



Eswatini hosts 44th AAPAM Roundtable Conference

▲ His Majesty's representative, Prince Simelane, who also serves as Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, joined Minister for Public Service Mabalala Maseko, senior officials, and delegates of the 44th Association of African Public Administration (AAPAM) Roundtable Conference for a group picture. (More on Page 3)

27th Annual General Conference for ECF-SADC:

His Majesty calls for stronger electoral funding

● Regional cooperation continues to play an essential role in building a peaceful and industrialised community

By Delisa Magagula

HIS Majesty King Mswati III, represented by His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela, who is Minister for Natural Resources and Energy, has commended

Southern African Development Community structures for their continued efforts to strengthen democratic governance while urging member states to deepen their commitment to regional cooperation and support for electoral institutions.

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Stories by Delisa Magagula

HIS Majesty King Mswati III, represented by His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela, who is Minister for Natural Resources and Energy, has commended Southern African Development Community structures for their continued efforts to strengthen democratic governance while urging member states to deepen their commitment to regional cooperation and support for electoral institutions.

Speaking at the official opening of the 27th annual general conference of the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC countries held at Happy Valley Hotel in Ezulwini, the King welcomed delegates from the region and affirmed Eswatini's dedication to fostering political stability, peace and development.

He said the kingdom remains committed to the vision and mission of SADC, noting that regional cooperation continues to play an essential role in building a peaceful and industrialised community capable of delivering sustainable prosperity.

He added that Eswatini fully embraces the objectives of SADC Vision 2050, which seeks a region characterised by prosperity, freedom and inclusivity. The monarch highlighted that Eswatini has made progress by upholding its cultural values, unity and a system of governance rooted in respect and cohesion. He said these principles have guided efforts to strengthen peace and development for the benefit of the population. He further noted that this year marks 57 years since the country gained independence, a milestone that reflects the nation's continued journey toward economic and social transformation.

The King said the country's unique system of monarchical democracy remains central to its efforts to preserve peace and promote national interest. During his remarks, the King also reflected on Eswatini's involvement in regional peace and electoral processes. He emphasised the kingdom's participation in election observation missions, particularly its role as a member of the SADC Organ Troika and incoming chairperson.

"Eswatini had the honour of leading the SADC Election Observer Mission during Malawi's 2025 general elections. We commend the government and people of Malawi for conducting a peaceful and credible election, noting that observers from the mission recognised the orderly nature of the process," said His Majesty. He said elections should contribute to unity and nation-building rather than division, stressing the importance of a reliable legal framework and professional conduct by those involved in managing electoral processes. He stated that transparency, integrity and accountability remain central to ensuring elections reflect the will of the people. The King recognised the work of electoral commissions in



▲ Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu who was representing the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini making her remarks.

27th Annual General Conference for ECF-SADC: His Majesty calls for stronger electoral funding



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III's representative His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela addressing the conference.

safeguarding democratic processes across the region. He said electoral management bodies play a vital role in upholding legitimacy and facilitating the selection of governments chosen by citizens.

Responsibility

He noted that members of the Electoral Commissions Forum have a responsibility to maintain high standards of professionalism to preserve public confidence in electoral outcomes. He acknowledged the forum's strategic plan, which promotes independence, openness, accountability and accessibility. According to the King, these values form the foundation upon which electoral institutions must operate if they are to fulfil their mandate effectively. He said the region has made progress in institutionalising democratic governance through mechanisms developed to respond to the regional context.

He further cited the establishment of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council and the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries as key achievements that have helped shape electoral processes. He said these structures promote good practice, encourage sound electoral laws and assist in nurturing a culture of free and fair elections.

"This gathering will provide an opportunity for member states to reflect on regional progress and challenges, and to identify ways of strengthening institutions responsible for elections," said the King. He thanked member states for continuing to support



▼▲ A section of delegates following proceedings.



▲ President and Chairperson of CNE Angola Dr. Manuel Pereira da Silva.

the activities of the forum through financial and moral contributions. The King said such cooperation is critical in enabling the forum to carry out its mandate and to improve electoral systems in the region.



▲ ECF - SADC Executive Committee Chairperson, Boathouse Moepya.

... PM urges stronger electoral safeguards in digital era

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini, represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, has called for stronger electoral safeguards in Southern Africa as countries adopt new technologies in election administration.

Speaking at the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC countries in Ezulwini, the Prime Minister said election management bodies in the region must modernise operations while protecting the credibility of electoral processes.

He said countries are already experiencing the impact of new technologies on political participation and information access, noting that artificial intelligence is influencing how people receive information, form opinions and engage in public life.

He said the region cannot assume immunity from developments taking place elsewhere. According to the Prime Minister, the use of digital tools has clear benefits for election administrators. He said organisations,

including electoral commissions, need to adapt and harness new systems to improve operations.

He noted that the ability of technology to detect duplicate registrations, optimise logistics and prevent administrative errors is a major gain for election authorities working to manage large and complex processes.

Electoral functions

"The gains must be matched by measures to protect core electoral functions the electoral environment is volatile and requires constant vigilance, technology has already been used internationally to target key electoral components, including voter databases, results transmission systems and other government platforms," said the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister further said leaders have a responsibility to ensure their countries' regulatory frameworks support the adoption of new systems while maintaining transparency, preventing bias and protecting voter data.

He said information technology

institutions must be adequately supported with infrastructure, expertise and networks to strengthen their capacity. He also raised concern about misinformation and fabricated content circulating online.

"False information has spread faster than authorities could respond, leading to post-election unrest and loss of trust," he said.

In addition, he said regional authorities should accelerate their efforts to ensure that new technologies strengthen electoral processes. "We should accelerate our efforts in ensuring that AI protects our democracy rather than destabilise it," he said.

He noted that election security can no longer be limited to physical systems, saying election security now requires digital security, particularly because most advanced AI systems, including major chatbots and cloud computing resources, are hosted outside the continent.

He stressed that technology should complement rather than replace human decision-making.

King Opens AAPAM 44th Conference

... With call for agile, citizen-focused governance

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

HIS Majesty King Mswati III, through the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Prince Simelane officially opened the 44th AAPAM Roundtable Conference.

In his opening remarks, the King welcomed all delegates to the Kingdom of Eswatini, expressing deep appreciation that such an important platform for public sector excellence was being hosted on Eswatini soil.

He said the country was honoured to receive experts, practitioners, academics and policymakers committed to strengthening governance across Africa.

The King extended warm greetings on behalf of the Queen Mother, the Government and the people of Eswatini. He encouraged delegates to use the coming days to exchange knowledge that will drive African public sectors toward greater efficiency, transparency and accountability. He said the Kingdom values every effort that advances the excellence, integrity and innovation that AAPAM continues to promote across the continent.

Central to his address was the conference theme, "Agile Public Administration: Partnership and Digital Transformation for Citizen Centric Service Delivery." The King said the theme aligns strongly with Eswatini's long term development trajectory. He explained that the National Development Plan, the Nkwe Programme of Action and the Grand Plan for National Transformation all reinforce the country's commitment to a modern and responsive governance system.

According to the King, agility in the public sector is now a necessity rather than a choice. He said Eswatini has prioritised economic diversification, human development, robust institutions and innovation driven growth. The Nkwe Programme of Action calls for strengthened public systems and accelerated digital reforms, while the Grand Plan sets a national vision for a digitally en-



▲ AAPAM 44th Roundtable Conference delegates following proceedings.

abled society where services are accessible, transparent and centred on the needs of ordinary citizens.

The King explained that the conference speaks directly to the direction Eswatini has chosen. He said the country is committed to modernisation, collaboration and digital empowerment, and he urged delegates to ensure that their discussions culminate in clear strategies that benefit the people of Africa.

Turning to the unique governing system of Eswatini, the King spoke of the Tinkhundla system of monarchical democracy. He said the system blends modern governance with traditional values of buntfu, respect and unity. He reminded delegates that Eswatini places ordinary citizens at the centre of national decision making through the Sibaya People's Parliament, where emaSwati deliberate on issues that shape the future of the country.

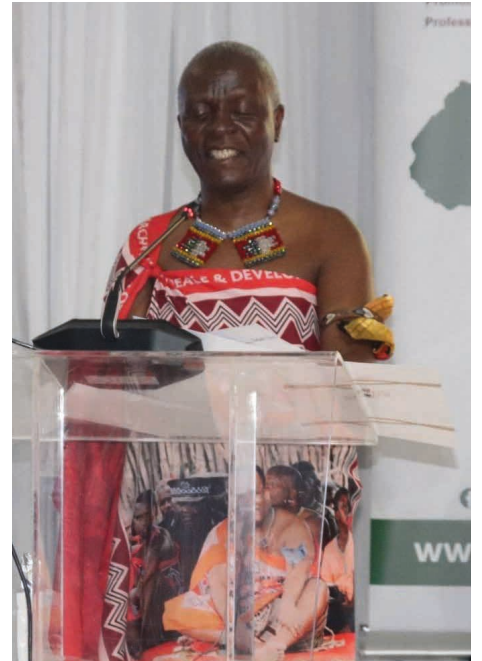
The King recalled that during the last Sibaya held in October and November 2023, emaSwati expressed strong expectations for improved service delivery, faster government processes, open opportunities for all and a public service that listens and responds. He said these voices continue to guide government reforms and must be honoured through practical action.

His Majesty further reminded delegates that public service excellence is a national priority. He said a high performing public sector fosters trust, attracts investment and improves quality of life. Excellence also strengthens national resilience and enhances economic competitiveness. Above all, he said, it affirms the principle that every liSwati deserves efficient, compassionate and timely service.

The King then highlighted major digital transformation initiatives being implemented across Eswatini. He pointed to the National Data Centre located at the Royal Science and Technology Park as a critical national asset that supports secure digital services and integrated data systems. He also noted the expansion of the National Broadband Network, which continues to improve connectivity across the country.

In the education sector, the Universal Access and Service Fund under the Eswatini Communications Commission has equipped schools with ICT laboratories and provided free internet access at selected Tinkhundla centres. These measures, the King said, ensure that young people are not left behind in the digital age.

The King also highlighted the Performance Management System which promotes accountability and measurable results across



▲ His Majesty's representative His Royal Highness Prince Simelane, who is also Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

ministries. He mentioned the development of the Government In Your Hand initiative, which aims to deliver public services through digital platforms for convenient access. He further pointed to the e procurement system, e customs, e taxation and the recently launched Business One Stop Shop as key initiatives enabling efficient business processes for investors and citizens.

In the health sector, the King said Eswatini is using technology to improve medical services. Digital tools now support the tracking of medicines, the management of laboratory results, emergency services and treatment dispensing. He emphasised that digital transformation is not a slogan but a practical reality that improves the daily lives of citizens.

His Majesty asserted that Eswatini is also investing in digital skills development to prepare young people for emerging opportunities in the global economy. He described these initiatives as building blocks for an agile and capable public administration that can respond to the needs of the present and future.

MINISTER for Public Service Mabulala Maseko has called on African governments to reimagine their public service systems by embracing digital transformation, strengthening partnerships and ensuring that all reforms are centred on the needs of citizens.

Minister Maseko said the conference theme, Agile Public Administration, Partnership and Digital Transformation for Citizen Centric Service Delivery, mirrors Eswatini's national direction as articulated in the National Development Plan, the Nkwe Programme of Action and the Grand Plan for national transformation.

He said these national frameworks guide Eswatini toward a modern and inclusive public service capable of supporting long term economic growth.

He said African governments face rising demands from populations that are more informed, mobile and digitally connected. Minister Maseko said this reality requires governments to think differently about efficiency, transparency and responsiveness. In his view, an agile public administration is no longer optional but essential for countries that seek meaningful development outcomes.

The Minister emphasised that the voice

... Minister calls for Africa to reinvent public services



▲ Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko (left) doing 'kugiya' with His Majesty's representative His Royal Highness Prince Simelane (2nd from left) and other senior officials during the conference.

of the people remains central in shaping Eswatini's governance strategy. Referring to the Sibaya People's Parliament, he said emaSwati called for improved service delivery, faster government processes, trans-

parent decisions and greater access to opportunities. He said these mandates from the nation continue to inform government reforms. Maseko further explained that the Tinkhundla system of governance encourag-

es consultation and the inclusion of citizens at every stage of national decision making. He said it reflects a balance between cultural values and modern administrative practice. He added that the Tinkhundla philosophy strengthens national unity and reinforces the principle of service to the people.

Turning to ongoing progress, the Minister highlighted several transformative digital initiatives under way in Eswatini. He mentioned the National Data Centre at the Royal Science and Technology Park as the backbone of the country's digital infrastructure. He said the facility supports secure data management and integrated digital services across ministries.

The Minister added that the expansion of the National Broadband Network continues to enhance connectivity across rural and urban communities. He noted that digital literacy is being strengthened through ICT laboratories provided to schools by the Eswatini Communications Commission. He said that free internet services at Tinkhundla centres ensure that citizens can access technology and information at community level.

Princess Lindiwe represents Eswatini at Tusk Conservation Awards in London

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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HER Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe, the Minister for Home Affairs for the Kingdom of Eswatini graced the Tusk Conservation Awards in London as a distinguished Guest of Honour.

This annual event, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, is dedicated to celebrating exceptional leaders whose efforts are pivotal in safeguarding Africa’s wildlife and natural heritage. The Ministry of Home Affairs of Eswatini confirmed the Princess’s attendance, emphasising the significance of her role at this global conservation gathering.

The statement from the Ministry highlighted that Princess Lindiwe’s participation “reflects Eswatini’s enduring commitment to wildlife protection and its recognition of the vital work being carried out across the continent.” Her presence at the awards not only showcased Eswatini’s dedication to conservation but also marked a strategic move in enhancing the Kingdom’s international profile. At the ceremony, Princess Lindiwe engaged with a diverse group of

influential figures in conservation and international public life. Among those she met were Ronnie Wood, famed guitarist of the Rolling Stones; Baroness Patricia Scotland, a prominent legal figure; Richard Griffiths, an international lawyer associated with SpaceX and global engagement initiatives; and Chris Levine, a renowned artist. These interactions underscore the event’s role as a nexus for cross-sector collaboration, blending conservation efforts with cultural, legal, and technological expertise.

The Ministry’s statement further expressed gratitude to Tusk and its partners for their role in spotlighting the remarkable achievements of Africa’s conservation community. It acknowledged the importance of the awards in fostering awareness and support for wildlife protection, while also appreciating the opportunity for Princess Lindiwe to represent Eswatini on such a significant international platform.

Princess Lindiwe’s attendance at the Tusk Conservation Awards signals a broader diplomatic and cultural mission. As the Ministry noted, her involvement “underscores her growing role in strengthening the international image of the Kingdom of Eswatini, representing the nation at major global gatherings and advancing partnerships in



▲ Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe, the Minister for Home Affairs in the Kingdom of Eswatini with Ronnie Wood of The Rolling Stones during the Tusk Conservation Awards.

conservation and cultural diplomacy.”

This, according to the statement, reflects a strategic effort by Eswatini to position itself

as an active player in global environmental stewardship and to leverage such platforms for fostering international cooperation.

Deputy Senate President backs bill to modernise Eswatini’s laws

By Delisa Magagula

DEPUTY Senate President Ndumiso Mdluli says the proposed Law Reform and Development Bill is critical because it allows Eswatini’s legal system to adapt to a changing society and its evolving needs, challenges and values.

He said ongoing reforms would ensure that out-dated laws are corrected and penalties reflect current realities.

Mdluli made the remarks on Monday in Parliament during debate on the Bill, which seeks to establish a permanent Law Reform Committee to assess and modernise legislation.

He said new situations and challenges had emerged that existing laws did not adequately address, resulting in penalties that are no longer proportionate to offences.

He cited current fines imposed by magistrates’ courts as an example of how the system had failed to keep up with modern criminal activity.

The Bill, which has passed committee stage, is intended to create a multi-disciplinary body responsible for reviewing old laws, identifying contradictions and recommending amendments.

Meanwhile legislators said the committee would fix long-standing gaps where penalties for serious crimes remain low.

Mdluli highlighted the mismatch between crimes and sanctions under existing laws, saying offences involving high financial losses often attract minimal fines that do not deter offenders.

He said current laws inadvertently create conditions that encourage criminal behaviour by imposing sanctions far below the harm caused to victims.

Other senators supported the Bill, saying the country’s legal framework had fallen behind the severity of present-day offences,



particularly those emerging in households and communities.

They argued that penalties rooted in older statutes had failed to prevent misconduct or provide adequate protection.

Some members said the age of laws still in force, including those written in legal English, made them difficult for ordinary citizens to understand. Calls were made for translations into siSwati as part of the reform process.

The creation of the Law Reform Committee was described by several senators as essential for a fast-changing society. They said the current system suffers long delays because ministries and drafters take years to update legislation, leaving gaps that undermine justice.

Senator Lizzie Nkosi noted that traditional leaders had long sought a mechanism to harmonise legislation with local needs and said the inclusion of chiefs in the committee would help align reforms with the Tinkhundla system.

During the second reading of the Bill, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Prince Simelane, said the reforms would modernise outdated legislation and contribute to stability and economic development.

He said contradictory laws would be reviewed, and the committee would determine which statutes remain relevant and which require amendment.

Mdluli said the Bill would restore dignity



▲ Deputy Senate President Ndumiso Mdluli.

to the justice system and ensure laws align with the Constitution and contemporary governance practices.

He welcomed the establishment of a committee composed of experienced individuals and asked how allowances for committee members would be managed and when the work would commence.

Simelane said allowances would be guided by government circulars but he could not provide specific figures.

He said the previous law reform body established in 1981 was ineffective because it was not legally constituted, and the new committee would operate with full legal authority. The Bill was referred to the ministry’s portfolio committee for further consideration.

Nothando Hlophe, Velemseni and others for Mbabane Day

By Sibusiso Masilela
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FOUR top local artists are lined up for performances at the 2025 Mbabane Day.

The artists include Nothando Hlophe, Velemseni, Sandz, and Two Billion to mention a few on December 6, 2025 at the Coronation park.

This was revealed by the Mbabane Municipal Council Chief Executive Officer, Gciniwe Fakudze, who was in the company of Mayor Thulani Mkhontfo on Tuesday.

Fakudze said they are looking forward to the event. “We are inviting residents of Mbabane to join us on Saturday during the family day. We will be having multiple activities, such as music performances from some of the top local artists. We will also have food stalls where people can try different recipes while enjoying themselves with their families,” she said.

Fakudze further revealed that the entrance fee for the event will be free.

“There will be no entrance for members of the public, but they will gain free entry and enjoy the beautiful experience of the city. We will be having a giant screen where football lovers can watch their favourite local teams while enjoying a great time with their respective families such as kiddies games and other social activities. We will wrap proceedings of the event with a movie,” she said.

The CEO further revealed that the event will be attended by their international partners from Matola and Mbombela.

“We will be having our international partners on the day, and we will be hosting other games such as boxing and golf to accommodate our citizens. We will ensure that the safety of our guests remains a top priority by providing security. The proceedings will start at 9am, and we hope the weather will be favourable on the day,” she said.

Joint Road Safety Operation Launched As Festive Season Approaches

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service has joined forces with the Cross Border Road Transport Agency of South Africa, the Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund and the Eswatini Road Safety Council to launch an intensive two day road safety operation aimed at reducing traffic congestion and strengthening awareness among motorists.

The operation forms part of the national Transport Month activities led by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Each November, the ministry designates the month as a period to focus on transport safety, compliance and public education. This year, authorities say the joint initiative comes at a critical time as the country heads into the busy festive period when road crashes traditionally increase.

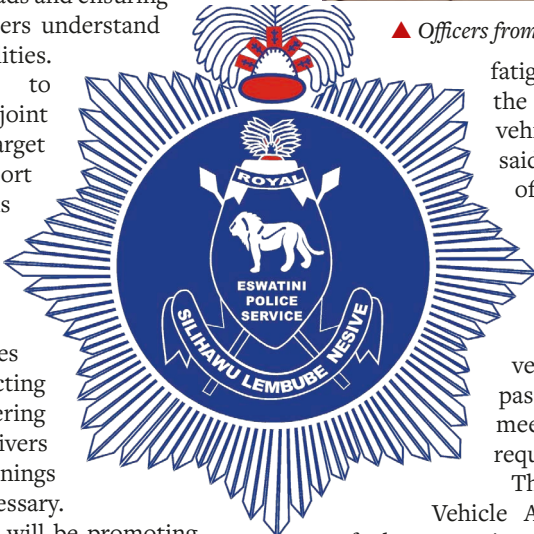
The statement announcing the operation was issued by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni. She explained that the collaboration reflects a shared commitment to protecting lives on the country's roads and ensuring that all road users understand their responsibilities.

According to Mnguni, the joint effort will target key transport corridors, bus ranks and border routes. Police and partner agencies will be conducting inspections, offering guidance to drivers and issuing warnings where necessary. The main focus will be promoting responsible behaviour behind the wheel and ensuring that transport operators comply with safety regulations.

Mnguni noted that many lives are lost each year due to avoidable mistakes such as speeding, reckless overtaking,



▲ Officers from the SAPS and REPS at work together.



fatigue, driving under the influence and poor vehicle maintenance. She said law enforcement officers will be paying attention to these issues throughout the operation. She added that the team will also be monitoring vehicles transporting passengers to ensure they meet roadworthiness requirements.

The Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund is part of the operation to educate motorists on claims processes and to highlight the human and financial cost of road crashes. MVA Fund officials say educating road users during Transport Month remains essential to reducing the number of families

affected by accidents. The Cross Border Road Transport Agency, which regulates and monitors international transport between Eswatini and South Africa, is participating to strengthen cooperation at points of entry.

The Eswatini Road Safety Council is using the operation to intensify its annual awareness campaign. Officials from the council will distribute safety materials, engage commuters and remind communities about basic precautions such as wearing seat belts, avoiding overloaded vehicles and respecting road signs. The council says education must be continuous, especially because the behaviour of one irresponsible driver can endanger dozens of people.

Mnguni said the partnership allows the country to pool resources and expertise. She emphasised that while the operation will only run for two days, the message is meant to last throughout the festive season and beyond. She encouraged motorists to

cooperate with officers and to welcome the initiative as a reminder of their duty to safeguard their own lives and those of other road users.

Traffic officers will also be engaging with public transport operators to reinforce the importance of maintaining their vehicles. Brake failures, worn tyres and faulty lights continue to contribute to serious accidents. Mnguni said officers will insist on proper documentation, valid licences and adherence to capacity limits.

The police further urged parents and guardians to ensure the safety of children travelling in public transport during the school holidays. Mnguni warned that overcrowded kombis and poorly maintained buses pose serious risks. She said the operation seeks to remind transport operators that passengers trust them with their lives every day.

Female 'Facata' wanted by the Police

NAWE ULIPHOYISA!

The Royal Eswatini Police Service has issued a public notice regarding an individual wanted for theft by false pretenses.

The suspect, identified as Mamba Thandeka, is a thirty-three-year-old female from Mangwaneni in Mbabane. The police are actively seeking assistance from the community to locate her.

Reportedly, Mamba Thandeka has been implicated in fraudulent activities that have significantly affected several individuals and businesses.

The nature of these crimes involves deceiving victims into relinquishing their property or money under false pretenses. Such acts not only harm those directly affected but also undermine the trust that is essential for community cohesion.

The police highlight the importance of vigilance and community involvement in

tackling crime. The cooperation of the public is essential for the successful apprehension of individuals who engage in criminal activities. Citizens are encouraged to remain observant and report any suspicious behaviour to the authorities.

Anyone with information regarding Mamba Thandeka's whereabouts is urged to reach out to the authorities. Senior Superintendent Thabo Hlophe from Manzini RCBO can be contacted at 7606 8570.

Additionally, individuals can reach out to Officer Inspector Madlopha at 7603 2658 for further guidance. The police have emphasized the importance of community tips and the value they can provide in ongoing investigations.



▲ Thandeka Mamba who is wanted for theft by false pretenses.

16 Days of Activism 2025: End digital violence against all women and girls



LIDLELANTFONGENI
ENPF

From 25 November to 10 December

At Lidlelantfongeni, we stand firm in our belief that violence in any form, be it physical, emotional, digital or otherwise, has no place in our homes workplaces, and communities.

While the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** shine a global spotlight on this crisis, our commitment extends far beyond the campaign period. It is a responsibility we carry throughout the year, as an institution that belongs to the people of Eswatini and exists to protect their dignity and future.

As technology becomes woven into daily life, so too do new risks. This year's focus on digital safety echoes our own journey as ENPF continues to evolve, digitise and modernise. We are strengthening systems, empowering members with knowledge, and promoting safe digital practices. We do this because protection must extend to every space where our members, and all people live, work and connect.

I call on every individual, organisation and leader to stand up, speak out, and take action. Support those at risk. Report abuse. Challenge harmful behaviour online and offline. Let us turn awareness into sustained action and build an Eswatini where no one lives in fear.

ENPF remains unwavering in its year-round commitment to dignity, safety, equality and the wellbeing of every iSwati. Together, let us be the generation that ends violence and not just discusses it.

- ENPF CEO Futhi Tembe



BUSINESS BRIEFS

SA's unemployment rate dips to 31.9%

JOHANNESBURG - South Africa's unemployment rate dipped to 31.9% in the third quarter of 2025. But Statistics South Africa says the story is now bigger than that headline number. From this quarter, Statistics South Africa has changed the way it measures the world of work – and it says the new approach gives “a more complete picture of people's connection to the labour market”.

IOL

How US-South Africa relations could reshape the economy

JOHANNESBURG - Following Donald Trump's snubbing of the 2025 G20 Summit in Johannesburg, the US President has barred South Africa from attending the 2026 G20 in Miami and has also halted all US aid to the country. Behind this are misinformed accusations of a white genocide and controversial land reform policies, but South Africa's alignment with US adversaries such as Russia, China and Iran is believed to be another major point of consternation. IOL

Bitcoin falls again after weak November

NEW YORK/LONDON - Bitcoin slumped on Monday, with the world's largest cryptocurrency down about 6% and on track for its biggest daily percentage fall since early November, as risk aversion drove investors out of digital and other assets. Bitcoin was last down 6% at \$85,788 and earlier fell as much as 8% to \$83,879.01.

Reuters



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	



EEC allocates E201 million to improve reliability

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) allocated E201 million in the 2024/25 financial year to improve transmission reliability and overall system performance, according to its latest annual report.

The spending, which is up from E195 million in the previous year, reflects a continued push to reduce technical losses, upgrade infrastructure and ensure operational stability across the national grid. The report indicates that the utility channelled the funds into transmission operations, system control and maintenance of critical infrastructure. According to the report, the investment forms part of efforts to stabilise the network, improve power quality and reduce the cost of unplanned outages, which have historically affected business confidence and operational planning. Despite the increased allocation toward infrastructure, the company faced materialised operational and financial risks that threatened long-term sustainability. Key headwinds included constrained working capital, safety incidents, and limited tariff adjustments, which affected its ability to fully recover operational costs. The company continues to navigate a challenging regulatory environment while attempting to maintain the financial viability of the power system.

“Despite the higher cost base, line efficiency improved, most notably in energy losses. Transmission energy losses stood at 5.18 per cent, a significant improvement from 9.96 per cent previously,” read the report.

The report further reported reducing energy losses is a priority for utilities because it directly impacts revenue retention, operational expenditure, and system reliability. A reversal of losses at this magnitude suggests improved network engineering, maintenance scheduling, and investment in grid optimisation.

“Voltage stability reached 96 per cent, demonstrating improvement in system performance, though still below levels typically associated with regional best practice. Sustained stability is critical to industrial users, who rely on predictable power quality for manufacturing operations and equipment safety,” further reads the report. While EEC has faced criticism from commercial customers in previous years, improvements in voltage stability may strengthen business confidence in the utility's technical capability.

The financial year was marked by a strategic shift in risk governance. The audit function continued to support risk reviews and reporting to the Board through the Audit and Risk Committee. To embed integrated risk management across divisions, the organisation initiated a Company-wide change management programme, introducing divisional risk champions to drive reporting discipline



▲ Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) Managing Director Ernest Mkhonta.

and accountability.

The initiative was based on Kotter's Change Model, a structured approach used in corporate change processes. The model emphasises organisational culture, behavioural alignment, and leadership endorsement – all critical factors in companies undergoing structural transformation.

In February 2025, EEC appointed a Risk Specialist to lead enterprise-wide risk management, working closely with divisional risk champions.

The appointment centralises oversight and signals a longer-term strategy to formalise risk governance. Internal audit remains the third line of defence and will participate in combined assurance reporting, aligning EEC with established corporate governance frameworks.

Although the company reported no significant shift in the overall risk profile from the previous year, several risks shifted from theoretical exposure to actual events. The most serious was loss of life, mainly linked to unsafe operations. Fatalities in utility operations are often the result of compromised safety standards, inadequate training, ageing infrastructure, or insufficient enforcement of safety protocols.

Safety

In addition to human tragedy, workplace incidents increase insurance exposure, erode public trust, and weaken morale across the workforce. EEC's acknowledgment of these incidents indicates a need for intensified investment in occupational safety, especially as infrastructure development accelerates.

The utility also reported insufficient working capital, driven by delays in tariff adjustments and constraints on cost-reflective pricing. A moratorium imposed by

government limited tariff awards granted by the national regulator, while public pressure around affordability resulted in tariff approvals below EEC's applications. These decisions eased pressure for households but strained the utility's ability to recover operational costs. EEC highlighted that the regulator awarded far fewer tariff increases than requested, underscoring the widening gap between cost-recovery requirements and actual revenue.

Across the region, utilities face similar challenges as governments balance economic hardship with rising energy generation and transmission costs. For EEC, this has resulted in capital shortages and delayed infrastructure expansion. Meanwhile EEC is working to address the impact of the tariff imbalance, though the report does not specify what measures will be taken. Utilities traditionally respond to capital shortfalls through operational cost reduction, debt restructuring, or greater emphasis on commercial customer segments, but each carries trade-offs. Management has acknowledged risks to sustainability, stressing the need for operational improvements and stronger financial resilience.

In the context of regional energy transition, EEC must balance immediate infrastructure demands with shifting power generation models, rising costs of imported electricity, and demand growth.

Reducing system losses and improving voltage stability are important steps towards future-proofing operations. These efficiencies create value by reducing wastage, increasing reliability, and strengthening the business case for investment. However, without cost-reflective tariffs, savings alone cannot fund long-term capital expansion.

By Delisa Magagula

Eswatini Artisans featured on global homo faber guide



▲ Seventeen artisans and creative enterprises from Eswatini have been profiled on the global platform, which showcases exceptional craftsmanship from around the world.

ESWATINI’S creative sector has marked a significant milestone with the launch of the country’s first chapter on the internationally recognised Homo Faber Guide.

The initiative is collaboration between the European Union, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Michelangelo Foundation.

Seventeen artisans and creative enterprises from Eswatini have been profiled on the global platform, which showcases exceptional craftsmanship from around the world.

The featured artisans include Siyaphambili Cooperative, Indzaba Yami, Madwa, Swazi Candles, Ngwenya Glass, Coral Stephens, Baobab Batik, Tintsaba, Khokho, Quazi Design, Luju Ceramics, JeremPaul, Antonio Langa, Mantsholo Creations, Mnqobi Mnisi, Welcome Mashaba and Favourite Design.

EU Ambassador Karsten Mecklenburg described the launch as an important step in promoting and recognising the creativity and skills of Emaswati artisans.

“This milestone is a significant step forward in developing, showcasing and celebrating the creativity of Emaswati, and highlights the crucial role skilled artisans can play in driving economic growth and

sustainability,” he said.

Representing the Michelangelo Foundation, Andrea Tomasi said the 17 profiles marked the beginning of a larger expansion of Eswatini’s presence on the platform.

“An additional 40 artisans will be added in 2026 and 2027,” he noted.

Meanwhile, artisans welcomed the exposure and potential growth opportunities. Bafanabethu Gina of Favourite Design said she looked forward to the new prospects

that the platform would bring.

“I am excited to be part of the Homo Faber Guide. I am particularly excited for the opportunities that are going to come with it and look forward to engaging with the various programs within the guide to grow my craft and creativity,” she said.

Philippa Thorne also expressed appreciation for the collaboration and the opportunities expected to arise from the initiative.

The Homo Faber Guide now hosts the first

group of Eswatini artisans, available through the platform’s official website. More artisan profiles will be uploaded progressively throughout 2026 and 2027.

This initiative is part of the ‘Eswatini: Promoting Growth Through Competitive Alliances’ programme, implemented by ITC in partnership with the EU and the Government of Eswatini. The programme supports small-scale farmers, entrepreneurs and artisans in export-led economic growth

Eswatini Mobile launches ‘win a red christmas trolley’

By EDN Reporter

ESWATINI Mobile is buzzing with festive energy as it launches a new customer-focused campaign, “Win A Red Christmas Trolley”, delivering joy to homes across the country. The campaign offers active Eswatini Mobile

customers a chance to win a fully stocked trolley worth E2,000 at no extra cost, turning Christmas shopping into a celebration.

This initiative aims to ease the season’s financial pressures and help families begin January with extra sparkle as Eswatini Mobile stands ready to share in the festive cheer.

The Red Christmas Trolley valued at up to E2,000 will be rolled out at Pick n Pay, Embiveni, Shoprite and SPAR outlets. The

promotion will run from December 1 to December 31, 2025, with lucky winners selected randomly at the participating retail stores across all four regions of the country. To qualify, participants must be found to be 18 years or older, active on the network and have their SIM card with them at the pay point. The promotion applies only during the official Eswatini Mobile announced times.

Eswatini Mobile Head of Commercial, Nosipho Xaba, said the initiative is a deliberate effort to support emaSwati during tough economic times, particularly as families juggle festive spending and the high-pressure back-to-school season.

“This campaign is our practical response to His Majesty King Mswati III’s call to elevate poverty. As Eswatini Mobile, we recognise the real pressures faced by families during December and even more in January when school fees, uniforms, and groceries compete for space in already strained budgets,” she said.

“Our vision is to be Africa’s Leading Integrated Business Partner, and we firmly believe that this cannot be achieved without the people we serve. The Red

DECEMBER 2025 WIN A RED TROLLEY CALENDAR DATES, TIME & LOCATIONS						
MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Christmas Trolley campaign is our way of giving back and ensuring that our customers feel supported during a time that is traditionally financially demanding.”

The promotion reflects the company’s continued commitment to aligning its commercial objectives with national priorities, particularly in improving the quality of life for citizens. Throughout December, Eswatini Mobile teams will visit selected Embiveni, Pick n Pay, Shoprite and SPAR stores where shoppers will be surprised with trolley giveaways on the spot, adding a festive spirit and an element of excitement to the shopping experience.

According to Xaba, with rising inflation and the cost of living continuing to place pressure on households, Eswatini Mobile’s campaign is expected to resonate with many families seeking relief. By centering the promotion around everyday essentials, the company positions itself as a partner that understands the socio-economic realities faced by consumers.

The Win a Red Xmas Trolley campaign not only enhances brand visibility but also reinforces Eswatini Mobile’s commitment to customer welfare, demonstrating that beyond connectivity, the company values the broader well-being of its subscribers.

As the festive season approaches, emaSwati can look forward to a December filled with surprises, support, and a little extra cheer courtesy of their Affordable Network.



▲ Eswatini Mobile Head of Commercial Nosipho Xaba.



eswatini
MOBILE
Your Affordable Network

Win A Red Christmas Trolley!

This festive season, your shopping could be on us! Visit selected superstores **this December** and stand a chance to have your groceries paid for, up to **E2,000**.

Heres How to win:

- Be at the store at the announced time.
- A random till number is drawn.
- Make sure you have an active SIM card with you and it's in your phone.

Shop, smile, and celebrate with us this Christmas.



WIN A RED CHRISTMAS TROLLEY

LET'S PAY YOUR BILL!

Terms and Conditions Apply.
For more information dial 980 or visit any Eswatini Mobile Experience Centre.

www.eswatini-mobile.co.sz

Prada completes Versace takeover

MILAN - Prada said on Tuesday it had completed the acquisition of smaller Italian rival Versace, a brand the luxury group said it had long coveted.

Prada signed a definitive agreement in April to buy Versace from U.S.-based Capri Holdings for about 1.3 billion euros (\$1.51 billion), after Capri's sale to Tapestry was scrapped in the wake of a challenge by anti-trust regulators.

Lorenzo Bertelli, the son of Prada owners Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli, told Reuters in November that he will become executive chairman of Versace once the integration is complete. He said that Prada had been keen on a deal for several years. "There had already been contacts during the COVID period, there were talks even before Capri's sale to Tapestry. When that deal fell through over antitrust issues, we came back and tried to speed things up," Lorenzo Bertelli said.



"It was something that had been in the works for a long time," he added.

Founded in 1978 by Gianni Versace in Milan, the brand renowned for its bold, glamorous aesthetic will join the group's two main labels - its namesake Prada and the smaller but fast growing Miu Miu - marking a sharp strategic shift for the Italian fashion house.

Bertelli, who strongly pushed for the acquisition, said Versace met two key conditions: that it was not too risky financially and that it was worth it, given the brand ranks among the world's leaders in terms of awareness. In March, a few weeks before the deal with Prada was announced, Donatella Versace stepped down as creative chief after almost three decades in the role.

Warner Bros Discovery gets mostly cash offer from Netflix

WARNER Bros Discovery has received a second round of bids, including a mostly cash offer from Netflix in an auction that could conclude in the coming days or weeks, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Monday.

Bankers for Paramount Skydance Com and Netflix worked over the weekend on improved offers for all or part of Warner Bros, the source added.

The bids are binding, giving the board scope to approve a deal quickly if terms are met, though they have not been described as final, the person said.

Netflix and Warner Bros Discovery declined to comment. Bloomberg News first reported the development. Last week, Warner Bros asked bidders to submit improved offers by December 1 after receiving preliminary buyout bids from Paramount Skydance, Comcast and Netflix.

Reuters exclusively reported that Warner Bros Discovery's board had rejected Paramount's mostly cash offer of nearly \$24 a share for the company, valuing it at \$60 billion, and publicly announced it would evaluate strategic options for the studio. The parent of HBO and CNN in October said it was exploring its options for sale.

Any potential deal involving Warner Bros Discovery would further consolidate the media industry after the \$8.4 billion merger of Skydance Media and Paramount Global, which capped a drawn-out process marked by political scrutiny and shareholder concerns.

The studio behind the "Harry Potter" and DC Comics film franchises announced plans in June to split into studio-centric and cable-focused units by next year to separate its growing streaming business from its lagging cable network unit.

(Reuters)

PIC backs gas strategy to anchor South Africa's energy transition

SOUTH Africa's energy transition gained a significant boost this week after the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) approved a landmark strategy on natural gas. The decision, announced on November 27, signals a major investment push into gas infrastructure, power generation, industrial supply, and regional co-operation at a time when South Africa faces both an energy security crisis and a looming "gas supply cliff".

The PIC says the strategy aligns with the National Development Plan 2030, the Gas Masterplan, and the Integrated Resource Plan 2025. It allows the state-owned asset manager to invest both directly and indirectly in midstream and downstream gas projects, assessed on a risk-adjusted basis.

At its core, the strategy aims to stabilise the energy system while creating space for renewables to scale, arguing that gas offers the flexibility and dispatchability South Africa currently lacks. Five pillars of the plan

The plan is built around five pillars, each critical to economic and industrial stability.

The first is gas infrastructure investment, from pipelines to LNG import terminals, which the PIC describes as foundational to developing a functioning gas market.

The second focuses on converting existing open-cycle gas turbines at Ankerlig and Gourikwa from diesel to gas, while also supporting a proposed 3 000MW gas-to-power plant in Richards Bay, a project considered central to stabilising the grid.

A third and urgent component is the need to avert South Africa's industrial gas supply cliff.

Several large manufacturers, chemical producers, and mining-linked industries rely heavily on gas as feedstock or fuel, while many face supply disruptions as legacy contracts and sources decline. The PIC warns that failure to secure a new supply could impact thousands of jobs and weaken key sectors of the economy.

The fourth pillar highlights regional cooperation with gas-rich neighbours such as Mozambique and Namibia. Cross-border collaboration is essential, the PIC says, not only to secure supply but also to position Southern Africa as an integrated gas and industrial hub.

The final pillar expands gas use beyond power generation into the chemicals and fuels value chain, including ammonia, urea, methanol, and synthetic diesel.

For sectors like agriculture and mining, this could support improved reliability and new downstream investment opportunities.

Proponents argue that natural gas could cut emissions relative to diesel and coal while enabling greater uptake of renewables by providing flexible backup power.

The PIC notes that gas-to-power infrastructure can "unlock broader opportunities for developing renewable energy", particularly when combined with storage and grid modernisation.

(Sunday World)



SA economy rises by 0.5% in GDP in the third quarter

South Africa's economy has seen a 0.5% rise in gross domestic product (GDP) in the third quarter, between July and September.

Statistics SA (StatsSA) revealed that nine out of 10 industries on the production side of the economy recording positive results.

Mining and quarrying

Mining and quarrying were the strongest performers, growing by 2.3%. The increase was mainly driven by platinum group metals. And it is supported by manganese ore, coal, chromium ore and copper.

Although iron ore, diamonds, nickel and gold declined, these drops were not enough to pull the sector down.

"Agriculture carried over its positive momentum, recording its fourth consecutive increase. The 1.1% rise in the third quarter was underpinned by stronger production of field crops, horticulture and animal products. "The trade, catering and accommodation industry also registered its fourth consecutive quarter of growth. Positive gains were recorded across the board, with stronger wholesale trade, retail trade, motor trade, accommodation and food & beverages," reads the statement.

Construction managed to return to positive territory after three quarters of decline. The sector recorded a small rise of 0.1%. This is linked to growth in non-residential buildings and construction works.

Electricity, gas, water sectors decline

The only industry to shrink was electricity, gas and water, which fell by 2.5%. StatsSA said the decline was caused by lower electricity production and usage. Water consumption was also weak. General government activity increased. This was supported



▲ Minister of Finance for South Africa Enoch Godongwana.

by higher employment in national and provincial government, as well as extra-budgetary institutions. Transport, storage and communication grew by 0.5%. This was lifted by a rise in air transport, communication services and transport support activities.

On the expenditure side, the economy was supported by household consumption, stronger fixed investment, higher exports and an increase in government spending.

Household consumption

Household consumption rose for the sixth quarter in a row, increasing by 0.7%. Transport was the biggest driver, mainly because of a rise in new vehicle sales. Spending on clothing and footwear, as well as miscellaneous goods and services, declined.

Gross fixed capital formation grew by 1.6% after three quarterly declines. The improvement was largely due to higher investment in transport equipment. Increased spending on ICT equipment and software in the "other assets" category also made a strong contribution.

Exports grew by 0.7%, lifted mostly by vegetable products and mineral products. Imports rose by 2.2%, influenced by higher trade in machinery and electrical equipment. Also in mineral products, textiles and textile articles, and animal and vegetable fats and oils. (Sunday World)

Apple to resist India order to preload state-run app as political outcry builds

APPLE does not plan to comply with a mandate to preload its smartphones with a state-owned cyber safety app and will convey its concerns to New Delhi, three sources said, after the government's move sparked surveillance concerns and a political uproar.

The Indian government has confidentially ordered companies including Apple, Samsung and Xiaomi to preload their phones with an app called Sanchar Saathi, or Communication Partner, within 90 days. The app is intended to track stolen phones, block them and prevent them from being misused.

The government also wants manufacturers to ensure that the app is not disabled. And for devices already in the supply chain, manufacturers should push the app to phones via software updates, Reuters was first to report on Monday.

India's telecom ministry confirmed the move later, describing it as a security measure to combat "serious endangerment" of cyber security. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political opponents and privacy advocates criticized the move, saying it is a way for the government to gain access to India's 730 million smartphones.

In the wake of the criticism, India's telecom minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia on Tuesday said the app was a "voluntary and democratic system," adding that users can choose to activate it and can "easily delete it from their phone at any time."

At present, the app can be deleted



▲ A person holds an Apple iPhone at the company's first retail store in Bengaluru, India.

by users. Scindia did not comment on or clarify the November 28 confidential directive that ordered smartphone makers to start preloading it and ensure "its functionalities are not disabled or restricted."

Apple however does not plan to comply with the directive and will tell the government it does not follow such mandates anywhere in the world as they raise a host of privacy and security issues for the company's iOS ecosystem, said two of the industry sources who are familiar with Apple's concerns. They declined to be named publicly as the company's strategy is private.

"Its not only like taking a sledgehammer, this is like a double-barrel gun," said the first source.

Apple and the telecom ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

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.

"BIG BROTHER CANNOT WATCH US"

The order caused a furore both inside and outside Parliament on Tuesday, with a number of lawmakers accusing the government of introducing an app that would act as a snooping tool. Rahul Gandhi of India's main opposition Congress Party said he planned to speak about the app in Parliament.

The Congress Party has called for a rollback of the mandate. On X, KC Venugopal, a top Congress leader, said "Big Brother cannot watch us."

The Modi government's press release said the app can help tackle incidents of duplicated or spoofed IMEI numbers, which enable scams and network misuse. (Reuters)

Fearing AI job losses, some young workers in Britain shift towards skilled trades

IN a labour market where artificial intelligence is quickly transforming and sometimes replacing jobs, student Maryna Yaroshenko wanted to find a future-proof career that offered long-term stability.

Like a growing number of young people in Britain and beyond, 18-year-old Yaroshenko opted for a skilled trade and is now training to become a plumber.

"That's something AI won't take over," said Yaroshenko, who is originally from Ukraine and is studying at the City of Westminster College (CWC) in London.

White-collar jobs are viewed as more vulnerable to disruption by AI and automation than manual labour. In Britain, one in six employers expect the use of AI tools to allow them to reduce their headcount in the next 12 months, according to a survey last month conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, a professional human resources body.

Yaroshenko sees AI as a useful tool, but not one that could replace the hands-on nature of plumbing, which many shy away from due to its physical demands and a lingering stigma around trades such as electrici-



▲ Plumbing students work together during a plumbing class at City of Westminster College, Paddington, in London, Britain.

cal work, carpentry, and welding.

"We will definitely work with it (AI) but only a human can make those unique things AI cannot," she said. "No AI can do plumbing, no AI can do real engineering, no AI can be an electrician."

DEMAND FOR HANDS-ON COURSES GROWING

CWC, part of the United Colleges Group, is a further education and training institution rather than a university. Over the past three years, it has seen enrolments in its engineering, construction and built environment courses rise by 9.6%, a jump CEO Stephen Davis attributes

partly to the growth of AI and also to student worries about the cost of university.

Some young people are opting against university to avoid the thousands of pounds of debt it can entail.

A survey of 2,600 adults carried out in August by the Trades Union Congress, the country's biggest union umbrella, found that half of UK adults were worried about AI's impact on their jobs, with those aged 25 to 35 particularly concerned.

(Reuters)

Samsung unveils first multi-folding phone as competition set to heat up

SAMSUNG Electronics unveiled on Tuesday its first multi-folding smartphone, in a bid to strengthen its position in a sector of the phone market where competition is expected to intensify.

The launch of the Galaxy Z TriFold marks Samsung's bid to reinforce its footing in a segment where Chinese rivals have been gaining ground, even as analysts say the high price and production challenges mean foldable devices are likely to remain a niche category for now.

The model, priced at about 3.59 million won (\$2,440.17), unfolds into a 253.1 millimetre (10-inch) display, using three panels and it is nearly 25% larger than Samsung's latest foldable Galaxy Z Fold 7 model.

"I believe the foldable market will continue to grow, and the TriFold in particular could act as a catalyst that drives more explosive growth in key parts of the segment," said Alex Lim, Samsung Electronics Executive Vice President and head of the Korea Sales & Marketing Office.

Lim said the new foldable device is intended for customers who specifically want it, rather than as a volume driver.

The TriFold, produced in South Korea, will go on sale domestically on December 12 and be rolled out in China, Singapore, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates within this year. The U.S. launch is expected as early as the first quarter of next year.

The device features Samsung's largest battery in its flagship models and supports super-fast charging that powers the phone to 50% in 30 minutes.

Lim said memory chips and other component costs have been rising sharply, making pricing a "difficult decision".

COMPETITION FROM HUAWEI, APPLE

Analysts said the TriFold is more likely to be a showcase of the new technology rather than a volume-driving flagship.

"The trifold is a first-generation product, and it's the first time a trifold design is being commercialised, so it's hard to see Samsung pushing large volumes at this stage," said Ryu Young-ho, a senior analyst at NH Investment & Securities.

He noted that while Samsung's Galaxy Z Fold line has matured over seven generations with lower cost structures, "the trifold could still face issues around completeness or durability," making it important to assess how the market responds first.

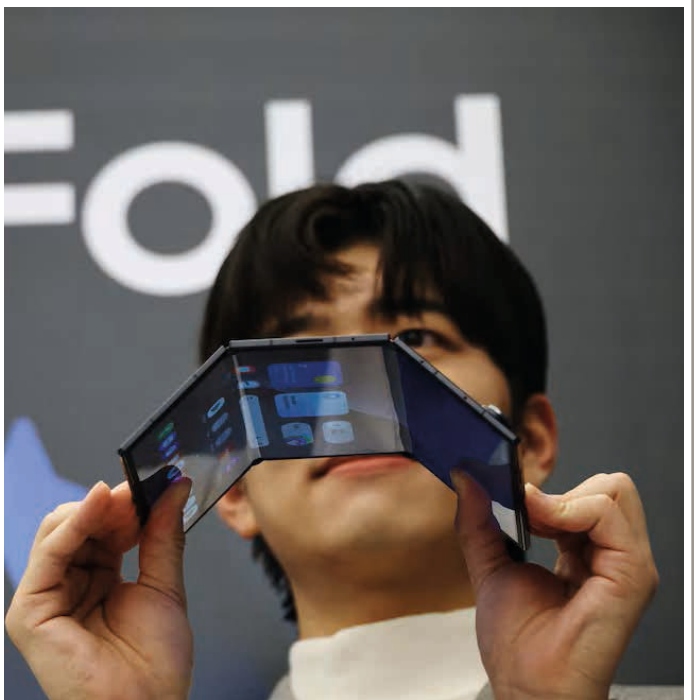
Competition in the foldable smartphone market is set to heat up, with China's Huawei launching the industry's first three-way folding phone last September and Apple AAPL.O expected to release its first foldable next year. Still, analysts say high prices and limits to mass production are likely to hold back the sector.

Foldable phones are expected to account for less than 2% of the total smartphone market this year and will make up under 3% by 2027, according to Counterpoint Research.

Samsung's shipment share of the foldable market jumped to 64% in the third quarter, up from 9% in the previous quarter, Counterpoint said, illustrating how market share can whipsaw depending on the timing of product launches.

The firm forecasts the foldable smartphone market will grow 14% this year, followed by annual growth in the 30% range in 2026 and 2027 as Apple looks set to enter the segment.

(Reuters)



▲ A model poses for photographs with a Galaxy Z TriFold during an event at its store in Seoul, South Korea.

MILK is milk, right? Not quite. Not all animals produce milk with the same kinds of nutrients.

In fact, certain important nutrients in A2 milk are different on a fundamental, structural level.

The primary protein in milk is known as -casein. This protein comes in two forms: A1 and A2, each of which includes a different amino acid in its structure. Traditional dairy cows produce milk that contains both A1 and A2 casein. Recently, though, specially bred cows that only produce A2 casein have hit the mainstream.

This protein difference may have serious effects on digestive health. Many people have lactose intolerance, a condition where the body does not produce lactase, the enzyme that breaks down lactose. However, recent studies have shown that other components in milk may cause digestive discomfort.

Nutrition Information

A one-cup serving of A2 2% milk contains:

- ▶ Calories: 120
- ▶ Protein: 8 grams
- ▶ Fat: 5 grams
- ▶ Carbohydrates: 12 grams
- ▶ Fiber: 0 grams
- ▶ Sugar: 12 grams

A2 milk is good in protein, which is an important building block in everything from muscle tissue to skin and blood.

A2 milk is also a source of:

- ▶ Vitamin A
- ▶ Vitamin D
- ▶ Vitamin B12
- ▶ Calcium
- ▶ Thiamin
- ▶ Riboflavin
- ▶ Potassium

It also contains omega-3 fatty acids. These are polyunsaturated fats that your body needs in order to function well. The consumption of omega-3 fatty acids has been linked to lower triglyceride levels, reducing the risk of heart disease or stroke.

Potential Health Benefits of A2 Milk

Milk is best known for its abundance of calcium, which helps the body grow and repair bones. It also helps prevent and treat osteoporosis, or the weakening of bones. You can find calcium in many effective treatments for acid reflux, too.

Here are some additional health benefits of A2 milk:

▶ It could help keep your blood pressure healthy. High blood pressure is often caused by elevated triglyceride and cholesterol levels. By consuming more omega-3 fatty acids like the ones in A2 milk, you can potentially lower your cholesterol levels. The potassium present in A2 milk benefits your blood pressure, as well.

▶ It could help your mood. Vitamin D plays a key role in mood disorders like seasonal affective disorder (SAD). By consuming foods rich in vitamin D — like A2 milk— people living with SAD may see a reduction in symptoms.

▶ It could strengthen your immune system. Vitamin A is important to keep your defenses strong and it's found most frequently in animal products like A2 milk. Consuming more vitamin A improves the response and regulation of immune system

cells.

▶ It could help your eyes stay healthy. Vitamin A helps maintain your retinas and your corneas. The vitamin A in A2 milk may help keep your eyes working well. Drinking milk regularly as part of a balanced diet may help your body prevent cataracts and keep your vision sharp.

Potential Risks of A2 Milk

If you have a diagnosed milk allergy, A2 milk is not a healthy alternative, and you should avoid it. In fact, if you have it, you could have the same symptoms -- including the potential for life-threatening anaphylaxis -- that you would if you were to drink "regular" milk.

If a doctor has told you that you are lactose intolerant, it's unlikely that you'll feel any better after drinking A2 milk. That's because it contains just as much lactose as milk which has both the A1 and A2 proteins.

If you're not sure if you're lactose intolerant, but you don't feel well after having milk, trying A2 milk may help. If you can tolerate it, it's possible that you have sensitivity or intolerance to the A1 casein protein.

Healthier Alternatives

If you're lactose intolerant, lactose-free milk may be a better choice for you than A2 milk. Like "regular" milk and A2 milk, lactose-free milk has all the nutritional benefits of "regular milk," just without the lactose. **WebMD**

What is A2 milk?



Difference between A1 and A2 milk

A2 Milk


From Gir Cows

A2 Beta-Casein Protin

Easy Digestion

No BCM7 Release

No Health Concerns



VS

A1 Milk


From Jersey Cows

A1 Beta-Casein Protin

Hard Digestion

BCM7 Release

Health Concerns



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI is making significant strides in creating platforms that enable people living with disability to showcase their creative talents, fostering a culture of inclusivity and empowerment.

Recent milestones highlight the nation's commitment to breaking down barriers and promoting equal opportunities for all artists, regardless of physical or sensory challenges.

A notable example of this progress was witnessed last week when acclaimed musician Msweli was honored with the Honorary Artist Award at the National Gospel Music Awards, which symbolises the growing acknowledgment of artists with disabilities within mainstream cultural events.

In a historic development during the 2025 Umhlanga Reed Dance ceremony, Eswatini took a groundbreaking step by including maidens with disabilities for the first time. This inclusion was widely praised for challenging longstanding cultural norms and promoting a message of unity and pride. The initiative involved 35 participants with diverse disabilities.

Supported by UNFPA in Eswatini and partners such as the Deputy Prime Minister's Office Eswatini, Khulisa Umntfwana, and the Family Life Association of Eswatini, this year's Umhlanga celebration extended beyond the dance itself to embody the principle of leaving no one behind.

The organizers ensured comprehensive support, including transportation, traditional attire, and sun protection, to facilitate full participation and comfort for all maidens involved. This move has been hailed as a powerful statement of cultural inclusivity, inspiring other traditional events to follow suit. Including young people with disabilities also reinforces the objectives of the Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme, which advocates equality, dignity, and empowerment for across Southern Africa.

Further reinforcing Eswatini's commitment to disability inclusion in the arts, the inaugural Disability Music and Arts Festival was held on September 27, 2025, at The Luke Commission auditorium in Sidvokodvo. This pioneering festival brought together a vibrant and diverse group of artists living with disabilities from across the country. The event showcased a rich tapestry of creative expressions, including music, poetry, dance, drama, painting, fashion design, and storytelling.

Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, addressing the festival, emphasized that the event transcended entertainment. He highlighted its alignment with Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Eswatini aligns with global push as... Artists living with disability recognised ... National Gospel Music Awards rewards Msweli with Honorary Disability Award



▲ Gogo Shongwe performing during the National Gospel Awards.



▲ Khaya Tfwala also performed during the Disability Music and Arts Festival.



▲ Philmon Gama was a marvel to watch during the awards.



▲ People living with disabilities had an opportunity to express themselves fully at the past Umhlanga ceremony.

... Inclusion drive mirrors global success models for disabled artists

ESWATINI'S efforts resonate with global trends where many countries have established robust frameworks to support artists with disabilities.

European nations such as Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands have developed specialized programs and organizations, often supported by European Union co-funded

initiatives like Europe Beyond Access. These programs focus on providing resources, training, and platforms to disabled artists, fostering their professional growth and visibility. Similarly, countries like Canada and Nordic nations, including Finland, have implemented national organizations and public funding mechanisms dedicated to enhancing inclusivity in the arts sector.



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla at the inaugural Disability Music and Arts Festival.



More from National Gospel Awards '25



▲ National Gospel Music Awards Best Newcomer of The Year, Hlobie Shongwe performing during the event.



▲ Voice Of The Church receiving the Best Gospel RadioTV Program Award.



▲ Khaya Dlamini accepting his award for Best Tenor.



▲ Nelly Siwela with Best Female Artist Award and Nothando Hlophe who scooped three awards pose for the lens.



▲ Gospel artist Shekinah Motsa posing with her award.



▲ National Gospel Music Awards Best Soprano winner Nontsikelelo Magongo making her remarks.

Fashion and faces



▲ Gold carpet hosts Lerato and Mncobi Tsabedze dressed to the nines.

Lethumusa Simelane joins ‘Mfowethu uGrend?’ Camp

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

LETHUMUSA Simelane, a respected senior archivist and historian at the Eswatini National Archives and Records Service (ENARS), has recently been announced as a participant in the upcoming ‘Mfowethu uGrend?’ camp, a unique, men-only initiative dedicated to confronting and addressing mental health challenges among men.

This transformative event, hosted by the Gogo & S’lwane Care Foundation, is scheduled to take place from December 19 to 21, 2025, at Malolotja Nature Reserve. The ‘Mfowethu uGrend?’ camp is spearheaded by popular comedians and social media influencers Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane, who have leveraged their widespread appeal and digital presence to create a safe and supportive environment for men to discuss mental health issues openly, topics often shrouded in stigma and silence. The duo first captured national attention with their viral “Lugodvo Kimi” trend on TikTok but have since expanded their influence beyond entertainment to champion a cause that strikes at the heart of community well-being and social stability.

Joining Lethumusa Simelane in this initiative is a distinguished lineup of panellists and speakers, including moderator Mfundo “Ndosh” Simelane, as well as Mtera Thwala, Clement Dlamini, Malungelo Mamba, and Dumsani “Njobo” Mamba. Together, these individuals bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives that promise to enrich the camp’s discussions and workshops. Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane will serve as hosts, guiding participants through the program’s sessions with empathy and insight.



▲ Senior Archivist Lethumusa Simelane.

The philosophical foundation of ‘Mfowethu uGrend?’ is powerful and forward-looking. Healing men today is essential for the health, prosperity, and stability of future generations. Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane have carefully crafted this camp as a sanctuary where men can confront their struggles without fear of judgment or stigma, recognising the urgent need to address escalating mental health crises among men in Eswatini and beyond.

Motivation

S’lwane articulated the motivation behind the camp with stark clarity, pointing to the alarming signs visible in everyday life. “We looked within ourselves, searched within our own families and communities. We read newspapers, saw it on TV and heard about it on the radio. Worse, even our social media

timelines are littered with it, from the attempted suicides to the completed ones, to the sexual and gender-based violence. The red flags are all over us, unmistakable. The crisis that is men’s mental ill-health is one we feel we can no longer ignore.”

Echoing this urgency, Gogo Eswatini emphasised the responsibility that comes with their public platform. “At some point, one feels like their influence is pointless if it is not fully leveraged to help better the lives of the people who make us what we are as influencers or public figures. Particularly, in such a troubled world as ours lately, every other weekend we are either burying a friend or a relative due to suicide, or we are reading in the papers that Man X has butchered Woman X, which to us will always be troubling.”

!Sooks gains continental recognition with Billboard Africa feature

LOCAL electronic music sensation Sukoluhle Dlamini, professionally known as !Sooks, has earned a prestigious spot on the Billboard Africa list, celebrated as one of the continent’s best acts.

!Sooks recently opened for the iconic Berlin-based collective, Keinemusikcrue, during their South African weekender, which included shows in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Taking to Instagram !Sooks expressed heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity, writing, “What a privilege to have opened for the incredible Keinemusikcrue in Cape Town. Big love to them and everyone who pulled through to celebrate with us.”

Born and raised in Eswatini, !Sooks has steadily built a reputation as one of Southern Africa’s premier electronic music talents. His dynamic sound and engaging performances have taken him across continents, including tours in the Netherlands, where he shared stages with notable artists such as Kid Fonque, Vinniy Da Vinci, DJ Christos, and Fk Mash. His recent inclusion on the Deep House South Africa playlist on Spotify further cements his status as a key figure in the genre.

In addition to his international tours, !Sooks has been a standout performer at South Africa’s renowned Rocking the Daisies Festival. Having delivered a memorable set at the event, he secured a booking for the 2023 edition, marking his second

appearance at the eco-conscious festival. Rocking the Daisies, which began five years ago, is celebrated for its commitment to environmental sustainability, promoting the motto “party hard, tread lightly.”

Beyond live performances, !Sooks is also an influential curator, spearheading the Unleash The Wolf events series. The upcoming edition, scheduled for this Saturday at Oryx Restaurant in Ezulwini, promises to be a highlight of the local music calendar. This year’s event will feature the legendary UK producer Jimpster, a revered figure in the Deep House known for his groove-heavy, soulfully textured soundscapes.

!Sooks’ collaborative spirit extends into studio projects as well. South African DJ and producer Chymamusique recently featured him on the new album ‘Musique Collaborated.’ The track “Oiled Machine,” which also

includes Deep House powerhouse Glen Lewis, showcases !Sooks’ versatility and ability to blend seamlessly with other top-tier artists. The album is now available on digital platforms, providing fans with easy access to this exciting collaboration.



◀ !Sooks.



▲ Young Zesh.

Young Zesh to ignite Mzansi Biggest Braai Festival

ESWATINI’S music star Young Zesh is poised to deliver an electrifying performance at the inaugural Mzansi Biggest Braai Festival, scheduled for November 28 to 30, 2025.

Set against the backdrop of Karoo 62 in Ladismith, South Africa, The Mzansi Biggest Braai Festival is a cultural extravaganza that celebrates the rich tapestry of African heritage under the unifying banner of #AfricaToTheWorld. The festival aims to blend the soulful rhythms of South Africa with the diverse sounds and traditions of the entire continent, creating an immersive experience that honours African identity and creativity.

Young Zesh expressed heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to perform at such a prestigious event. “I’m honoured to be blessing Mzansi Biggest Braai Festival. Such shows align with my brand. I promise an A-star performance,” he said. Notably, the event will also feature local DJ ItsAllBlaq.

The festival’s centrepiece is the Main Stage, which will feature powerhouse performances from Africa’s top musical talents alongside international acts. This stage is designed to keep the energy soaring from day into night, offering attendees a rich and diverse musical journey that showcases the continent’s vibrant soundscape.

Platform

Complementing the Main Stage is the Elevate Stage, a creative platform dedicated to emerging artists and innovative artistic expressions from across Africa. This stage will spotlight fresh voices and new sounds, providing a launchpad for the continent’s next generation of cultural trailblazers.

Adding to the festival’s dynamic vibe is the Hypelink Stage, curated in partnership with a leading media powerhouse. This stage focuses on contemporary genres that define today’s youth culture, including Amapiano, 3-Step, and Tech music. Designed to keep the crowd moving well into the night, the Hypelink Stage promises a pulsating soundtrack that captures the spirit of modern Africa.

Beyond the music, the festival embraces the passion of motor enthusiasts through the Chrome & Wheels Zone. This high-octane rally brings together bikers and car lovers to celebrate speed, style, and automotive culture. The zone will feature a spectacular rally parade showcasing custom motorcycles and cars, a thrilling burnout competition, and a vibrant community space where enthusiasts can connect over shared passions.

Mbokazi transfer to Chicago finalised

MBEKEZELI Mbokazi's transfer to Chicago Fire has been confirmed with both clubs announcing the move simultaneously on Tuesday. He has signed a contract until 2029 with an option for one more season, but other details of the deal were not announced, although it had been earlier reported that Pirates sold the player for some R50 million.

"We are excited to welcome Mbekezeli to the club as we further strengthen our back line," said Chicago Fire coach Gregg Berhalter.

"In his young career, he has already shown high potential and proven himself to be a strong leader and competitor on the international level. We expect immediate impact and room to grow in the future."

The 20-year-old, from Hluhluwe in KwaZulu-Natal, flew to Chicago last month for a medical to sign his contract but returned to play for Pirates in their Betway Premiership win over Durban City on Saturday.

It is not clear whether he will have a last game for the club in the Carling Knockout final against Marumo Gallants in Polokwane on Saturday, but the centre back did train with the Buccaneers on Tuesday.

Mbokazi, who has five caps for



▲ Mbekezeli Mbokazi.

South Africa, was on Monday included in the squad to go to the Africa Cup of Nations finals in Morocco.

Mbokazi will join Bongokuhle Hlongwane (Minnesota United) and

Olwethu Makhanya (Philadelphia Union) as South African players competing in Major League Soccer. (Supersport)

Mbappe more than his goals, says Real Madrid coach

REAL Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said on Tuesday French superstar Kylian Mbappe was vital to the team for more than just his prolific goalscoring. The striker slammed home four against Olympiacos in the Champions League last week and has 23 goals in 19 games across all competitions this season.

Mbappe has called on Madrid to be united in recent weeks as the Spanish giants struggle for consistency under Alonso.

"He's been very good individually, helping the team a lot," Alonso told a news conference ahead of Wednesday's trip to face Athletic Bilbao in LaLiga.

"It's not just about goals for Kylian, which in the end is the most important thing, but he does other hugely fundamental things like leadership, influence, helping his teammates, and that's so important day to day."

Madrid are a point behind champions Barcelona after a third consecutive top flight draw on Sunday, at Catalan minnows Girona.

Spanish media have speculated Alonso's future as Madrid coach is at stake if the team do not improve.

The Basque coach admitted he has spoken recently to Real Madrid president Florentino Perez about turning the team's form around.

"The conversations are very positive, in a good tone, wanting to



▲ Kylian Mbappe.

improve the results and that's what we've spoken about," said Alonso, who conceded Madrid have been erratic this season.

"I think we've lacked consistency in our game, and we want to play better in the next one," continued the coach.

"We've lost a bit of quality in our play, we've lost a little bit of energy."

Madrid will be without French left-back Ferland Mendy for the visit

to Bilbao.

Mendy was "diagnosed with a hamstring injury", said Madrid in a statement on Tuesday, less than a week after returning from a thigh problem against Olympiacos in the Champions League, for his first appearance of the season.

Spanish media said the new injury would keep Mendy out for around three weeks (Supersport)

Stormers on winning roll but wanting big improvement

YOU'D think after they consolidated their position at the top of the Vodacom United Rugby Championship log by beating their nearest challengers away from home the DHL Stormers would be satisfied, but that just isn't in the nature of John Dobson's coaching group and players.

As their forwards coach Rito Hlungwani states almost every time he goes in front of a press conference, the aim is always to improve - and it is the same in every game.

And that was the case again from defence coach Norman Laker, who in looking ahead to the start of the Investec Champions Cup season, spoke of a need for a sharp improvement when they face Bayonne on Friday night.

It wasn't just words from Laker either, who'd rather spend the Euros he must get for his tour allowance on donuts, something he does for the entire playing group when they keep rugby's equivalent of soccer's clean sheet, than keep his money in his pocket because the opposition have crossed the Stormers line.

And in truth, if you watched only up until the 30th minute of last weekend's game at Thomond Park, there was a lot to feel dissatisfied with. The Stormers defence looked disjointed in that period and the three tries Munster scored in building up a 21-6 lead came all too easily. The Stormers struggled to get their hands on the ball, made errors, and were unable to impose themselves.

From that moment onwards though they were in control, scoring 27 unanswered points over the last 50 minutes of the game to win 27-21 and lay sole claim to pole position on the URC log. Their power game was impressive in that period, but so was the quality of their defending. Clearly there were words at halftime, and according to Laker there have been words since then too.

"We were really disappointed with the first half as a group,

we know we should have done much better in that period," said Laker from Biarritz, where the Stormers are preparing for Friday night's game against the French club.

"Given the way we prepared, it was very disappointing how it went in that period. When the bench came on it made a big difference, but we know we have a lot of things we have to work on. There was a lot of stuff that we worked on in the off season that was successfully implemented in the first phase of the season (when the Stormers won five times in five starts), but in this game it didn't come off, at least not in the first half.

"We were not at our best and there was stuff we can definitely improve on and we weren't pleased with. We have been addressing it with the team," he added.

Yet while there was a noticeable gear shift when a power laden bench came onto the field as a unit four minutes into the second half, one of the members of that impact squad group, or Storm Squad if you like, lock JD Schickerling, said it was the work done by the starting team that laid the platform.

"We always knew that (gear shift) was going to be the plan. The guys who started had to chip away for us and our job was to finish the game. We knew it wasn't going to be easy. We all know how good Munster are and we hadn't won at that venue before."

The Stormers are sitting pretty on the URC log and are a good way to achieving the minimum requirement of finishing in the top eight, which would mean they may need just two more wins in 12 games, but that won't be their aim. They will want a home semifinal in that competition, and after exiting in the Pool phase last year, they are on a mission in the elite European competition that starts for them on Friday.

"Bayonne will be a really tough start for us. (Supersport)



▲ Rito Hlungwani.

Why Bafana need versatility at AFCON 2025

BAFANA Bafana head coach Hugo Broos has explained why tactical flexibility was important in his final squad selection for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco.

Broos named a 25-man squad on Monday for the tournament, which runs from December 21 to January 18. Bafana are in Group B and will play Angola, Egypt and Zimbabwe in the battle for a place in the knockout rounds.

Bafana's last AFCON experience

Bafana finished third at the last AFCON in the Ivory Coast, but Broos had to tweak his tactics after an opening defeat to Mali.

The Bafana head coach also shifted to a back five in the semifinals against Nigeria, which Bafana only just lost via a penalty shootout. Broos wants a squad that is again prepared for any game situation.

Broos mentioned this when explaining why he has selected Polokwane City right wing-back Thabang Matuludi. Matuludi has effectively been selected in place of Mamelodi Sundowns' more experienced Thapelo Morena, because of Morena's lack of game time with Masandawana.

"Sometimes it is very important to have players in different positions, because you never know what you have to do," said Broos.

"At the last AFCON against Nigeria we played with three central defenders and it was a good tactic. This means we can make these choices. We have to think about that – what happens if you have to play in a certain tactical way?

"Before we had Morena. But he was injured in the last few months



▲ Bafana Bafana head coach Hugo Broos. and didn't play so much with Sundowns. So we couldn't take him. He could play as a right-sided defender or right winger and it is important to have those players."

Broos is adamant that this time Bafana cannot lose their opening match. They will take on Angola on December 22, before facing Egypt on December 26 and Zimbabwe on December 29.

"It is very important to win the first game," he said.

"We saw at the last AFCON we lost the first game and from that point you have your backs to the wall. If we win (against Angola) it will be a big first step to survive the group stages."

"This team is so mature now"

Bafana have come on in leaps and bounds since the last AFCON, qualifying for this tournament, and for the 2026 Fifa World Cup finals next year in the USA, Canada and Mexico.

"The previous AFCON was a very good experience for us in how international football is played. We learned a lot and that helped us qualify for the World Cup and this AFCON. The team is so mature now, we go to this AFCON with much more experience. That is a big change in this team in the last two years," added Broos.

(The Citizen)

Salah Unhappy After Being Dropped, Says Liverpool's Slot

ARNE Slot admitted on Tuesday that "superhuman" Mohamed Salah was unhappy about being omitted from Liverpool's team for their vital 2-0 win against West Ham, but praised his attitude.

The Egypt forward was an unused substitute at the London Stadium on Sunday as Liverpool boss Slot made changes following a terrible run of nine defeats in 12 games in all competitions.

Misfiring Salah, 33, has scored just four Premier League goals this season – in stark contrast to his haul of 29 last season, a tally that won him the Golden Boot.

Slot told reporters that during his reign as manager at Anfield, Salah had been a "superhuman being" but that he had not been at his best in recent weeks.

"As with all players around the world, there are also phases in your time at the club that you are human," he said. "But he's scored so many goals for us and I'm sure he will in the future."

Slot, whose eighth-placed team host high-flying Sunderland on Wednesday, said he was not surprised by Salah's reaction to being left out, praising his professionalism.

"That's a normal reaction from a player that's good en-

ough to play for us," he said. "And I say it mildly, because he's been so outstanding for this club for so many years, and will be for us in the future."

"So, yeah, of course a player isn't happy when they're not playing. He wasn't the only one who wasn't happy that he wasn't starting, I can tell you."

The Dutchman said that Salah had been supportive of his teammates.

"You cannot be a player that's available every three days and play on that high standard if you go with your emotions," he said. (Supersport) "



▲ Mohamed Salah.

Red Bull apologise for criticism after Antonelli receives death threats

THE Red Bull Formula One team on Monday said it sincerely regretted suggesting Kimi Antonelli had handed McLaren's Lando Norris fourth place in Qatar after the rookie received death threats.

With Red Bull's defending champion Max Verstappen leading, Norris was stuck behind Antonelli's Mercedes.

When the teenager ran wide on a corner on the penultimate lap, the Briton zoomed past to grab fourth and two extra points.

"Not sure what happened to Antonelli Max, looks like he just pulled over and let Norris through," Gianpiero 'GP' Lambiase, Verstappen's race engineer, immediately told his driver in a radio message which television viewers also heard.

Red Bull adviser, Helmut Marko, said later that the 19-year-old "waved" Norris past.

On Monday, Antonelli's profile picture on his Instagram account was blacked out.

Mercedes said comments attacking Antonelli on his various social media accounts had shown a "100 per cent increase in the abuse we sadly usually see on a Sunday of a race weekend".

British media reported that the team said several of the comments "were death threats" and that it had flagged 330 more "severe or suspect" comments on team social media.

McLaren use engines manufactured by Mercedes.

On Monday, Red Bull issued a statement acknowledging that "replay footage shows Antonelli momentarily losing control of his car, thus allowing Norris to pass him.

"We sincerely regret that this has led to Antonelli receiving online abuse," it added.

Mercedes said Lambiase had apologised to team principal Toto Wolff.

"I spoke to GP," said Wolff. "I saw him and obviously he was emotional in that moment.

"He said he didn't see the situation."

Norris will go into the final race in Abu Dhabi 12 points ahead of the Dutchman. If Verstappen wins, Norris can finish third and still take the title. Without the two points he would have needed to come second to be sure.

"We are fighting for second in the constructors' championship, which is important for us," said Wolff. "Kimi is fighting for a potential third in the race. I mean, how brainless can you be to even say something like this?

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

(Supersport)



▲ Helmut Marko.

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE PICK OF THE WEEK

Stories by Chris Dlamini

Who is up for E120k ‘carrot’?

EVERY match is now about winning, particularly at the top where the summit is under scrutiny week in, week out. Defending champions occupy it after dislodging early pacesetters Manzini Sea Birds last weekend, but can they hold on to it with seven games to the first round incentive of E120 000? They travel to face last season’s fierce title rivals and runners-up Royal Leopard this weekend, among other gruelling fixtures involving the inconsistent big guns. In our PICK OF THE WEEK, we highlight the must-watch games.

Leopard aims to build on 5-1 win

Royal Leopard vs. Nsingizini Hotspurs
Date: December 6, 2025
Venue: Mkhuzweni Technical Centre, Buhleni

Kick-off: 3pm

After going on four consecutive winless games including three defeats, the star-studded Royal Leopard rose to outfox struggling Ubombo Sugar 5-1 last weekend, a timely win ahead of a clash with the reigning champions, Nsingizini Hotspurs this Saturday. A good 10 points separates the two fierce rivals who fought for the league title last season until the last day of the season, and Nsingizini won it by a point difference. The two had represented Eswatini in



▲ Junior Magagula.

the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League (Nsingizini) and TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup but failed to progress in the second preliminary stage. Ahead of this face-off, Insingizi Yezulu head coach Mandla Qhogi and his captain Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini have spoken about maintaining their place at the top, which they acknowledged will not be easy. Surely, Leopard will not make it easy as the police outfit looks to get out of its slumber and rise up the table - it starts here for Ingwe Mabalabala. For Insingizi, it will all be about the



▲ Neliswa Tiger Dlamini.

maximum points and their focus on closing the round on top to take home the E120 000 prize. Interestingly, statistics favour them when looking back to previous meetings from the 2022/23 season to last season - only last season that Leopard resisted Insingizi in both rounds after being dominated in prior seasons.

LOG STANDINGS:

R. Leopard - 11th (8 points)
Ns. Hotspurs - 1st (18 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

R. Leopard
L D L L W
Ns. Hotspurs
W L W W W

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

22/02/25
Ns. Hotspurs 1-1 R. Leopard
15/04/25
R. Leopard 1-0 Ns. Hotspurs
14/01/24
Ns. Hotspurs 3-1 R. Leopard
04/11/23
R. Leopard 0-1 Ns. Hotspurs
30/04/23
R. Leopard 0-0 Ns. Hotspurs
16/11/22
Ns. Hotspurs 1-0 R. Leopard

HEAD COACHES:

Edwin Matsebula (R. Leopard)
Mandla Qhogi (Ns. Hotspurs)

CAPTAINS:

Muzi ‘Mzoro’ Dlamini (R. Leopard left wing forward)
Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini (Ns. Hotspurs midfielder)

Green Mamba out to add to Wanderers woes

GREEN MAMBA VS. MANZINI WANDERERS

Date: Saturday, December 6, 2025
Venue: Tambankulu Stadium, Tambankulu

Kick-off: 3pm

A star-studded and impressive Green Mamba taking on a faltering and trouble-torn Manzini Wanderers feels like an accident waiting to happen. The once Mighty Weslians, as Wanderers, is also passionately known, are nowhere near the big team status they hold. They have become a laughing stock and a serious cause for concern they desperately need a lifesaver - a well-monied director or sponsor - to at least keep the players and staff afloat with their agreed salaries. As is, the situation makes them nothing but a ticking time bomb ready to explode anytime. Truth be told, they hardly stand a chance against Green Mamba, at least on paper. The maroon and white fallen hub giants gave away a 2-0 lead to minnows and rookies Amawele on Saturday to lose 3-2. They alarmingly sit at the second bottom of the table with a lousy five points in eight matches, level with basement hub neighbours Sisonkhe. Green Mamba has the players to win any game, and this is one they will be looking for a smash and grab as



▲ Green Mamba playmaker Banele ‘Pupu’ Sikhondze.

they chase the top spot in the race for the first round carrot.

LOG STANDINGS:

G. Mamba - 5th (14 points)
M. Wanderers - 15th (5 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

G. Mamba
W W D L W
M. Wanderers
D L W L L

HEAD-TO-HEAD:
16/01/24

M. Wanderers 1-0 G. Mamba
04/11/23
G. Mamba 3-0 M. Wanderers

HEAD COACHES:

Bongani Mhlongo (G. Mamba)
Gcina Dlamini (M. Wanderers)

CAPTAINS:

Sabelo ‘Sikhali’ Ndzinisa (G. Mamba forward)
Mlamuli ‘Mlaba’ Nkambule (M. Wanderers midfielder)

A tough must-win for ‘Bull’

YOUNG BUFFALOES VS. MBABANE HIGHLANDERS

Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini

Kick-off: 1.30pm

Capital city giants Mbabane Highlanders have gone for the whole of November without a win - the last time they won was in October against Manzini Sea Birds and Amawele.

The last five games have been draws and two defeats to Rangers last Sunday and Sisonkhe. This explains why the black and gold capital city giants are not even within the top eight in the standings but at number 11 with nine points in eight games. The leading team, Nsingizini Hotspurs, has 18 points, nine ahead of Inkunzemnyama, who must beat a tough but also inconsistent star-studded Young Buffaloes.

The latter is coming from a shock 1-0 defeat to unbeaten minnows Ezulwini United and will be all out to make amends. On top of making

amends, Buffaloes will be looking to avenge last season’s double blow at the hands of Inkunzemnyama. Highlanders beat the army team in both rounds last season despite

fighting relegation for the better of the season. Buffaloes are five points better than

Highlanders at position six, and a win gets them closer to the leading pack or even back in the top four. For Inkunzemnyama, a win brings their morale back and could lift them up a bit in the standings.

LOG STANDINGS:

Y. Buffaloes - 6th (13 points)
M. Highlanders - 10th (9 points)

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

Y. Buffaloes
L W W W L
M. Highlanders
D D L D L

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

13/04/25
M. Highlanders 2-0 Y. Buffaloes
06/11/24
Y. Buffaloes 1-2 M. Highlanders

HEAD COACHES:

Dominic Kunene (Y. Buffaloes)
Ernest Mavuso (M. Highlanders)

CAPTAINS:

Siboniso Ngwenya (Y. Buffaloes defender)
Siphamandla Maseko (M. Highlanders forward)



▲ The mens netball national team.

Tricky draw for men’s netball team

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela

THE men’s netball team has been handed a tricky draw in the 2025 Africa Cup. The national side will take on host (Malawi), Kenya, and Namibia in Pool 2 of the annual continental cup between December 8-15, 2025. This follows the draw of the continental cup, which serves as a qualifier for the 2027 World Cup finals in Australia. The top two teams in the male and female categories will represent the continent in the finals of the global showpiece. The local lads last reached the finals of last year’s edition after a narrow defeat to South

Africa in Namibia. National team head coach Vim-bibukhosi Ndlangamandla said they are looking forward to the international assignment. “We are looking forward to the African Cup. We want to secure a podium finish and qualify for the World Cup finals. I am confident in my team due to the determination they are showing at training,” he said. The lady’s team won’t take part in this year’s continental cup due to financial constraints. The men’s national team is expected to leave on December 5, 2025, for Malawi.

The men’s netball national team:
Nduku Masangane (Green Lightning), Siphiwo Dlamini (Green

Lightning), Brendan Dhlamini (Royal Flames), Sizolwethu Magagula (Royal Flames). Mandisa Sihlongonyane (Green Lightning), Simanga Vilakati (Green Lightning), Zwelakhe Mbatha (Royal Flames), Mpendulo Mncina (Vixens). Fortune Neves (Green Lightning), Sakhile Maseko (Green Lightning), Thabo Maphosa (Buffaloes), Sibusiso Shongwe (Vixens). Technical bench Vumbukhosi Ndlangamandla (H. Coach), Wandile Sithole (Ass. Coach), Nhlanhla Ngcamphalala (Team Manager), Bongani Magagula (Team Doctor).

Mozambique race deferred

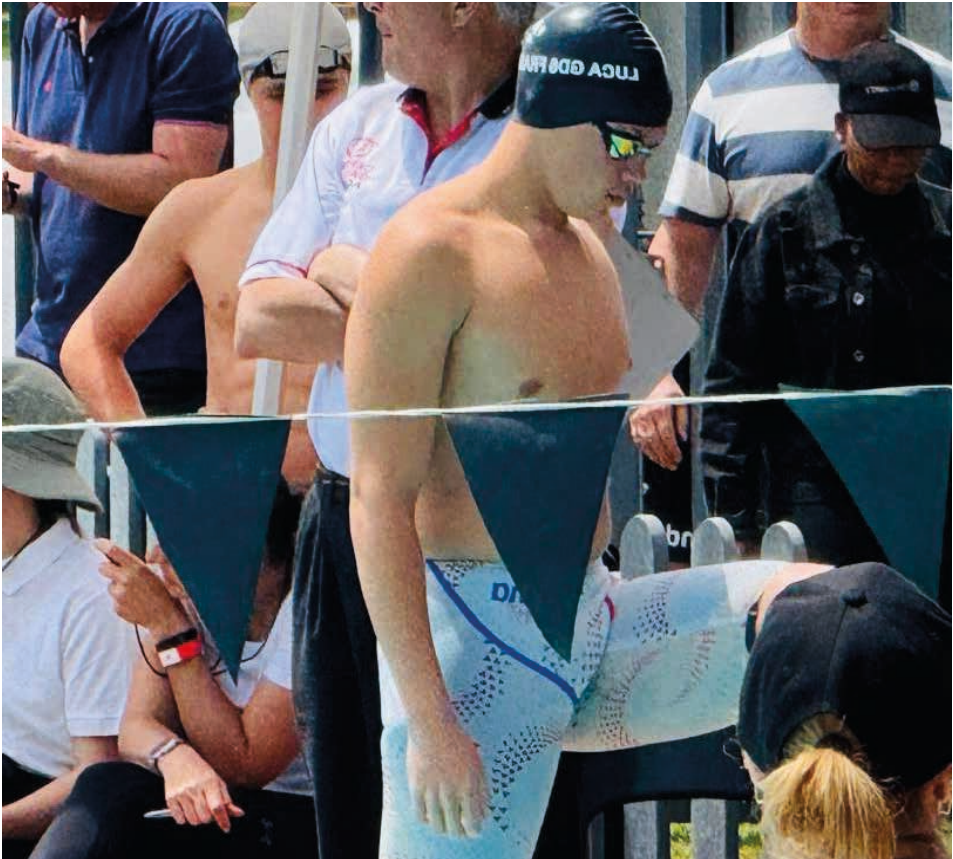
THE annual ‘Vuna vuna’ road race has been deferred to December 13, 2025, in Ponto do Ouro. The race was scheduled to take place on November 30, 2025, at the neighbouring country’s tourist attraction. A four-member local cycling pick team will represent the country during the international assignment. The quartet of Mandiswa Fakudze, Lungelo Mlangeni, Kwanele Jele, and Thando Shabangu will take part in the ‘Vuna Vuna’ road race scheduled for Ponta do Ouro, Mozambique, on Saturday. The cyclists will be under the guidance of veteran Newcomm Wheels coach Mbusi Motsa, who confirmed the latest news. “We have received corre-

spondence from the race organisers about the postponement of the race. This will give us more time to prepare for the race as it will boost the careers of the four riders and help them gain international exposure. We would like to thank our Mozambique counterparts for inviting us to the event, which will help to promote cycling in the SADC region,” he said. Fakudze recently represented the country in the 2025 World cycling championships held in Rwanda. The Mozambican Cycling Federation (FMC) is one of the most anticipated races on the national calendar, celebrating speed, perseverance, and the vibrant spirit of Mozambican cycling.



▲ Local riders in action during a recent local race.

Luca spearheads ANOCA games preps



▲ Luca Fraser.

THE country’s male swimming sensation, Luca Fraser, has spearheaded his preparations for the 2025 ANOCA Games. The Pelicans swimming club youngster has performed well in the Cathy Doyle long championships held in Johannesburg, where he won three medals. He won the 50m breaststroke with a time of 31.59 and the 200m breaststroke, where he clocked 2:42. 25. He wrapped up his splendid performance with a silver medal in the 50m breaststroke. The athlete coach, Meluleki ‘Sluga’ Sime-lane, said they are happy with the progress of the athlete. “We are pleased with the performance of the swimmer and confident that he will make the country proud during the ANOCA games. We urge him to continue working hard in his flourishing career,” he said. Fraser is part of a two-member national team with comprises female youngster Keandra McNamara under the guidance of Mduduzi Xaba in Angola between December 10—20, 2025.

He is also earmarked to represent the country in the 2028 Olympic Games scheduled for the United States of America, as he is part of the E6 million scholarship program from the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA).

Luca Fraser results

Day 1 – 27 November, 2025
50m Breaststroke
Final Position: 1st
Final Result: 31.59

Day 2 – 28 November, 2025
200m Breaststroke
Final Position: 1st
Final Result: 2:42.25

Day 3 – 29 November, 2025
50m Backstroke
Final Position: 6th
Result: 32.42

200m Individual Medley (IM)
Final Position: 5th
Result: 2:33.19

Day 4 – 30 November, 2025
100m Breaststroke
Final Position: 2nd
Final Result: 1:11.93

Wanderers players boycott training

By Sibusiso Masilela

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THINGS are not wonderful at Manzini Wanderers.

The hub giants' players have reportedly put down their tools due to the pending November salaries.

The players boycotted training on Tuesday ahead of their next league fixture against Green Mamba on December 6 2025, at Mkhuzweni Technical centre.

A source within the 'Weslians' revealed the news to this publication on condition of anonymity. "The players have stopped training, and they have made it clear that they won't resume training until they get what is due for them. They further wanted clarity over the whereabouts of former director Mlamuli Mabuza," the source said.

The club's Public Relations Officer (PRO) Mongie Simelane said he was not privy to comment on the issue of salaries.

"I cannot comment on the issue of salaries since it is handled by the management committee," he said.

The crowd pullers recently announced



▲ The hub giants' players have reportedly put down their tools due to the pending November salaries.

their legend Jerry 'Gamedze as their operations director following the unceremonious exit of Mabuza, who had a fallout with the national Supporters committee (NSC).

The Gcina Dlamini led side is sitting at position 15 in the MTN Premier league log standings with five points after eight matches.



▲ Sikhumbuzo Mazibuko Wanderers.



▲ Ubombo Sugar FC coach Milton Dlamini.

Three-year contract for Milton

By Sibusiso Masilela

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FORMER Baroka head coach Milton Dlamini has penned a three-year contract at Ubombo Sugar FC.

This follows his move to the sugar belt side together with former Orlando Pirates and Supersport United middle fielder Dennis 'Yuki' Masina, who is the new chief scout.

Dlamini has replaced interim head coach Van Rooyen Magagula at the Lubombo-based side.

The club has only retained former Red Rhinos coach Percy Shongwe as their trainer.

Dlamini confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

"I am grateful to get the opportunity to lead the club on a three-year contract, and I thank the company board of directors for entrusting me with this opportunity. My main goal is to

help the team survive relegation this season before focusing on next season's plans," he said.

The club welcomed Dlamini through a press statement.

"Ubombo Sugar is delighted to announce the appointment of Mxolisi Milton Dlamini as the club's new head coach. He joins us, bringing a wealth of experience in elite performance environments to South Africa and Eswatini. He is committed to playing an attacking brand of football and to developing players technically and tactically, and we are sure supporters, and our stakeholders are going to enjoy watching this team again," the club said.

Dlamini's first assignment will be on December 5, 2025, against Manzini Sea Birds at Mhlume Stadium.

He has found the team languishing at position 14 with seven points after eight matches into the current MTN premier league campaign.

Football is 'Ernest-ly' cruel!

By Chris Dlamini

"THE team has spoken for itself."

This was the immediate response from Mbabane Highlanders head coach Ernest Mavuso in reaction to the question of boosting his squad in the upcoming transfer window billed for February in Eswatini. Mavuso was asked if he would agree that South African winger Sphiwe Hopewell Cele needed more quality like him to help the team get consistent results.

"Football is cruel. It's a very cruel game! We have been playing well, creating as many chances to score, and this match is one we did it all. I don't know how we lost the match because we were all over Rangers, but goals proved evasive when it could have easily been 3-1 or 4-1.

"It was one cruel game for us, but that's football. We clearly need to boost the squad as it speaks for itself," he said.

Mavuso said they all could see it but asked not to get to names despite already setting their sights on some locals and foreign players. He added that this was a very tough league.

"There is no longer a small team. We'll go back to the drawing board and keep working hard to get positive results," he responded ahead of the next match against Young Buffaloes.

Highlanders visit the army side on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini. Meanwhile, Rangers' head coach Mthunzi 'Lomphofu' Ginindza reiterated Mavuso's words that there was no small team in this season's league.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders coach Ernest Mavuso and his Rangers counterpart Mthunzi Ginindza.

"Every team has confidence as we have all seen the results so far. My team has done well so far, but we continue to push as we must be safe from relegation by finishing the first round on 30 points," he said.

He said they would set new goals after achieving the first round's targeted 30 points, but if not, they still

would have set one to finish the season. He praised his club for showing character against the offensive Highlanders and using that rare second-half counter attack opportunity to win 1-0. Ginindza's troops will take on third-placed Ezulwini United, the only team of the 16 yet to taste defeat.



‘Salah unhappy after being dropped’

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Three-year contract for Milton

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... Financially-crippled hu giants Manzini Wanderers players have reportedly downed their tools after being owed November salaries.