across Europe to discuss the outcome of the Florida talks. "It will be a very substantive day."

Macron posted a picture of himself and Zelenskiy striding in front of an honour guard at the Elysee Palace. "The work for peace continues," the French president wrote.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who hosted the talks at Witkoff's Shell Bay club near Miami, said on Sunday Washington was "realistic about how difficult this is, but optimistic, particularly given the fact that as we've made progress".

"There's more work to be done. This is delicate," Rubio said. "There are a lot of moving parts, and obviously there's another party involved here ... that will have to be a part of the equation, and that will continue

later this week, when Mr. Witkoff travels to Moscow."

INTENSIFIED TALKS COME AT DIFFICULT JUNCTURE FOR KYIV

The intensified negotiations have arrived at a difficult juncture for Kyiv, which has been losing ground at the front while facing the biggest corruption scandal of the war.

Zelenskiy's chief of staff, who had also led the Ukrainian delegation at peace talks, resigned on Friday after anti-corruption investigators searched his home. Two cabinet ministers have been fired and a former business partner of Zelenskiy has been named as a suspect.

Trump, who promised to swiftly end the war, has expressed frustration that a deal seems to be elusive.

"Ukraine's got some difficult little problems," Trump told reporters on Air Force One on Sunday, referring to the corruption scandal. He repeated his view that both Russia and Ukraine wanted to end the war and said there was a good chance a deal could be reached.

RUSSIA BOMBARDS UKRAINIAN CITIES

So far, Russia has shown no sign of backing off its maximalist demands while its forces continue to make slow progress on the 1,200 km (750 mile) front line.

At least four people were killed and 22 injured by a Russian attack on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro overnight.

Russia said on Monday its forces had captured another settlement in eastern Ukraine, Klyнове in the Donetsk region. Reuters could not independently verify the situation there. Moscow has been saying it is on the verge of seizing the ruined city of Pokrovsk, its biggest prize in nearly two years.

Meanwhile, it has been bombarding Ukrainian cities nightly with long-range strikes, mainly targeting energy infrastructure, leaving Ukrainians in frequent cold and darkness as the war's fourth winter sets in.

Ukraine, for its part, has been launching long-range strikes to target Russia's oil exports. On Monday the Kremlin denounced Ukrainian attacks on a Russian oil-exporting terminal that serves a pipeline from Kazakhstan, and on two tankers in the Black Sea.

(Reuters)



▲ French President Emmanuel Macron shakes hands with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy as he arrives for a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France.



▲ South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Ramaphosa dismisses Trump's threat to bar South Africa from 2026 G20 summit

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa dismissed on Sunday U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to exclude Pretoria from next year's G20 summit, reaffirming South Africa's status as a founding member of the group.

Washington boycotted the Group of 20 leaders' summit held under South Africa's presidency in Johannesburg on November 22-23, with Trump repeating allegations, widely discredited, that the host country's Black-majority government persecutes its white minority.

Trump said last Wednesday that South Africa would not be invited to the summit to be held in Florida next year because it had refused to hand over the G20 presidency to a senior representative of its embassy who was at the closing ceremony. Pretoria

says it handed over the rotating presidency to a U.S. embassy official.

"South Africa is and will remain a full, active and constructive member of the G20," Ramaphosa said in a state of the nation address on Sunday.

He also described as "blatant misinformation" Trump's repeated claims that South Africa was committing "genocide against Afrikaners" - descendants of Dutch settlers - and confiscating land from white citizens.

Ramaphosa noted that despite the diplomatic rift, U.S. businesses and civil society groups engaged actively in G20-related events in Johannesburg in November.

"We value those constructive ties and will continue to work within the G20 framework," he said, signalling Pretoria's intention to maintain dialogue.

(Reuters)

Europeans rally round Ukraine as Trump envoy heads to Moscow

EUROPEAN leaders rallied to show support for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Monday after U.S.-Ukrainian talks to revise a peace proposal that initially favoured Russia, while Donald Trump's envoy headed to Moscow to brief the Kremlin.

Zelenskiy was warmly received by French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, and the two joined a call with about a dozen other European leaders including those of Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland and the EU.

"The war must end as soon as possible. Much now depends on the involvement of every leader," Zelenskiy posted on X. Macron posted a picture of himself and the Ukrainian leader striding in front of an honour guard at the Elysee Palace.

Earlier, Zelenskiy made clear that Ukrainian and U.S. negotiators had not yet fully hammered out revisions to a proposed U.S. peace plan, despite two rounds of talks to adjust terms that initially endorsed Russia's main wartime demands.

There were "some tough issues that still have to be worked through", Zelenskiy posted following Sunday's U.S.-Ukrainian talks, held at a Florida luxury golf resort built by Trump's envoy and fellow real estate magnate Steve Witkoff.

Witkoff left the talks to travel to Mos-



cow where he will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday.

CHANGES NOT MADE PUBLIC

U.S. and Ukrainian officials have yet to make public any amendments they have so far agreed to the 28-point plan which Washington presented to Kyiv less than two weeks ago.

Kyiv and its European allies have been pushing for revisions to terms, which called for Ukraine to give up more territory, curb the size of its army, renounce joining NATO and be barred from hosting Western troops. Ukraine says that would amount to capitulation, and leave it prone to eventual conquest by Russia, which invaded in 2014 and 2022. (Reuters)

Intaba Yase Dubai to headline Zhumiao Lounge show

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

SOUTH African music sensation Intaba Yase Dubai is gearing up to headline a major event at Zhumiao Lounge.

The highly anticipated 'Ultimate Pens Down' event is scheduled for December 6, 2025, kicking off at 3 pm and continuing late into the night.

The 'Ultimate Pens Down' event will not only showcase Intaba Yase Dubai but also feature prominent artists such as Ayanda Art, Stalin Matsitsa, Fanatic SA, Diba Diba, and Kidtro. These performers bring a rich diversity of sounds and styles, promising a dynamic musical experience.

The event's atmosphere will be further energised by a lineup of talented DJs, including DJ Litiya, DJ Mshayi, DJ Phara, and DJ Biggie, who will keep the beats flowing throughout the night. Entry to the event is priced at E70 for general admission and E200 for VIP access, offering fans options to enjoy the event according to their preferences.

Intaba Yase Dubai, born Lindokuhle Msomi, hails from Mthandeni in the KwaMaphumulo area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The 'Sbali' hitmaker has also worked with Eswatini star Lyrikal Busta on tracks like '365 Days' and the recently released 'Mtukulu.'

His journey to stardom is a story of perseverance and passion. After completing his

matric in 2012, he dedicated himself entirely to his music career, releasing numerous songs. However, widespread recognition eluded him until he was signed by Ambitious Entertainment. His breakthrough came with the smash hit 'Imali Eningi,' where he was featured alongside Big Zulu.

This track catapulted him into the national spotlight, transforming his career and making him one of the most talked-about musicians in South Africa. Intaba Yase Dubai's rise to fame was not without challenges. Before 'Imali Eningi' became a hit, he contemplated quitting music due to a lack of success. His collaboration with Big Zulu marked a turning point, validating his talent and persistence.



▲ Intaba Yase Dubai is gearing up to headline a major event at Zhumiao Lounge.

Theatre Club gears up for Performance Week

THEATRE enthusiasts have much to look forward to as the Theatre Club prepares to host its much-anticipated Performance Week from December 4 to 6, 2025.

Among the highlights of the week is the compelling play 'Prison Girls,' a production that delves deep into the lives of incarcerated women and the complex emotions they navigate behind bars.

Written by the talented Dzeli Mdluli and directed by Samukelo Lion Dlamini, 'Prison Girls' offers audiences a poignant glimpse into the human stories often hidden within prison walls.

In an exclusive interview, Dzeli Mdluli shared insights into the inspiration behind the play. "Prison Girls is designed to reveal the realities of prison life from the perspective of women who are serving sentences for various offences. It's not just about crime; it's about the human experience, the regrets, the friendships, and the personal reflections that shape their existence," she explained.

The narrative centres on four women, each with a unique backstory, brought together by their incarceration. As they confront their past decisions, the play explores themes of remorse and resilience, highlighting the emotional and psychological challenges faced by those behind bars. "These characters look back on their lives before imprisonment and question the choices that led them here. It's a story about understanding, forgiveness, and the hope for redemption," Dzeli added.

'Prison Girls' is one of several productions presented by the Divine Artist Theatre Group, known for their commitment to socially relevant storytelling and powerful performances. The play will open the Performance Week on Thursday, December 4, setting the tone for an engaging series of events. Tickets for 'Prison Girls' and other performances during the week are priced at E50 for adults and E30 for children under 16. They are available both online and at the theatre door, making it accessible for all who wish to experience this unique theatrical event.



▲ Prison Girls writer Dzeli Mdluli.

Campus Connect Eswatini unveils star-studded lineup



▲ Campus Connect Eswatini director K Master.

CAMPUS Connect Eswatini has officially announced the lineup of artists set to perform at this year's highly anticipated event.

The 2025 edition will showcase a diverse roster of talent including Zulu D, Young Zesh, Obsession, Sgitha, Lord F, BK, Lady Zee, Sbu De Drum DJ, Castle, and Leano, among others. Scheduled for Friday, December 5, 2025, at the De Lounge Bar and Restaurant, Campus Connect Eswatini 2025 aims to be a landmark occasion, drawing over a thousand university students, young professionals, and community members.

Beyond entertainment, the event carries a strong social mission: to support disadvantaged high school and self-sponsored university students across the country by raising funds for essential toiletries and hygiene products.

K Master, the event organiser and a respected figure in Eswatini's entertainment industry, shared the inspiration behind Campus Connect Eswatini. "Our primary goal with this event is to raise funds to provide essential toiletries for needy students who often face challenges accessing basic hygiene products," he explained. K Master emphasised that the event is designed to foster a spirit of community and social responsibility among young people, while offering

an engaging platform for entertainment and connection.

Ticket pricing has been structured to maximise accessibility. Pre-sale tickets are available for E100, VIP tickets for E450, and tickets at the gate will cost E150. "We want as many people as possible to join us, so we've structured ticket prices to be affordable while also offering VIP experiences for those who want to support the event at a higher level," K Master noted.

Although sponsorships are still being finalised, K Master expressed optimism about securing partners who share the vision of empowering youth and strengthening community ties. The proceeds from Campus Connect will be directly used to purchase toiletries and other essential items, addressing critical needs that affect students' education and well-being.

The event promises a dynamic program that blends entertainment, networking, music, stalls, and community outreach activities. "Campus Connect is about creating a space where young people can connect, be inspired, and contribute to social change. The community outreach and social impact initiatives are at the heart of what we do," K Master said.

BET Africa going off air in Jan 2026

AS confirmed by MultiChoice, “BET Africa” is officially shutting down on January 1, 2026, ending more than a decade of broadcasting on the continent.

To make sure fans don’t miss a single moment, the channel will air double episodes of its South African telenovela “Black Gold” from December 22 until the channel goes off air. The drama originally aired from Monday to Thursday at 6.30pm.

Launched in August, “Black Gold” quickly became a must-watch drama. The series, set in KwaZulu-Natal, follows themes of betrayal, family legacy and the fight for power. At its centre is Nomalanga Shozi as Amandla Zungu, a principled woman whose world is turned upside down by treachery.

She is joined by Saftas-winning actress Dawn Thandeka King as the cunning Florence Zungu and Sello Maake kaNcube as Tom Motsepe, a mining tycoon with a dangerous past. Other cast members include Warren Masemola, Sweet Guluva, Thulani Mtsweni and Nomsa Buthelezi.

Sources close to the production told “City Press” that filming for “Black Gold” recently wrapped up, and the accelerated double-episode schedule is designed to make sure every story beat is shown before BET Africa shuts down. The news reportedly came as a shock to the cast and crew, who did not expect contracts to end this early. “They had to stop shooting, so it’s a mess,” said the source.

The closure is reportedly part of a larger reshuffle by Paramount Global, which has been scaling back linear TV operations across Africa, Europe, and other regions to focus on streaming and global content.

As per reports, MultiChoice confirmed



▲ “BET Africa” is officially shutting down on January 1, 2026, ending more than a decade of broadcasting on the continent.

that BET Africa, along with MTV Base, will be discontinued on DStv from January 1 in a statement.

“MultiChoice can confirm that BET Africa and MTV Base will be discontinued on the DStv and GOtv platforms from 1 January 2026 at 9:00 CAT, following updates from our channel partner, Paramount.

“Our customers can continue to enjoy other international channels from Paramount, including Nickelodeon, NickToons, Nick Jr, Comedy Central, and MTV. We thank Paramount for their continued partnership and look forward to working with them on the remaining channel offerings,” MultiChoice said. BET Africa launched in April 2015 on DStv channel 129 and became known for a mix of reality shows, dramas, sitcoms and

movies.

Local productions such as “Queendom” and international hits like “Empire” helped the channel grow its reputation.

When “BET Africa” first launched, it also featured new seasons of hits like “Being Mary Jane” with Gabrielle Union and Kevin Hart’s spoof reality show “Real Husbands of Hollywood”, which had previously aired on BET International.

The channel also offered reality specials like “Nellyville”, starring the rapper Nelly, and talk shows including “The Real”, hosted by Grammy-nominated Tamar Braxton alongside Loni Love, Adrienne Bailon, Tamera Mowry-Housley, and Jeannie Mai, giving African audiences a mix of local and international programming. (IOL)



Black Coffee takes Nota Baloyi to court

WORLD-FAMOUS DJ and producer Nkosinathi “Black Coffee” Maphumulo has launched an urgent high court bid to silence controversial music executive Nhlamulo “Nota” Baloyi after a series of explosive social media posts that accused the star of associating with criminals, abuse, and shady financial dealings.

The Grammy-winning DJ, who recently revealed in his divorce case that he is worth more than R1-billion, wants the court to force Baloyi to delete all the posts immediately, order him to publish a full public apology worded exactly the way he wants, and declare the statements false and defamatory.

According to the court papers that this publication has seen, Black Coffee wants to make Baloyi pay legal costs on the harshest possible scale. The court document shows that Black Coffee first tried to get an emergency order without notifying Baloyi (an “ex parte” application). He has now come back with a second urgent application.

Baloyi, in his responding papers, accuses Black Coffee of using his money and fame to bully and intimidate ordinary people who dare criticise him. He said the application is not about defamation; it’s about muzzling public discourse on issues that affect society.

Right to freedom of expression

He insists everything he posted is either true or fair comment and is protected by the constitutional right to freedom of expression.

He also accuses Black Coffee of harassing his mother by contacting her directly in an attempt to pressure him, a conduct Baloyi calls intimidatory.

In a bold counterattack, Baloyi is asking the court to dismiss Black Coffee’s case and make the DJ pay punitive legal costs, order Black Coffee to pay R25 000 as compensation for the distress caused to Baloyi’s mother, and ban Black Coffee and his team from contacting Baloyi or his family except through official court channels.

Baloyi wants the matter postponed so Black Coffee can first hand over certain documents he believes will prove his allegations. In the court papers, he pointed out that Black Coffee waited weeks before bringing the urgent application, even though the posts had been online for some time. He argues that this shows there is no real urgency, saying Black Coffee is trying to harass and bankrupt him. (Sunday World)

Stogie T’s single unites Nasty C, A-Reece, ending years of rivalry

STOGIE T has brought together rivals Nasty C and A-Reece on the same song - without either knowing the other would feature.

This collaboration helped squash years of rumoured beef between two of South Africa’s biggest rap stars. Boitumelo Molekane, who is well known as Stogie T, has finally released his long-awaited song,

“The Horsemen.” The track features a lineup of hip-hop heavyweights: David Junior Ngcobo, better known as Nasty C; Lehlogonolo Ronald Mataboge, known professionally as A-Reece; and Gift Magubane Pimville, who goes by Maggz. Hip-hop fans have been anticipating this collaboration for months.

In a recent interview with YFM, Stogie T detailed how the collaboration came together and why he chose not to inform Nasty C and A-Reece that they would be appearing on the same song during the early stages of recording. In May, Nasty C confirmed an unreleased song with A-Reece, stating Stogie T hadn’t informed them of their shared feature. Nasty C texted A-Reece, saying, “I just did a song with Stogie T., I didn’t know you were gonna be on the song, but I’m still down to go ahead with this. Where are we at before we do that? Are we not f**king with each other or what?”

On the contrary, A-Reece was on the same page. “He was like, ‘Nah, dude, what? We’re good. We’re not beefing or whatever.’ He



▲ Stogie T has brought together rivals Nasty C and A-Reece on the same song - without either knowing the other would feature.

said he had no idea either.” Nasty and A-Reece have always tried to clear the air, but whenever one of them tries to do so, misunderstandings just get in their way.

The feud was evident when Nasty C invited A-Reece to the Blue Ivy tour, but A-Reece arrived late. Nasty C’s team allegedly denied A-Reece’s request to perform one song. Nasty C later stated in an interview that he refused the late arrival, saying, “This is my show, I am not gonna accept his disrespect,” suggesting it revealed A-Reece’s “real intentions.”

Nasty C attributes the perceived “beef”

with A-Reece largely to fans and a miscommunication between the two artists. He clarified the situation, saying, “I think that it’s just a friendly competition, you guys came over same time, who’s gonna do what first?” when asked about the origins of their rivalry.

“It was like that at first, and then obviously, fans find things, and they make things out and make it bigger than what it actually was. The whole thing just gets blown out of proportion, and then the lack of communication,” he concluded by saying, “There’s really nothing there.” (IOL)

DO your shoulders instantly tense up at the thought of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season?

Does your heart skip a beat when you think about spending the entire day with your extended family during the most wonderful time of the year? Does the thought of holiday overspending keep you up at night?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're not alone. Nearly 9 in 10 U.S. adults report experiencing stress during the holidays.

Before the holiday stress sneaks up on you, read on to learn how to enjoy your most stress-free holiday season yet.

1. Identify your triggers

Holiday stress is manageable, but first, you need to understand your personal triggers.

Do certain situations cause you to feel overwhelmed?

When you feel stressed, stop and try to consider what may be causing your anxiety. Once you understand your triggers, the other times can help you limit holiday stressors.

2. Plan ahead

Finding time for all of your holiday activities can be tricky. In addition to holiday commitments, you may also have to contend with increased traffic.

Or you may feel extra pressure to get ahead of work so you can take time off to travel.

Creating an action plan can help relieve stress.

Write down all the things you need to do so you can prioritize those that are most important. A list also makes it harder for things to slip your mind.

3. Put yourself first

The act of giving gets so much attention during the holidays, it can be easy to forget to give back to yourself.

Taking care of yourself can help make it easier for you to take care of others.

Set aside some time to do things you enjoy. Find time to exercise, plan a dinner out, or just get a few minutes of fresh air.

And don't forget the importance of a regular good night's sleep.

4. Keep your finances in check

If you're worried about spending and how it will affect you after the holidays are over, be realistic about what you can afford. The sentiment behind a gift is more important than the cost.

Create a budget and stick to it. Spend only what you can afford, and if you can't spend anything, bake a treat or offer your talents and time to your friends and loved ones.

5. Honor loved ones you have lost

It may be difficult to celebrate the holiday season if you've lost someone dear to you or distance makes it challenging to spend time together.

Spend this holiday season reflecting on special memories of lost loved ones. Consider doing something meaningful in their honor.

And if you're unable to spend time with loved ones, volunteer your time to a local organization where your smiling face could change someone's day.

6. Don't be afraid to say no

Understand that it's okay to say no. Try to

6 Tips for managing holiday stress



say "yes" to the events and things you know will bring you joy.

Say "no" to obligations you know will cause you heartache and disappointment.

If working a few extra hours of overtime will make you happy so you can treat someone you love, it may be worth doing.

But if your boundary-crossing relative invites you to a holiday party, feel free to decline.

You'll experience less stress and worry by saying no.

Symptoms to look for

Holiday stress looks much the same as regular day-to-day stress. It can affect the body in many different ways. Symptoms can include the following:

- anxiety
- sadness
- headaches
- body aches
- inability to sleep
- irritability

Should you see a doctor?

If you've tried the tips above and your mood hasn't improved or your symptoms continue well after the holidays, consider speaking with a mental health professional.

They can help you determine your biggest stressors and find ways to better cope with holiday stress.



▲ If you're worried about spending and how it will affect you after the holidays are over, be realistic about what you can afford. The sentiment behind a gift is more important than the cost.

Takeaway

When it comes to stress, it's important to listen to what your body and mind are telling you. If a situation is too stressful, ask

yourself why you feel the way you do and consider what you can do to better manage your stress.

By learning how to cope with day-to-day stress, you can be better prepared to tackle holiday stress. (Healthline)

Stella assures Piastri he can still be champion

OSCAR Piastri was robbed of victory in Qatar but the Australian can take hope from history in his bid to become Formula One champion next weekend, according to McLaren boss Andrea Stella.

The 24-year-old did everything right at the Lusail circuit, winning the Saturday sprint from pole position and leading Sunday's race from pole until a team strategy blunder left him having to settle for second to Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

The Australian said he was speechless with what had happened and McLaren were quick to apologise for a mistake that left him third overall and 16 points behind teammate Lando Norris, who finished fourth. Verstappen is second, 12 off the lead.

"Clearly Oscar was in control of the race and deserved to win it, and we lost the podium as well with Lando," Stella told reporters.

"Oscar, from a points point of view, is definitely in condition to win the title," added the Italian.

"We have seen before in the history of Formula One that when you have this kind of situation sometimes it's the third one that actually wins."

LESSONS FROM 2007 AND 2010 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Stella, who joined McLaren after years at Ferrari, spoke from personal experience.

In 2007 Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen won the championship after going into the final race third overall and behind McLaren's Fernando Alonso and a rookie Lewis Hamilton, who ended up level on points and missing out by one.

In 2010 Sebastian Vettel took the first of his four championships with



▲ Oscar Piastri.

Red Bull after going to Abu Dhabi in third place and behind teammate Mark Webber, now Piastri's manager, and Alonso who was by then at Ferrari.

McLaren have said they are well aware of the precedents but will not abandon the policy of treating their drivers as equals and Stella emphasised that Piastri will be free to race while he still has a chance of the title.

"We will let the drivers be in condition to race each other but above all what's important for us is that we are in condition to beat Verstappen with one of our two drivers," he

added.

"We want to be fair to our drivers, we want to race with integrity and we want to race in a way that doesn't surprise our drivers.

"So between now and Abu Dhabi there will be further conversations with Lando and Oscar. We will confirm our racing approach but certainly what I can say is that if any of the drivers is in condition to pursue the quest to win the title, then we will respect this."

(Supersport)

Cardoso stands firm on Sundowns' cautious approach

MAMELODI Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso has defended his cautious approach in last Friday's goalless CAF Champions League scrap against MC Alger. Despite securing a point away from home, Cardoso faced questions over his timid set-up at the Ali La Pointe Stadium, where the match failed to ignite.

Sundowns accused of lacking ambition

The tactical chess match drew criticism from sections of the Algerian media, who felt Sundowns lacked ambition. Cardoso, however, maintained that his side executed their plan correctly by prioritising balance over attacking football.

"I understand the question regarding going hard in attack and trying to win but this is a competition where if you get a point away, you take two points away from the opponent," he said.

"We knew that if we went with a lot of numbers upfront, we could suffer from that because this team is very dan-

gerous when they have spaces to use. So, not allowing spaces means attacking with balance which allows us to always manage the result of the game. On the other side, it's always interesting to see that people don't sometimes give credit because Alger defended very well.

"They had the capacity to cope with our offensive game and they closed the middle by not allowing the ball to go to some of our players who are very important and forced us to go on the outside. We didn't arrive in the box as many times as we wanted but it's also clear that MC Alger didn't enter ours in order to score."

Sundowns remain top of Group C on goal difference, level on four points with Al-Hilal, who claimed a 1-1 draw away to Saint-Éloi Lupopo on Sunday. Cardoso also emphasised the contrasting demands of the Champions League compared to their Betway Premiership matches.

'High quality players'

"This team (MC Alger) has high quality players upfront and any mistake can lead to a goal," he added.(The Citizen)



▲ Mamelodi Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso.

Red Bull regret suggesting Antonelli moved aside for Norris

RED Bull issued a statement of regret on Monday after senior team members made "incorrect" comments accusing Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli of moving aside for McLaren's Formula One leader Lando Norris at the Qatar Grand Prix.

Red Bull's 82-year-old motorsport consultant Helmut Marko told reporters after the race, won by Red Bull's Max Verstappen, that it was obvious Antonelli "more or less waved Lando by" for fourth place on the penultimate lap.

Verstappen's race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase also observed over the radio that Antonelli appeared to have made it easy.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff angrily accused his fellow-Austrian Marko of "total, utter nonsense" and Red Bull moved to calm the situation when it emerged Antonelli, 19, had faced social media abuse.

"Comments made before the end of and immediately after the Qatar GP suggesting that Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli had deliberately allowed Lando Norris to overtake him are clearly incorrect," the statement said.

"Replay footage shows Antonelli momentarily losing control of his car, thus allowing Norris to pass him.

"We sincerely regret that this has led to

Kimi receiving online abuse."

The overtake meant Norris, whose car has a Mercedes engine, goes to the final round in Abu Dhabi with a 12-point lead over Verstappen rather than 10.

Antonelli explained the incident as a mistake made in dirty air while following Carlos Sainz's Williams - also a Mercedes-powered car - and almost crashed.

"I was pushing hard to stay ahead of Norris in the closing stages and unfortunately just pushed a little bit too hard. I got out of shape through turn nine and then had a massive snap of oversteer," said the Italian rookie.

WOLFF SAYS ACCUSATION IS 'BRAINLESS'

Wolff ripped into Marko's comments after the race.

"We are fighting for P2 (2nd place) in the championship, which is important for us. Kimi is fighting for a potential P3," said the Austrian.

"I mean, how brainless can you be to even say something like this?," he exclaimed.

"And it annoys me because I'm annoyed with the race itself, how it went," added the boss. "And then hearing such nonsense blows my mind."

Wolff said he spoke to Lambiase and cleared the air, with the engineer explaining



▲ Toto Wolff.

he had not seen the situation.

"But why would we do this? Why would we even think about interfering in a driver championship? You really need to check yourself whether you are seeing ghosts," added Wolff.

McLaren have already won the constructors' championship for a second successive year and Mercedes are second overall, 33 points clear of Red Bull in third with a maximum 43 still to be won.(Supersport)

The Springboks were congratulated by Mr Mark Alexander, the President of SA Rugby, on Monday for an outstanding 2025 season, which included the successful defence of the Castle Lager Rugby Championship title, as well as a second successive unbeaten Castle Lager Outgoing Tour to Europe.

“On behalf of SA Rugby, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rassie Erasmus, Siya Kolisi, the Springbok coaches, management team and the entire squad for their outstanding performances over the past year,” said Mr Alexander.

“Your sacrifices, dedication and unwavering commitment have once again united our nation and inspired millions. The Springboks have not only delivered excellence on the field, but have also carried themselves with dignity and humility off it – serving as true ambassadors of South Africa.”

Mr Alexander lauded the Boks – who returned to South Africa from Europe on Monday after winning all five tests in November – for their resilience, discipline and teamwork.

“We salute the coaches, management and every player for the role you have played in strengthening the Springbok legacy,” he said.

“Your efforts have elevated South Africa’s standing on the global stage and reminded us all of the power of rugby and sport to bring people together.

“This not only defines our rugby heritage, but it’s a reminder that the Springbok jersey represents more than sport; it embodies unity, hope and the pride of our people.”



Springboks congratulated for outstanding 2025 season

Mr Alexander also thanked SA Rugby’s corporate partners and provincial unions for their support throughout the season, at the end of which the Boks finished the year as the top-ranked team in the world for a third successive season.

“Your unwavering support makes these successes possible,” he said.

“Equally, all of this can only work with the steadfast support of our member unions and their equity partners, whose commitment ensures the sustainability and strength of

South African rugby at every level.

“On behalf of SA Rugby and the people of South Africa, I express our deepest gratitude and pride. You have made history and you have made our nation proud.”

(Supersport)

Man City boss Guardiola uncertain over Rodri return

MANCHESTER City manager Pep Guardiola said Monday he was uncertain when Spain midfielder Rodri will be fit enough to return to action.

Rodri missed much of last season with a knee injury and has appeared just once – and then only for a minute – in City’s last 10 games due to a hamstring problem.

The 29-year-old has been ruled out of Tuesday’s Premier League trip to Fulham and is doubtful for the home clash with Sunderland on Saturday.

“No, not yet,” said Guardiola, when asked at a press conference on Monday that lasted just a few minutes, if Rodri was available.

Asked if he could feature at the weekend, Guardiola said: “I don’t know.”

Guardiola also spoke about goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, who was booked for a fourth time in his short City career in the last-gasp 3-2 win over Leeds on Saturday.

Leeds manager Daniel Farke also accused Donnarumma of feigning injury to allow Guardiola to deliver a key team talk. The Italian is now just one yellow card away from a suspension.

“Yes, he has a lot (of bookings), he has many,” said Guardiola. “It is what it is.”

Asked if he had spoken to Donnarumma about it, he said: “No.”

Guardiola was more willing to discuss the work of Fulham manager Marco Silva after their impressive 2-1 win away to Tottenham.

“Marco is many, many years there and always (when we) have been there – really, really tough games,



▲ Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola.

difficult,” said Guardiola.

“The organisation is exceptional and every year I have the feeling that with the ball, they are better and better. Tough, tough opponent.

“I saw the games yesterday and today, against Chelsea, against Arse-

nal, last games against Sunderland.

“Always it’s so, so difficult for the opponents to break them up. It has always been like that in this beautiful stadium (Craven Cottage) in London.”

(Supersport)

Frank pleads for Tottenham unity after Vicario jeers

THOMAS Frank has tried to build bridges with Tottenham supporters by insisting that the club are “nothing without the fans” ahead of Tuesday’s trip to Newcastle.

Frank’s time at the helm of Spurs suffered a setback with Saturday’s 2-1 loss at home to Fulham, where goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario was booed during the game following a hapless error that led to the winning goal.

There were more jeers during a defeat which meant that Spurs’ last Premier League win at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium occurred on the opening day of the season, with the north London club having won only three of their last 21 games at home.

After that loss, Frank criticised those supporters whom he said were “not true Tottenham fans”.

Frank, speaking ahead of the match away to Newcastle, said: “I completely understand the frustration. If we don’t win, there will always be a frustration, so that is normal.

“We are nothing without the fans. No club is anything without the fans. Tottenham Hotspur, we are nothing without our fantastic fans. Nothing. We need each other. There is nothing we want more than making them happy in every way.

“My point was during matches that’s where we need each other. After, fair with the booing, but during, that is when I want to create a fortress.”

He added: “If any club wants to be successful, you need to create a fortress. If you want to create a fortress, it can only be together. Fans, team.”

(Supersport)



▲ Thomas Frank.

Oyama stars miss Japan finals

By Chris Dlamini

IN their first real big international competition, Oyama Kyokushin Karate stars Nelly Gama and Mpendulo Maconga finished in the semi-finals. They could make it beyond that stage as they lost their fights. However, Gama still did well enough to finish at an overall position four in the open weight ladies division on Sunday. She had won to the semi-finals on Saturday along with male under-60kg fighter Mpendulo Maconga.

“Nelly got a remarkable fourth while Maconga was also within the top 8. For first-timers, this is a great achievement,” said Oyama Kyokushin Karate Eswatini (OKKE) Secretary Sensei Musa Ginindza.

He travelled with the duo to Japan last

week.

“I’m certain that the experience they got here will go a long way in shaping their careers and inspiring others that they can win big on the big stage. This was so close for them, particularly Nelly,” said Sensei Ginindza.

To attest that their performance was one to be commended, OKKE President Shihan Mfanafuthi Vilakati proudly posted on the OKKE Facebook page when Gama kicked her way to the semis on Saturday. Other karate stars also congratulated the duo for their achievement, which continued on Monday amid not making it to the finals.

Meanwhile, both Gama and Maconga are national champions. They also could not compete in this year’s STANLIB Oyama Champ of Champs early last month due to this international task. They could not be risked for injuries.



▲ Oyama national team Nelly Gama and Mpendulo Gama with some of the top officials in Japan.



▲ The Manzini sports lounge singles knockout tournament champion Zweli 'Siziba' Dlamini.

‘Siziba’ crowned MPC Pool Singles KO champ

By Chris Dlamini

HE is back.

Decorated pool star Zweli ‘Siziba’ Dlamini was on Sunday crowned the champion of the Manzini Pool Club (MPC) All-Night Singles Pool Knock-out Tournament.

After missing out on several titles, finishing as runner-up in some, the well decorated national team player put all his misfortunes behind him to snatch this title.

He was back at his element best over the weekend, eliminating his rivals with aplomb. To win the crown, he outsmarted Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Pool Club young star Khanyokuhle ‘PlayStation’ Simelane.

The duo faced off in what was a spectacular finale for the watching players and fans at the new MPC site. Dlamini won 7-4 to take

home the E4 000 grand prize. The runner-up made a collection of E3 000.

Dlamini, currently a registered and active player for Malkerns Pool Team, used to win such titles with ease a few years ago, outshining seasoned stars, some of whom were his mentors. Before winning the MPC title, he went past big names domestically and internationally, like Flag ‘Mjeka’ Nxumalo and Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane.

Simelane went past the seasoned Sandile ‘Ngula’ Gama and his own teammate Siyabonga ‘Siya’ Dlamini.

Winners and prizes:

1. Zweli ‘Siziba’ Dlamini - E4 000
2. Khanyokuhle ‘PlayStation’ Simelane - E2 000
3. Siyabonga ‘Siya’ Dlamini - E2 000
4. Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane - E1 000
5. Sandile ‘Ngula’ Gama - E500
6. Flag ‘Mjeka’ Nxumalo - E500
7. Voro - E500
8. Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane - E500



▲ Sandile Mamba in action at the Manzini Sports lounge.



▲ Players watching their players during the Manzini Sports lounge all night singles pool knockout tournament.

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We are passionate about food and excellent service

By Chris Dlamini

THE one thing surely predictable in the ongoing MTN Premier League is inconsistency, particularly in the big teams.

It is not just the ‘Big 3’ but other big guns like the Moneni Pirates and the security forces teams, being Young Buffaloes, Royal Leopard, and Green Mamba.

This is to the extent its also fair to say the minnows are having unprecedented dominion over the giants as inconsistency sweeps through them. Here’s how the weekend went...

AT THE SUMMIT:
Nsingizini Hotspurs - 1st (18 points)
- They have dislodged early pacesetters, Manzini Sea Birds, after edging them 1-0 in the top-of-the-table clash on Saturday at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium, in Nhlangano. They face their runners-up last season, Royal Leopard next as they aim to retain the summit. Leopard won 5-1 against Ubombo Sugar over the weekend, their first after four consecutive defeats.

CLOSER TO THE SUMMIT:
Manzini Sea Birds - 2nd (16 points)
Ezulwini United - 3rd (16 points)
- This is by far their best ever squad in the top flight. After over two seasons of building the brand, the Stingers are unbeaten and just stung army outfit Young Buffaloes with a 1-0 margin. Their log position speaks for itself - eight games and counting.

Rangers - 4th (15 points)
- After a slender 1-0 away victory to faltering giants Mbabane Highlanders on Sunday, their continued good run took them to the top four where they sit on fourth.

THE UPSETS:
Manzini Wanderers - 15 (5 points)
- The least said, the better, but still, it is worrying that a giant brand like Manzini Wanderers is moving backwards with a sea of internal challenges, all due to financial strain. They face more condemnation this week against Green Mamba.

Mbabane Highlanders - 10th (9 points)
- For the standards and goals they want to pursue, they just need to get a little bit of some quality players who are complete and experienced like their South African winger Siphwe Hopewell Cele is. A finisher, central midfielder, goalkeeper, and sort out their right back position, too. Otherwise, they have also just underperformed amid some impressive displays in some games.

Young Buffaloes - 6th (13 points)
- After a bad start, they bounced back and got crucial wins, even making it to the top four until after their 1-0 shock defeat to the only unbeaten side in the league after matchweek eight.

COACH (ES) OF THE WEEK:
Mthunzi ‘Lomphofu’ Ginindza (Rangers)
- A

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE 2025/26 REVIEW

Big stumble for ‘Big 3’

bittersweet reunion it was for him and Mbabane Highlanders as his troops scored a late winner to win earn their first-ever win against the capital city giants.

Musa Manyatsi (Ezulwini United)
- His team is the only unbeaten side in eight games. They continued their brilliant run on Sunday with a 1-0 stunner to a star-studded Young Buffaloes.

AT ROCK BOTTOM:
Sisonkhe FC (16th - 5 points)
They have collected two points since their win against Mbabane Highlanders. They just held inconsistent Mbabane Swallows 2-all, a good result for them as they need to get out of the relegation zone. The other point was from the 1-all draw with Rangers. Sisonkhe is level with Manzini Wanderers who are sitting on 15th.

THE GOALBANGERS:
Hleliso Gamedze (Rangers - 7 goals)
- He was tightly marked, and his team saw little of the ball amid the 1-0 win. He could not add to his tally.
(Tabankulu Celtics - 7 goals)
- They lost 2-0 to Green Mamba, so he remains level with Rangers’ Hleliso Gamedze.

THE FANS CORNER:
They came out again, first at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium in Nhlangano for the top-of-the-table clash between defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs, and Manzini Sea Birds. However, there was a good crowd in Mhlume and Simunye, but the latter ended in supporters clashing, which is not good for the game. The Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini was also reasonably attended as Mbabane Swallows and Moneni Pirates were involved.

MATCH WEEK 8 RESULTS:
T. Celtics 0-2 Green Mamba
U. Sugar 1-5 R. Leopard
Amawele 3-2 M. Wanderers
Ns. Hotspurs 1-0 M. Sea Birds
Sisonkhe 2-2 M. Swallows
M. Pirates 0-0 M. Chiefs
Ez. United 1-0 Y. Buffaloes
M. Highlanders 0-1 Rangers

MATCH WEEK 9 FIXTURES:
T. Celtics vs. Amawele
G. Mamba vs. M. Wanderers
Y. Buffaloes vs. M. Highlanders
Rangers vs. Ez. United
M. Chiefs vs. Sisonkhe
M. Pirates vs. M. Swallows
R. Leopard vs. Ns. Hotspurs
M. Sea Birds vs. U. Sugar



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs striker Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini.



▲ Rangers players celebrating their 1-0 win over Highlanders.



▲ A female Manzini Wanderers supporter had her joy shortlived by rookies Amawele on Saturday.



▲ Ezulwini United coach Musa Manyatsi.



▲ Ezulwini United players.

SPORTS TOURISM POWER:

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ARSENAL for a deal in Eswatini? Believe it or not, England’s Arsenal, renowned as The Gunners or ‘The Invincibles’, could possibly engage in a deal with Eswatini.

Behind it all is Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Maxwell Jele and businessman, Multipurpose Distributors Director and Moneni Pirates President Thulani Xaba.

In what can be viewed as an act of patriotism, the two have joined hands to promote sports tourism in the country. Jele and Xaba recently met with the Arsenal Marketing department on November 23, 2025, in London.

The meeting could yield a possible global partnership between the London giants and Eswatini.

This follows the phasing out of the partnership between Gunners and Rwanda, known as the Visit Rwanda deal, which is coming to an end of the current campaign.

When for comment, Jele confirmed these developments, mentioning that this was a private arrangement that they were exploring. He noted that these discussions are still at a preliminary stage but appreciated the conclusion of the initial meeting.

Jele also stated that such global partnerships have tremendous positive spillovers to stakeholders such as the Eswatini Tourism Authority, as they lead to the influx of tourists in the country.

The Arsenal Football Club is a profession-

EOCGA CEO, Moneni boss in UK Arsenal meet



▲ Behind it all is Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Maxwell Jele and businessman, Multipurpose Distributors Director and Moneni Pirates President Thulani Xaba.

al football club based in Islington, North London, England. They compete in the Premier League, the top tier of English football. In domestic football, Arsenal has won 13 league titles (including one unbeaten title), a record 14 FA Cups, 2 League Cups, 17 FA Community Shields and a Football League

Centenary Trophy. In European football, they have won one European Cup Winners’ Cup and one Inter-Cities Fairs Cup. In terms of trophies won, it is the third-most successful club in English football. Arsenal was the first club from southern England to join the Football League in 1893, officially joining the

First Division in 1904. Arsenal carries the longest active streak continuously in the top division (over 105 years and counting) & completed the 20th century with the highest average league position of any club.

Arsenal has won the second-most top-flight matches in English football history.

We need to maintain top spot – Qhogi

By Sibusiso Masilela
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NSINGIZINI Hotspurs wants to consolidate pole position in the MTN Premier League.

This was revealed by the defending champions’ head coach, Mandla Qhogi, following their 1-0 win over Manzini Sea Birds on Saturday.

This was during the top-of-the-table clash played at King Sobhuza II Stadium.

“I am happy with the result, and we came to the party despite the resistance from the opposition. We need to remain consistent at the top of the standings and keep our title hopes alive,”he said.

The South African mentor also welcomed the return of midfielder Bongiswa’ Pumba’ Dlamini from a long-term injury.

“We are pleased with the return of ‘Pumba,’ and his presence will give us more depth in the middle of the park,” he said.

Meanwhile, Sea Birds’ coach Friday Myeni commended his players’ performance despite the loss.

“I am happy with the performance of my team as we matched the opposition pound for pound. We will despair and continue fighting for the League title until the end of the season,”he said.

A Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini second-half strike helped the defending champions jump to the top spot with 18 points.



▲ Leopard goalscorer Junior Magagula.



▲ Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini.

Nsingizini’s E120k ‘carrot’ race faces Leopard test

By Chris Dlamini

THE stage is set for yet another tough weekend in the MTN Premier League. Exciting as the league is, fans have experienced it all - the joy, heart breaks, hopes, and promises.

From upsets to big top-of-the-table clashes, supporters look forward to seeing better results from their clubs once again amid stunners proving rife.

It is on to matchweek eight, and among the top fixtures is defending champions and leaders as of Saturday, Nsingizini Hotspurs, collide with last season’s runners-up Royal Leopard. The latter just got a timely win ahead of such a big clash following four consecutive defeats since returning from the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup sec-

ond preliminary stage. They beat Ubombo Sugar 5-1 on Saturday.

Other interesting ties involve struggling Manzini Wanderers and Green Mamba, Young Buffaloes against Mbabane Highlanders, while Mbabane Swallows had a date with Moneni Pirates. These are all matchweek nine fixtures, which will matter as the leading pack weighs in on the E120 000 first round leaders’ incentive.

However, the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) was yet to release the official fixture with kick-off and venue details.

Matchweek 9 fixture:

T. Celtios	vs.	Amawele
Y. Buffaloes	vs.	M. Highlanders
Rangers	vs.	Ez. United
M. Chiefs	vs.	Sisonkhe
M. Pirates	vs.	M. Swallows
R. Leopard	vs.	Ns. Hotspurs
M. Sea Birds	vs.	U. Suga



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs coach Mandla Qhogi.

**Guardiola
uncertain over
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**EOCGA CEO, Moneni
boss in UK Arsenal meet**

**... Maxwell Jele, Thulani Xaba mingle with
The Gunners for sports tourism.**

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