



## Japan's E12 million to boost transport for learners with disabilities

By Thokozani Mazibuko

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# Japan grants Eswatini E12 mln to boost school transport for learners with disabilities

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

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The funding follows the signing of the Universal Accessible School Transport Project between Eswatini and Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

At the signing ceremony in Manzini, officials confirmed that the grant will be used to procure four universally accessible buses and provide specialised training for drivers and technicians. The initiative aims to ease long-standing transport barriers, especially for children in rural communities while advancing the country's inclusive education agenda.

Japan's Ambassador to Eswatini, Shimizu Fumio, said the project highlights a significant step forward in the two nations' co-operation. He noted that the buses are designed to allow learners using wheelchairs to board safely without needing to disembark, ensuring dignity, safety and reliable school access.

"This assistance provides educational opportunities for individuals who are disadvantaged," he said, adding that the grant reflects Japan's continued commitment to strengthening development ties with Eswatini.

Ambassador Shimizu highlighted this year's active high-level exchanges between the two countries, including Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini's visit to Japan during the Osaka Kansai Expo 2025 and His Majesty King Mswati III's participation in the TICAD Summit in August. He said these engagements strengthened cooperation and helped pave the way for initiatives like the transport project.

The Ambassador emphasised that while Eswatini's policies support inclusive educa-



▲ Minister for Economic Planning and Development Dr. Tambo Gina making his remarks.

tion, learners with disabilities, often in rural areas, still struggle with access due to scarce specialised transport and uneven distribution of support facilities. He said the buses funded through the grant will help close that gap.

The project was initiated following a request from Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, whose advocacy highlighted the urgent need for improved mobility for learners with disabilities. Shimizu noted that Japan was compelled to respond, aligning its support with Eswatini's National Disability Action Plan, the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2018 and other national development priorities.

He urged the Ministry of Education and Training and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office to ensure proper management and maintenance of the buses to secure long-term sustainability.

Moreover, Ambassador Shimizu emphasized Japan's commitment to supporting Eswatini's inclusive development efforts and expressed hope that the new buses will open doors to greater educational opportunities and improved life outcomes for children with disabilities.



▲ Minister Dr. Gina signing the grant with Ambassador H.E Shimizu Fumio.



▲ Minister for Economic Planning and Development Dr. Tambo Gina shaking hands with Ambassador of Japan to Eswatini H.E Shimizu Fumio.

## DPM hails accessible transport deal as boost for inclusive education

ESWATINI has strengthened its push for inclusive education following the signing of a new partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to improve school transport for learners with disabilities. Speaking at The George Hotel in Manzini, Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla said the introduction of universally designed buses represents a firm national commitment to removing mobility barriers and expanding opportunities for all learners. Dladla said the agreement aligns with Eswatini's broader goals of equity, social justice and accessible essential services. She noted that many children with disabilities continue to miss school due to inaccessible transport, poor rural roads and a shortage of specialised vehicles. She stressed that inclusive education can only be realised when every child can reach school safely and learn in a supportive environment.

The DPM emphasised the need for coordinated investment in safer roads, universal design in transport planning and

stronger collaboration among the education, transport and local government sectors. She urged that organisations of persons with disabilities be central to these efforts, reiterating the principle of "nothing about us without us."

While welcoming the JICA support, Dladla said buses alone will not solve the long-standing challenges but should mark the beginning of sustained action. She thanked Japan for its continued partnership and expressed confidence that through joint efforts, no child will be excluded from education due to disability or lack of transport

**The DPM emphasised the need for coordinated investment in safer roads, universal design in transport planning and stronger collaboration among the education, transport and local government sectors.**



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla delivering her remarks during the gathering.



Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala  
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# Disinformation damaging Eswatini's global image – Minister warns

... Foreign Affairs calls for united front as three-day digital transparency workshop opens

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has sounded a strong warning on the growing threat of disinformation, stressing that false narratives are actively harming Eswatini's international reputation. Speaking during the official opening of the Countering Disinformation and Promoting Digital Transparency workshop at Happy Valley Hotel, the Minister, represented by Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko, called for a national, multi-sector response to safeguard the country's image and strengthen digital resilience.

Opening the workshop, the Minister said the presence of government officials, tech professionals, media practitioners and communications experts demonstrated the urgency of addressing misinformation in an age where damaging content spreads faster than truth. He extended heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Taiwan for funding and supporting the programme, noting that Taiwan's commitment to digital transparency and global cooperation continues to add value to Eswatini's institutional capacity. He emphasised that disinformation is no longer a distant or abstract challenge but a direct threat to governance, democracy, economic prospects and the social cohesion of the Kingdom. "In today's interconnected world, false narratives can erode trust, sow discord, and undermine democratic processes. For Eswatini, the impact is particularly severe. Disinformation is damaging our global image, often painting an inaccurate picture of our nation and our people," he said. The workshop, which runs for three days, aims to strengthen skills in identifying, analysing and countering coordinated misinformation campaigns, especially those targeting public institutions, leadership and major national programmes. The Minister said the Ministry is deeply aware of the growing risks and is prioritising digital literacy, critical thinking



▲ Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mabulala Maseko making his remarks. (Right) Taiwan Ambassador to Eswatini Jeremy Liang says Taiwan ready to share hard-earned expertise as global threat intensifies.



and coordinated communication as tools to protect the country from manipulation.

He outlined three key objectives driving the workshop. First, to improve the capacity of participants to recognise and respond effectively to disinformation, whether originating locally or abroad. Second, to promote collaboration and the exchange of best practices among government, private sector and civil society. Third, to strengthen the country's ability to project an accurate,

dignified and fair representation of Eswatini to the world. "We envision a future where Eswatini is recognised not only for its natural beauty and vibrant culture, but also for its commitment to truth and transparency in the digital realm," he said.

## Transparency

Throughout the opening session, the Minister highlighted that digital transparency is now a global standard, and countries that fail to adapt risk being misrepresented

and misunderstood on the international stage. He encouraged participants to use the workshop as a platform for innovation, partnership and constructive dialogue. "As you deliberate over the next three days, I urge you to champion media literacy, critical thinking, and robust fact-checking. Let us leave this workshop with renewed purpose and determination to ensure that the digital space becomes a force for good—not division," the Minister concluded.

## ... Taiwan pledges strong partnership in fight against misinformation

TAIWAN'S Ambassador to Eswatini, Jeremy Liang, has reaffirmed Taiwan's commitment to helping Eswatini strengthen its defences against misinformation, describing the challenge as one of the most pressing threats facing modern societies.

Speaking during the Countering Disinformation and Promoting Digital Transparency workshop at Happy Valley Hotel, Ambassador Liang said Taiwan stands ready to work "hand in hand" with Eswatini to build resilience, enhance media literacy, and reinforce public trust in government.

At the request of Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, Taiwan brought four digital diplomacy experts to Eswatini to lead the workshop. Ambassador Liang said the team will share practical strategies on responding to misinformation, online fraud, cognitive warfare, and AI-driven attacks on governments. "The programme is rich and comprehensive, supported by training materials, and I am confident all participants will find it highly informative and rewarding," he said.

He noted that misinformation has become a global challenge that undermines stability, erodes trust, and distorts government policies. Taiwan, he explained, is one of the most targeted countries in the world. "For



▲ Participants in the workshop following proceedings.

11 consecutive years, Taiwan has ranked as the country most heavily targeted by foreign disinformation. Every day, we confront waves of misinformation," he said. Through these experiences, Taiwan has developed valuable tools and approaches that it is willing to share with Eswatini.

Ambassador Liang highlighted the

Memorandum of Understanding signed earlier this year by Taiwan's Foreign Minister Dr. Lin Chia-lung and Minister Shakantu, establishing a framework for cooperation on information integrity. "This MOU strengthens our collaboration and demonstrates Taiwan's readiness to share expertise on media literacy, fact-checking

mechanisms, and digital resilience," he said.

He welcomed the strong turnout from government ministries and the media, noting that effective response to misinformation requires cooperation between public institutions and civil society. "Your presence demonstrates a shared commitment to this crucial issue," he told participants.



By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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NOTHANDO Hlophe has once again proven that spiritually rooted artistry still has the power to command the digital space. Her soul-stirring track “Methodist Medley” has surpassed an extraordinary 4 million views on YouTube, cementing its place as one of Eswatini’s most impactful gospel offerings of the decade.

“Empini sothini, uma singenawe... tembatse Nkosi.” A line that no longer needs an introduction, because by now it has marched into our ears, pitched a tent in our hearts, and started leading worship sessions of its own.

Surely, you’ve bumped into this tune somewhere, maybe in a passing taxi, at a youth service, blasting from a neighbour’s speaker, or floating through a Sunday morning like incense from an old hymnal.

Featured on her latest album, *A New Dawn*, the medley has become the project’s radiant centrepiece, a melodic bridge between the past that raised her and the present that she now ministers to. *A New Dawn* was launched on 7 June 2025 at a vibrant live event at the Mavuso Trade Centre, a celebration that drew worshippers, music lovers, and industry figures who had witnessed Nothando’s evolution from rising vocalist to one of the nation’s most respected gospel ambassadors.

It is “Methodist Medley,” with its gentle weaving of traditional hymns, that has stirred hearts most profoundly. The medley is more than a musical piece; it is a spiritual archive. It carries with it echoes of childhood Sundays, the rhythmic swaying of wooden pews, and the voices of congregants who sang these hymns long before YouTube ever existed. In pairing these classics with fresh sonic textures, Nothando Hlophe has crafted a piece that feels both timeless and timely.

She expressed this sentiment when sharing the milestone with her supporters online. “Methodist Medley is still shaking the heavens. Thank you for streaming, sharing, and celebrating this move of God with us. The

▲ Nothando Hlophe has once again proven that spiritually rooted artistry still has the power to command the digital space.

journey continues,” she posted, a message that captured her signature humility and gratitude.

In a recent interview, Nothando Hlophe reflected deeply on why this medley resonates so widely. For her, the hymns are not simply melodic relics of the past; they are spiritual markers, reminders of God’s faithfulness during formative years and anchors that ground her in moments of uncertainty.

“These hymns carry the essence of my faith journey,” she explained. “They remind me of God’s faithfulness throughout my life and the comfort that comes from His presence.” The lyrical themes of “Methodist Medley” revolve around divine protection, spiritual refuge, and unwavering guidance.

They speak of universal experiences shared across communities: the need to find reassurance amidst life’s trials, the longing for stability in times of chaos, and the comfort of knowing one is never truly alone.

Nothando Hlophe emphasised that message with sincerity, “We all go through seasons of uncertainty, but His presence is our constant shelter. I want this song to remind people that they are never alone, God is with them, always.”

This emotional authenticity is one of the main reasons the medley continues to thrive on digital platforms. It offers hope, familiarity, and spiritual nourishment to listeners far beyond Eswatini’s borders. Behind the success of *A New Dawn* lies a powerful creative partnership. The album is produced by Genesis Ekucaleni Media, the media company founded by pioneering Senator Pholile Shakantu, whose influence has extended beyond governance into shaping Eswatini’s artistic landscape. Shakantu, celebrated for her iconic work on the Eswatini film *BakaNgwane*, has played an instrumental role in cultivating a homegrown creative ecosystem capable of producing world-class content. Working alongside Genesis Ekucaleni Media is Lokuhle Media Group, led by renowned music producer Phindokuhle

# Nothando Hlophe’s ‘Methodist Medley’ hits 4 million views



Sithole, whose meticulous craftsmanship helped sculpt the album’s crisp, modern sound. Their collective expertise ensured that the project not only captured Nothando’s spiritual essence but also met the high production quality demanded by global music consumers. The successful live recording was made possible through the support of Eswatini Mobile, the main sponsor of the event, further evidence of the growing corporate recognition of gospel music’s cultural influence and community reach.

While “Methodist Medley” shines as the album’s standout, it is not the only track drawing major attention. Songs like “Sithumela Wena” have also carved out space in the hearts of listeners, already earning over 890,000 views on YouTube. Collectively, the album’s online momentum reflects a growing appetite for gospel music that honours tradition while embracing innovation.

Nothando Hlophe is riding a remarkable wave of success. Fresh off clinching the prestigious ‘Best Of Africa’ title at the Crown Gospel Music Awards, she has also swept up three major honours, ‘Song of the Year’ for her soul-stirring anthem “Sithumela Wena,” ‘Best Gospel Artist,’ and ‘Best Live Recording’ for her acclaimed album *A New Dawn*, at the National Gospel Music Awards.

## Fire contained at Mankayane Govt Hospital as quick response averts tragedy

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

A POTENTIALLY devastating fire incident at Mankayane Government Hospital was narrowly avoided after the Eswatini National Fire and Rescue Services responded swiftly and successfully contained a blaze that broke out in the male medical ward.

The fire, which erupted earlier today, prompted an immediate emergency response as hospital staff and rescue teams worked together to ensure the safety of patients and personnel. According to reliable sources, more than 12 patients were admitted in the affected ward at the time of the incident.

All patients were quickly evacuated and moved to safety before the situation could escalate.

Eyewitnesses described moments of tension as smoke filled the ward, but calm coordination by hospital workers helped prevent



panic. Patients were escorted outside the building while emergency procedures were activated. Their swift action is credited with saving lives and minimising injuries.

The Eswatini National Fire and Rescue Services arrived promptly after being alerted and immediately began firefighting op-

erations. Firefighters managed to bring the flames under control within a short period, preventing the fire from spreading to adjacent hospital wards and other critical areas of the facility.

ENFRES Public Relations Officer Mandla Dlamini confirmed the incident and praised

the rapid response by firefighters and hospital staff. He said the situation could have resulted in one of the country’s most tragic hospital disasters had it not been for the timely intervention.

“We can confirm that our teams responded promptly and managed to contain the fire before it could spread further. There were no fatalities reported and no injuries to patients or staff,” Dlamini said.

He further confirmed that only the male medical ward was affected by the fire, while other sections of the hospital remained operational. The extent of the damage is still being assessed by relevant authorities.

According to Dlamini, investigations are currently under way to establish the cause of the fire. He said ENFRES specialists are working closely with hospital management and other stakeholders to determine how the blaze started and whether safety systems functioned as expected.

“At this stage investigations are ongoing. Once completed, we will be able to provide a clearer picture of what led to the incident,” he said.



By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini has reiterated the Government's unwavering resolve to fortify the legal and regulatory environment guiding the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), describing the ongoing reforms as essential to building a disciplined, trusted and future-ready Police Service.

The Prime Minister was addressing Honourable Senators during a Police Service Regulations Workshop held on Tuesday at SibaneSami Hotel in Ezulwini, where he emphasised that the modernised Police Service Regulations of 2025 are central to enhancing professionalism, accountability and operational efficiency across the force. The Regulations, which have already been passed by the House of Assembly, serve as an extension of the Police Service Act No. 22 of 2018.

Dlamini explained that the comprehensive reforms address key pillars of policing, ranging from recruitment and promotions to conduct and retirement, thereby creating a uniform standard for officers at all levels. "The role of the Police Service in upholding the law, preserving peace and ensuring the safety of all emaSwati cannot be overemphasised," he told Senators. "A disciplined, well-regulated and supported Police Service is essential in building public trust and maintaining stability in our country."

# PM backs stronger police regulations

According to the Prime Minister, the 2025 Regulations also introduce one of the most progressive institutional developments within the Police Service, the establishment of the Royal Eswatini Police Service Staff Association. This association is designed to offer officers a structured and recognised platform to raise concerns about welfare, conditions of service and representation in government negotiations.

Government, he said, envisions a Police Service whose internal governance matches the complex demands of modern policing. For this reason, the Regulations take deliberate steps to clarify disciplinary procedures, streamline appointments, and ensure fairness and merit-based progression. The advocacy for sound regulatory structures, the PM observed, is directly connected to the broader national agenda of safeguarding peace and advancing the rule of law.

"These Regulations are meant to empower and capacitate our Police officers so that they may execute their duties with professionalism, integrity and confidence, as we intensify our fight against crime and social

disorder," Dlamini said. The Premier further underscored that the reforms reinforce the need for operational discipline and ethical accountability, two fundamental traits of an effective Police Service.

Beyond the technical aspects of the new framework, Dlamini used the platform to commend the collaborative spirit demonstrated during deliberations in the House of Senate, noting that such unity reflects the best of national leadership. "The spirit of unity demonstrated in the House of Senate is commendable. Our Kingdom will go very far if all the Houses work together in oneness for the collective good of the nation," he said.

The Prime Minister concluded by reaffirming that unity remains a driving force behind sustainable national development. He urged members of all Houses to maintain cooperative engagement, arguing that shared commitment and purpose are pivotal as Eswatini undertakes complex reforms aimed at strengthening institutions and fostering long-term stability.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini.

## EEC, Ubombo seal E1.5bn energy expansion agreement

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI'S pursuit of greater energy independence advanced significantly on Monday as Ubombo Sugar Limited (USL) and the Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) signed a major Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) worth E1.5 billion.

The agreement paves the way for a major expansion of USL's cogeneration project, increasing its maximum export capacity to 40 MW by June 2028.

The project is one of the largest private-sector energy investments in the country and is expected to play a central role in reducing Eswatini's reliance on imported electricity.

The signing took place at the Hilton Garden Inn in Mbabane, attended by senior government officials, industry executives, and energy regulators.

According to technical details presented during the ceremony, the Standard Core Generation Asset will export up to 40 MW into the national grid once the expansion is complete.

This will add 24 MW to the existing generation output, building on the current 16 MW PPA relationship between USL and EEC.

Once the expanded plant reaches stable operation, it is projected to deliver approximately 141 GWh of energy per year, equivalent to around 40 per cent of Eswatini's energy needs.

"This project builds on the experience of the existing 16 MW power purchase agreement relationship between EEC and Ubombo Sugar Limited. Notwithstanding any technical contracts and limitations of a sugar-processing cogeneration plant, both parties will draw from their expertise and experience to ensure the success of the 40 MW maximum export power purchase agreement," said HRH Prince Lonkhokhela, the Minister for Natural Resources and Energy.



▲ EEC MD and Ubombo MD during and after the signing of the power purchase.

Prince Lonkhokhela described the agreement as a significant step toward reducing Eswatini's dependence on imported power.

The minister said, the PPA between Ubombo Sugar and EEC is a step in the right direction for Eswatini to achieve energy sovereignty.

He emphasised that the government fully supports projects that expand local generation using renewable and agricultural by-product resources, noting their long-term economic value.

Meanwhile, Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) CEO Sikhumbuzo Tsabedze highlighted the national impact of the agreement, confirming the increase in USL's contribution to the electricity mix.

"This Power Purchase Agreement is very important, as it will increase power generated by Ubombo Sugar Limited from 5% to 10%," Tsabedze stated.

He noted that cogeneration aligns with ESERA's broader strategy of diversifying Eswatini's energy sources, especially through independent power producers (IPPs).

EEC Managing Director Ernest Mkhonta expressed strong support for the project,

linking its economic impact to reduced electricity imports. Mkhonta said, increasing local generation capacity directly translates to a reduction in electricity imports.

He further explained that keeping more energy expenditure within the country would benefit the national economy.

"The subsequent decrease in external payments will ensure that the local currency, the Lilangeni, circulates within the country," said Mkhonta.

He concluded that the project would enhance employment opportunities, stating that the localised economic activity would substantially contribute to the country's fiscal health and promote increased employment opportunities.

In the same tone, USL Managing Director Muzi Siyaya praised the efficiency with which the agreement was concluded, citing his long experience in energy-sector negotiations.

"Leveraging 15 years of experience in energy transactions, I commend the expeditious pace at which this cogeneration power plant agreement was successfully concluded," he said.



▲ The Minister for Natural Resources and Energy HRH Prince Lonkhokhela said this new deal will increase local power generation and create jobs.

He added that the project demonstrates the capacity of institutions in Eswatini to finalise complex transactions, especially those involving renewable resources and agricultural synergy.

The ceremony began with remarks by ESERA CEO Sikhumbuzo Tsabedze, who reiterated the strategic importance of integrating agriculture, manufacturing, and electricity generation.

"The procurement of power from cogeneration plants strategically explores the synergy among agriculture, manufacturing, and electricity generation, all of which are critical for the economic growth and development of the Kingdom of Eswatini," said Tsabedze.

Worth noting the agreement positions Ubombo Sugar as one of the largest contributors to Eswatini's renewable energy production and solidifies its role as a key Independent Power Producer. The E1.5 billion expansion is now expected to move into the implementation phase, with completion targeted for mid-2028.



By Delisa Magagula

THE Health Promotion Unit, in partnership with UNICEF Eswatini, launched the Childhood Lead Poisoning Awareness Campaign on Monday, highlighting a global public-health concern that affects millions of children each year.

Speaking at the launch, Senior Medical Officer (Public Health) Dr. Shabangu said lead remains a widely present toxic metal found in paint, contaminated water systems, industrial waste, certain cosmetics and some traditional herbs.

He noted that children may show few or no obvious symptoms, yet exposure can interfere with brain development, reduce learning ability, affect school performance and impair concentration.

Lead poisoning is recognised internationally as a major contributor to disease. Global public-health data indicate that lead exposure contributes to more than a million deaths each year, largely linked to long-term health complications.

Research also shows that children's developing nervous systems are more vulnerable to even low levels of exposure. No level of lead in the bloodstream is considered completely safe for children.

Recent global assessments estimate that approximately one in three children worldwide have blood lead levels high enough to be considered harmful.

According to reports, the burden is highest in low- and middle-income countries, including many in Africa and Asia, where exposures often stem from unsafe recycling of lead-acid batteries, industrial pollution, contaminated soil, old paint, unsafe water systems and consumer products containing lead. In sub-Saharan Africa, millions of children are estimated to have elevated blood-lead levels above internationally recommended thresholds. Several countries in the region have recorded cases linked to industrial emissions, legacy mining sites, informal battery recycling, contaminated food or spices, and unsafe waste disposal practices.

One example documented in the region includes long-term contamination in mining towns where smelting operations

- CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN -

# Eswatini's call for action on global toxic threat

... Lead remains a widely present toxic metal found in paint, contaminated water systems, industrial waste, certain cosmetics and some traditional herbs.



▲ The Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNICEF has launched the National Childhood Lead Poisoning Awareness Campaign. The launch took place on Monday at Bethel Court Hotel in Ezulwini.

once operated.

In such areas, lead dust has been found in soil, homes, and playgrounds, with children recording high blood-lead levels years after mining activity ceased. Other countries have reported incidents involving lead in imported products, traditional medicines or household paints used in older buildings.

At the launch, UNICEF Eswatini and the Health Promotion Unit noted the role of the media in sharing verified prevention messages.

They also announced plans to expand communication strategies using creative and arts-based approaches to improve

public awareness at community level.

"The campaign aims to inform households, caregivers, schools and communities about potential sources of exposure, the importance of safe waste disposal, checking older paint, monitoring water sources and being cautious about unregulated products that may contain lead," said Shabangu during the launch.

The Ministry of Health and UNICEF stated that protecting children from lead exposure is essential for supporting healthy physical and cognitive development and for reducing preventable health risks linked to environmental contaminants.



▲ Senior Medical Officer Public Health Dr Adman Shabangu shared his remarks during the launch.

## REPS swift action leads to arrest of woman in boat cruise scam

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service has acted swiftly in arresting a woman accused of defrauding unsuspecting victims in a cross border fraud scheme that left several people stranded in South Africa.

Thandeka Mamba was arrested following an investigation into allegations that she collected a large sum of money from a group of bank employees under the pretext of organizing a leisure trip that never materialized.

According to police reports, Mamba allegedly promised seventeen bank workers a luxury boat cruise experience in Durban South Africa. The victims reportedly paid a total amount of E131 000 believing the trip was legitimate and fully arranged. However upon their arrival in Durban the promised boat cruise did not exist and attempts to contact Mamba proved unsuccessful as she had vanished without trace.

The victims were left stranded and confused after realizing that no booking



▲ Thandeka Mamba who has been arrested by the Police after allegedly defrauding unsuspecting victims in a crossborder fraud scheme that left several people stranded in South Africa.

had been made and no cruise operator had any record of the alleged trip. Following the ordeal the matter was reported to the authorities which prompted an immediate investigation by the Royal Eswatini Police

Service.

Confirming the arrest Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni said the police wasted no time in tracking down the suspect once a formal report had been lodged. She said investigations revealed that the suspect had misrepresented herself as a tour organizer and had convinced the victims that all arrangements including accommodation and leisure activities had been fully secured.

### Efficiency

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni commended the professionalism and efficiency of officers involved in the operation stating that the arrest demonstrates the police service's commitment to protecting the public from financial crimes. She further revealed that the suspect is expected to appear before court soon to answer to charges related to fraud and theft by false pretenses.

Police investigations are ongoing as authorities seek to establish whether there may be more victims who fell prey to similar schemes allegedly orchestrated by the suspect. Members of the public who may have information related to the case or who

believe they may have been defrauded in a similar manner have been urged to come forward and assist with investigations.

The incident has sparked widespread concern as it highlights the growing prevalence of travel related scams especially during the festive season when many people are planning group trips and leisure activities. Police have cautioned the public to exercise extreme care when making payments for travel packages and to always verify the credentials of individuals or companies offering such services.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni advised citizens to insist on written contracts proof of bookings and to confirm directly with service providers before parting with their money.

She further encouraged the use of established travel agencies and reputable operators to minimize the risk of falling victim to fraudulent schemes.

Meanwhile the affected bank workers are said to be cooperating fully with police as they seek justice and possible recovery of their funds. While no injuries were reported the emotional and financial distress caused by the ordeal has been described as significant.



BRIEFS

SA working on ways to help ferrochrome firms

SOUTH Africa is working on ways to support its ferrochrome industry, state power utility Eskom said on Monday, as it announced an agreement with Samancor Chrome and the Glencore-Merafe Chrome Venture.

Eskom said in a statement that the memorandum of understanding with the two companies followed constructive engagements on Friday with the country's minister of electricity and energy and trade unions.

PetroSA approves Shell as majority partner in block offshore SA

SOUTH Africa's legacy national oil company, PetroSA, has approved a deal to give Shell Offshore a 60% stake in its Block 2C, off the country's west coast, a document seen by Reuters showed on Monday. If successfully concluded, the agreement will strengthen oil major Shell's exposure to the Orange Basin, which has become one of the world's most coveted exploration zones after major oil discoveries in neighbouring Namibia.

\$108 billion hostile bid from Paramount

PARAMOUNT Skydance on Monday launched a hostile bid worth \$108.4 billion for Warner Bros Discovery, in a last-ditch effort to outbid Netflix and create a media powerhouse that would challenge the dominance of the streaming giant.

Netflix had emerged victorious on Friday from a weeks-long bidding war with Paramount and Comcast, securing a \$72 billion equity deal for Warner Bros Discovery's TV, film studios and streaming assets. (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	



# Nhlangano town projects E1.5 million surplus

... on E27 mln budget

Stories By Delisa Magagula

The Nhlangano Town Council is projecting a strong financial performance for the current financial year, with the latest official report indicating a surplus of E1,555,599 by March 2025.

This marks a significant turnaround from the initial 2024/2025 Budget Estimates, which expected a deficit of E187,392.

The updated figures, outlined in the Financial Performance section of the report, show that the council's fiscal trajectory has shifted positively despite minor revenue shortfalls.

The performance is largely attributed to tighter spending and slower-than-planned capital expenditure.

According to the report, the council is operating on an approved budget of E27.03 million, funded through property taxes (both government and private), own-source revenue, and government subvention.

"A review of the revenue performance shows that the council expects to collect E26.6 million by the end of March 2025 slightly below the budgeted E27.03 million, creating a negative variance of E430,000. This means the council is on track to collect 98 per cent of its projected income," reads the report in part.

Meanwhile, property tax, one of the key revenue streams, was budgeted at E10,547,698. It is now forecast at E9,947,698, which comes in at 94 per cent of the target.

The report further states that, government rates, however, are performing better than anticipated. Initially budgeted at E9,679,790, the revised projection puts collections at E9,947,698, achieving 103 per cent of the budget. While income shows mixed results.



▲ Nhlangano Town Council Chief Executive Officer Babsy Mavuso.



▲ Dr Phil Mnisi says the economy is stable and promising Governor Dr Phil Mnisi having a moment during the launch.



▲ The Governor making his review presentation.

## Country's financial system stable – CBE

ESWATINI's financial system remains stable and resilient, according to the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), which released its 2025 Financial Stability Review on Tuesday.

The Bank says that despite rising fiscal pressures including a projected E2.46 billion deficit the country's financial sector continues to operate from a position of strength.

Presenting the Review, CBE Governor Dr Phil Mnisi said the stability is supported by accommodative monetary conditions, steady credit flows and strong capital positions within financial institutions.

"A key contributor was last year's 75 basis-point cut to the discount rate, bringing it to 6.75 per cent which eased borrowing conditions and supported economic activity through the 12 months to June 2025," said Mnisi in his

presentation.

The Review shows that banks remain well-capitalised, liquid and able to withstand shocks, despite global economic uncertainty.

According to Mnisi credit to households and businesses continued to grow at a moderate pace, while non-performing loans remain contained. Mnisi said this performance reflects prudent regulation and sustained confidence in the financial system.

However, the CBE also pointed to emerging pressures, particularly within government finances.

"The projected E2.46 billion fiscal deficit, widened by the recent public-sector salary review, remains one of the main risks the Bank is monitoring. While the deficit is significant, the CBE stressed that it is manageable and does not currently threaten financial stability," he said.

Mnisi said highlighting the deficit is part of the Bank's proactive approach to risk identification, aimed at ensuring policymakers respond early before fiscal challenges spill into the banking sector.

He emphasised that coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities will be essential to maintaining stability through 2025.

Despite these pressures, the tone of the Review is broadly positive. The CBE maintains that Eswatini's financial system continues to show resilience, supported by sound regulation, stable credit conditions and improved market confidence.

The Bank reiterated its commitment to transparency, noting that publicly releasing the Review helps strengthen trust and ensure that financial institutions and the public remain informed about risks and opportunities.



# Government pushes for healthy competition to drive economic growth

By Delisa Magagula

THE government has reiterated its commitment to strengthening competition in Eswatini's markets, saying fair and healthy competition is essential for economic growth, innovation and consumer welfare.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo, Under Secretary Phesheya Dube said the government continues to support strong regulatory systems that promote fair play among companies, prevent anti-competitive conduct and safeguard consumers.

He was addressing delegates during the commemoration of World Competition Day, held under the global theme Artificial Intelligence, Consumers and Competition Policy.

Dube said competition is not merely a technical concept but a central driver of development.

"Competitive markets drive efficiency, stimulate innovation, attract investment and ultimately contribute to job creation and social welfare," he said.

He added that the government recognises the role of the Eswatini Competition Commission (ECC) in maintaining a fair economic environment.

"By protecting consumers from exploitative and unfair practices, the Commission contributes directly to public confidence in the economy," he said.

Dube noted that as markets evolve through digitalisation and artificial intelligence, competition policy must keep pace. Emerging risks such as data misuse, market concentration and unfair digital practices, he said, require stronger vigilance and collaboration across sectors.

"Regulators cannot afford to look backwards while markets move forward. No single institution can address these challenges alone; coordination and shared understanding are essential," he said.

He further emphasised that strong competition policy supports the government's broader goals under the national development agenda.

"Markets that work well create opportunities for all Emaswati and encourage wider participation, which in turn reduces inequality," Dube said.

Meanwhile, ECC Board Chairperson Sandile Simelane officially opened the commemoration, stressing that competition and consumer protection are fundamental pillars of a healthy economy.

Simelane acknowledged that many people still do not fully understand the role of the Commission, but said its work remains critical in safeguarding the integrity of markets.

"Most of us did not understand the function of a competition commission until we saw the impact of its work," he said.

He pointed to practical examples within the region, emphasising that effective enforcement improves pricing, efficiency and fairness.

"Look at South Africa when Covid-19 tests dropped from E800 to E400 after competition intervention. That shows why a competition commission matters," he said.

Simelane encouraged wider public engagement with the ECC to ensure businesses and consumers are fully informed about



▲ Industry players who came to launch awareness day.

their rights and obligations.

He said technological advancements, particularly in AI, present both opportunities and risks that regulators must understand and respond to.

"AI can improve services and expand choice, but it can also lead to unfair conduct if not supervised. Competition authorities must remain vigilant so innovation supports rather than undermines fair markets," he said.

Worth noting both speakers highlighted that Eswatini's economy is increasingly shaped by digital platforms, mobile money, automated systems and AI-driven tools used in banking, retail and public services.

Dube said that with more consumers interacting with automated systems daily, safeguarding their rights is a priority.

"Consumer spending drives economic activity. By ensuring proper safeguards against unfair practices, competition policy strengthens confidence, enabling businesses to grow while consumers benefit from choice and affordability," he said.

Simelane echoed the message, noting that while AI improves efficiency such as faster loan processing or round-the-clock customer support it must be used responsibly.

He said companies must ensure transparency and fairness in how digital tools operate. "Businesses should clearly disclose when customers are interacting with chatbots and provide an option to speak to a real person," he said. He added that consumer data protection remains essential.

Both the government and the Commission stressed that promoting fair competition requires partnership among regulators, businesses and civil society. Dube called for ongoing cooperation to ensure markets remain fair and competitive.

"We encourage continued engagement between the Commission, sector regulators, the private sector and civil society to ensure that competition policy remains responsive and effective," he said.

Simelane said the Commission will con-



▲ Panel discussions around competition was held.

tinue educating stakeholders and enforcing competition law to maintain open, fair markets. "Healthy competition strengthens our economy. It drives better products, better prices and better opportunities for all," he said.

He thanked delegates for participating and expressed confidence that the day's discussions would contribute meaningfully to Eswatini's economic development.

**“Consumer spending drives economic activity. By ensuring proper safeguards against unfair practices, competition policy strengthens confidence, enabling businesses to grow while consumers benefit from choice and affordability”**



▲ US Phesheya Dube represented the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.



SOUTH Africa is working on ways to support its ferrochrome industry, state power utility Eskom said on Monday, as it announced an agreement with Samancor Chrome and the Glencore-Merafe Chrome Venture.

Eskom said in a statement that the memorandum of understanding with the two companies followed constructive engagements on Friday with the country's minister of electricity and energy and trade unions.

Samancor Chrome and the joint venture between Glencore and Merafe Resources have said they are considering job cuts because of pressures including the cost of electricity.

Energy regulator Nersa is currently reviewing an interim power tariff adjustment for the two firms, and the government is working on a longer-term mechanism to support competitive pricing for the ferrochrome sector, Eskom said.

South Africa holds approximately 80% of the world's known chrome ore reserves, according to Glencore, positioning the country as a key player in global ferrochrome production.

Once an interim tariff for Samancor Chrome and the Glencore-Merafe Chrome Venture is approved the companies have committed to suspend layoff processes and bring back about 40% of their furnace capacity while a long-term solution is being developed, Eskom added.

(Reuters)

# SA working on ways to help ferrochrome firms –Eskom



▲ Eskom said in a statement that the memorandum of understanding with the two companies followed constructive engagements on Friday with the country's minister of electricity and energy and trade unions.

## PetroSA approves Shell as majority partner in block offshore SA

SOUTH Africa's legacy national oil company, PetroSA, has approved a deal to give Shell Offshore a 60% stake in its Block 2C, off the country's west coast, a document seen by Reuters showed on Monday.

If successfully concluded, the agreement will strengthen oil major Shell's exposure to the Orange Basin, which has become one of the world's most coveted exploration zones after major oil discoveries in neighbouring Namibia.

A short note under PetroSA's priority programmes said the company had approved the farm-in deal to allow Shell Offshore to take a 60% interest "with Shell committing a \$25

million signing bonus and full cost carry (of around \$135-\$150 million) for three wells".

The chief executive at PetroSA, which holds 100% of Block 2C, pending the deal, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A Shell spokesperson said commercial sensitivities prevented any comment on "specific opportunities", but added the company was "continuously evaluating various portfolio options to grow our business".

Shell is already aiming to explore along South Africa's west coast and in July was granted environmental authorisation to drill up to five deep-water wells in the Northern

Cape Ultra Deep Block in the Orange Basin.

It has not said when any drilling will begin.

In October Shell applied to appeal a high court decision blocking exploration in the west coast offshore Block 5/6/7, as a number of court cases brought by environmental groups delay planned drilling.

PetroSA, which this year was incorporated into the new South African National Petroleum Company, holds many assets, including offshore acreage and a gas-to-liquid plant at Mossel Bay in the Western Cape, which is under care and maintenance.

(Reuters)



▲ David Ellison, CEO of Paramount Skydance, exits following an interview at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City.

## Warner Bros fight heats up with \$108 billion hostile bid from Paramount

PARAMOUNT Skydance on Monday launched a hostile bid worth \$108.4 billion for Warner Bros Discovery, in a last-ditch effort to outbid Netflix and create a media powerhouse that would challenge the dominance of the streaming giant.

Netflix had emerged victorious on Friday from a weeks-long bidding war with Paramount and Comcast, securing a \$72 billion equity deal for Warner Bros Discovery's TV, film studios and streaming assets. But Paramount's latest attempt means the jockeying for Warner Bros and its prized HBO and DC Comics assets will not come to a conclusion swiftly.

Paramount's \$30-per-share cash offer includes financing from Affinity Partners, the investment firm run by Jared

Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, and several Middle Eastern government-run investment funds, and is backstopped by the Ellison family.

Larry Ellison, the world's second-richest person, is the father of Paramount head David Ellison and has close ties to the White House.

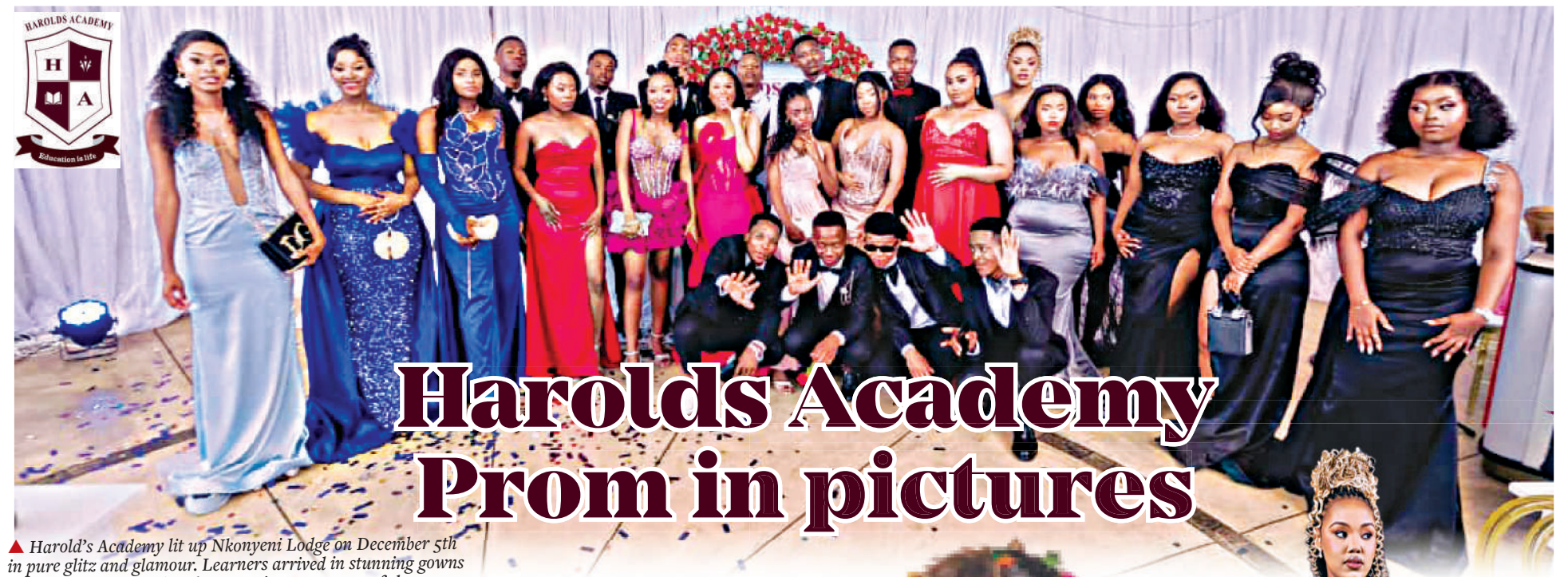
The studio argues its bid for the entirety of Warner Bros Discovery is superior to Netflix's bid, providing shareholders \$18 billion more in cash and an easier path to regulatory approval. It also argued that Paramount-Warner Bros combination would be in the best interest of the creative community, movie theaters and consumers, who would benefit from enhanced competition.

(Reuters)



▲ A view shows a logo of Shell petrol station in South East London, Britain.





# Harold's Academy Prom in pictures

▲ Harold's Academy lit up Nkonyeni Lodge on December 5th in pure glitz and glamour. Learners arrived in stunning gowns and sharp suits, turning the venue into a runway of elegance. The night sparkled with music, laughter, and unforgettable moments, celebrating youth, style, and achievement in true prom-night fashion.



Prom King Mhlango Cebolenkhosi and Prom Queen Sukati Siyandza.

◀ Brown Jasmine

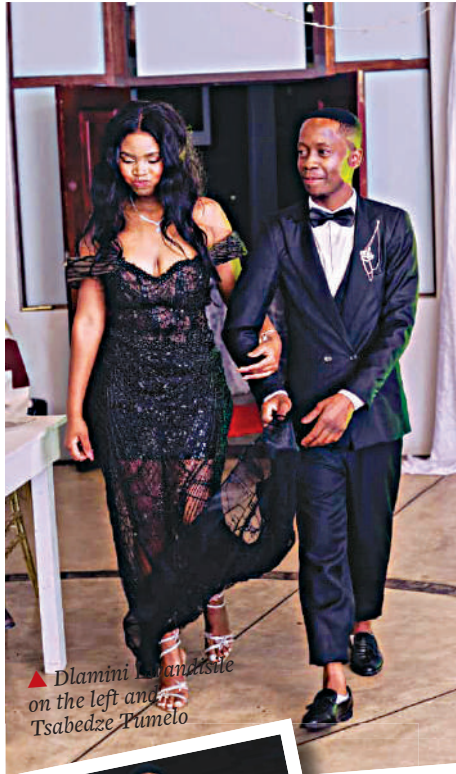
▲ Sikhondze Noncedo

▲ Yende Fezokuhle





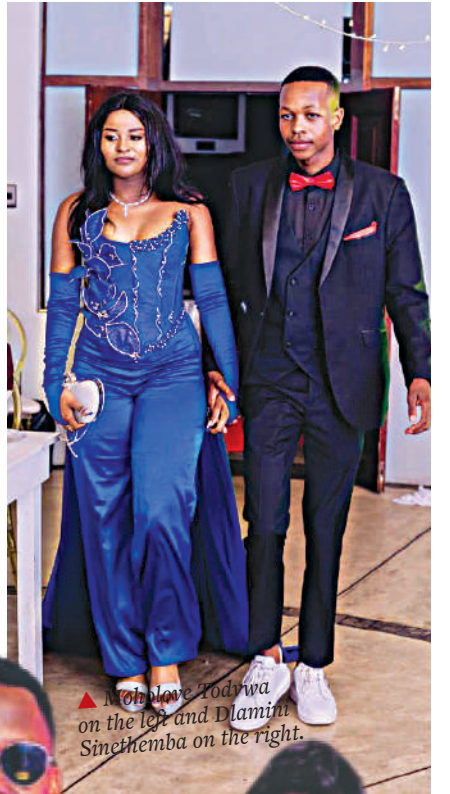
▲ Zwane Siphosethu



▲ Dlamini Lomandise on the left and Tsabedze Pumelo



▲ Dlamini Lomandise on the left and Tsabedze Pumelo



▲ Mkhoswe Todiwa on the left and Dlamini Sinthemba on the right.



▲ Shongwe Nosizolwethu



▲ Sanele Mngometulu



▲ Masilela Musa on the left and Mamba Siphilile on the right



▲ Mota Bonguthando and Magagula Siwakhile



▲ Mahlalela Dion on the left and Dlamini Nellie on the right



▲ Nhlabatsi Nonjabulo on the left and Popoola Boluwatife on the right.



▲ Yende Fezokuhle on the left and Shongwe Siletselwe on the right.



▲ Dlamini Sive and Dlamini Sebenele.



# Stella Jacobs launches new record label

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group



▲ Stella Jacobs.

Jacobs announced a significant partnership that will enhance the reach of her music. Gem of Africa has secured a distribution deal with Paradise Africa, a move that will ensure all future releases are available on major digital streaming platforms.

“We have officially secured a distribution deal with Paradise Africa, so every release can be available on all digital streaming platforms. Thank you for believing in me, even when I struggled to believe in myself. This new chapter is ours,” she stated.

ESWATINI female musician Stella Jacobs has embarked on an exciting new chapter in her career by launching her own independent record label, Gem of Africa.

The announcement comes shortly after the expiration of her contract with Melting C, the label that previously represented her. In a press release, Stella Jacobs shared the personal journey that led to the creation of Gem of Africa. She revealed that years of feeling overlooked and facing obstacles in releasing her music motivated her to take control of her artistic destiny. “I finally get to share something that means the world to me. After years of feeling overlooked and struggling to release my music, I decided to believe in myself the way I’ve always wished others would,” she said.

Gem of Africa, according to Stella Jacobs, has been legally registered. She emphasised this point, stating, “This is more than a label, it’s my freedom, my confidence, and a promise to put my voice and my vision first.”

The launch of Gem of Africa also signals a new era of engagement with her fanbase. Stella Jacobs acknowledged the patience and support of her followers during challenging times. “To my beautiful supporters, I’m truly sorry for keeping you waiting. Your patience has kept me going through some of the toughest moments,” she expressed with gratitude.

In addition to establishing her label,

## Poetess Landa issues public apology for Poetry In Comfort’s no-show

THE much-anticipated Poetry In Comfort show, held on Saturday at the Liberty Centre in Manzini, was marked by both artistic triumphs and unexpected controversy after two South African headliners, Poetess Landa and Zamoh Cofi failed to appear on stage.

Poetess Landa, whose performance was among the most anticipated of the day, later issued a formal public apology to her Eswatini fans. Her heartfelt message, released shortly after the show, expressed regret over her absence and explained that a sudden vehicle breakdown had halted her trip to Manzini.

“Dear esteemed fans and audience, I regret to announce that I was unable to attend the Poetry in Comfort event held in Eswatini, Manzini on the 6th of December 2025 as scheduled. Unfortunately, I encountered a vehicle breakdown en route to the event, which prevented me from making it to the venue. I sincerely apologise to all who were looking forward to my participation and extend my deepest gratitude to the organisers and attendees for their understanding. Your support means the world to me, and I hope to make it up to you in the future.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support,” she stated in her

official communication.

However, the absence of the second South African act, celebrated poet Zamo Cofi, deepened the concern. Unlike Landa, Cofi issued no apology or explanation, leaving both the audience and event organisers with unanswered questions. In an interview with the show’s director Sibonokuhle Simelane, he confirmed that only one of the two international guests had communicated before the event.

### Troubling

Simelane acknowledged receiving an update about Poetess Landa’s tyre problem but said the case of Zamo Cofi was more troubling. According to him, the poet went completely silent a day before the show and remained unreachable during the entire event.

“He went offline a day before the show and never reverted to me. We paid him in full,” he revealed.



▲ Poetess Landa.



▲ Young Zesh.

## Young Zesh credits fans for successful ‘Homecoming’

LOCAL music sensation Young Zesh has publicly expressed heartfelt gratitude to his fans, collaborators, and supporters following the overwhelming success of his recent ‘Homecoming’ event.

His sold-out concert was held at Mdzimba View Shisanyama on Saturday. Young Zesh described the atmosphere at the event as more than just a performance venue, but a space transformed into a familial gathering where destiny seemed to align. “To my fans, you carried me. You made that space feel like home, like family, like destiny aligning. You don’t just support me; you build me,” he said.

The star also extended warm thanks to the DJs and fellow artists from both Eswatini and South Africa who contributed their talents and energy to the show. “To the DJs and artists both Eswatini and South Africa who came and shared their craft, bantwana basekhaya, you brought the fire. You honoured me with your time, your talent, your energy. I’m grateful beyond words.”

### Recognise

Young Zesh did not forget to recognise his family’s unwavering support, crediting them for their prayers, belief, and emotional strength during moments of self-doubt. “To my family, thank you for holding me together, praying for me, believing in me when I doubted myself,” he said.

He also praised Mdzimba View Shisanyama for their crucial role in hosting and supporting the event. “And to Mdzimba View Shisanyama, my home ground, thank you for opening the gates wide for me, for trusting my vision, and for being the pillar behind this homecoming. You didn’t just host the event, you embraced it, and you embraced me,” Young Zesh remarked.

Looking ahead, Young Zesh announced plans to make the ‘Homecoming’ event an annual tradition, promising an even bigger and more vibrant celebration next year. “And listen, we are doing this again next year. This will now be tradition. This is our gathering. This is our story. Next year, we go even higher, even louder, even deeper. Ngiyanibonga from the bottom of my heart. The mountain stood with me, and I felt it,” he concluded.



# Kanye West, Bianca Censori ‘runaway’ to South Korea

CHICAGO - Kanye West and Bianca Censori are traveling the world together again ... with fans catching them arriving in South Korea early Saturday morning.

The husband and wife duo landed at Incheon International Airport just outside of Seoul around 6 AM local time ... and, while they were almost certainly exhausted from the overnight flight, Ye stopped to sign a few John Hancocks for fans.

West doesn't speak, but he quickly scrawls his name on a few different items before walking off with his better half and their security.

While we've seen both Kanye and Bianca several times in recent months, we haven't seen them together as much -- pretty different from the beginning of their relationship in 2023 when the two were running all over the world hand in hand.

Of course, Censori shocked everyone by showing up basically naked to the Grammy Awards red carpet back in February ... before she and Ye made a hasty exit.

More recently, we've seen Bianca spending time with her family and taking care of some personal appointments ... like



▲ Kanye West and Bianca Censori.

earlier this week when we she tried to cover up her identity by using a pair of spandex shorts she stripped off. Kanye usually rocks the stage with a concert or two when out in Korea or Japan, even though it doesn't

appear he has anything on the books.

Don't be surprised if we see him dominating the stage in the next couple days ... with Bianca backing him up from her seat, of course! **TMZ**



▲ Tebogo Thobejane.

## Madlanga Commission:

### Tebogo Thobejane condemns killing of witness

FORMER “Muvhango” star Tebogo Thobejane has condemned the killing of Madlanga Commission witness Marius van der Merwe, who was shot on Friday, December 5, in Brakpan.

The witness's death comes after he testified before the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry last month, where he implicated the suspended Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department (EMPD) Deputy Chief, Julius Mkhwanazi. The commission is probing allegations of police interference and corruption within law enforcement structures.

Thobejane used a series of Instagram stories, which have since been deleted, to speak about the death of witness D.

She questioned the state of South Africa's justice system, saying the country continues to invest millions in the Madlanga Commission while witnesses remain exposed.

#### Broken

“My heart is broken. There are so many flaws in this system that it has become painful to watch. Millions are being poured into commissions while the people who have suffered under these criminals are left unprotected. Witness D's death showed us everything we needed to know,” Thobejane said. Thobejane herself survived an assassination attempt in 2023. The social media star was shot in Sandton and sustained a gunshot wound on her foot after she was attacked by three men on the N1 highway. Thobejane's ex-boyfriend, Vusimuzi “Cat” Matlala, was linked to an alleged assassination attempt against her. However, Matlala has denied any involvement in this tragic incident.

Matlala is also facing allegations of police infiltration, money laundering and corruption within the justice system.

Thobejane added that Witness D's murder was further proof that the system does not prioritise people on the ground.

“The justice system does not care about ordinary citizens. Those inside the commission sit behind protected walls. We are the ones who bleed, bury, and fear for our lives. And somehow, we are told to stay calm and stop ‘venting’,” she wrote. **IOL**

## Thandolwethu Zondi on his role on ‘Outlaws’

JOHANNESBURG - Thandolwethu Zondi is cementing his status as one of South Africa's young great talents.

At 23, the KwaZulu-Natal-born actor's career is on a surge.

After his stint on Shaka iLembe season 2 and the teen drama Go!, his latest role on Outlaws season 2 has everyone talking. He plays Mthunzi Biyela. whose romance with Buang (played by Mamodibe Ramodibe) stirs family tension. “I had to dig deep because I was discovering Mthunzi. I had to start by asking myself: have I ever been in love to a point where it could cost me my loyalty? Those were the hard questions I needed to confront,” Thandolwethu said.

“As I explored him, I realised the only person who truly loved Mthunzi was his mother — and she had passed away. The loyalty he held was towards people he felt weren't really loyal to him in return. When he met Buang and fell in love with her, that love completely surpassed the loyalty he had for his family.” Before acting, Thandolwethu's dream was to pursue

sports on the field and off the field as a commentator and presenter. Today he's fully dedicated to his craft. He goes through intense training for his scenes. There are scenes where he had to walk barefoot across the North West terrain and a scene on a bus where it was extremely hot. “By the time I stepped onto the Outlaws set, we had a stunt coordinator, Jose, who knew how to work with us. Because of my training from Shaka iLembe, I had all that muscle memory. I knew how to move, and Jose told me we didn't need extra lessons. Coming from a production with heavy stunt work helped.”

Having shared the screen with legends including Dawn Thandeka King and Slindile Nodangala means Thandolwethu learnt from the best. “Mam' Sli played a huge role in my acting career. On set she would give me notes and share insights about her craft. She was like a mother to me. Sometimes I'd watch the veterans work when I'm not in the scene. I always want to see them shoot because I want to see the choices they make.



▲ Actor Thandolwethu Zondi.

We grew so much closer and she helped me tremendously.”

**Tshisa Live**

## Mzansi Magic renews hit telenovela ‘Inimba’ for season two

JOHANNESBURG - Mzansi Magic has officially renewed its breakout telenovela Inimba for a second season, following an exceptional debut year that has seen the show dominate ratings, social media conversations, and awards circuits throughout 2025.

Since its April premiere, Inimba has emerged as one of the country's most talked-about productions, consistently trending weekly as viewers scrutinise its intricate plot. The fan frenzy helped the show secure an impressive 90-episode extension in its first season, an achievement rarely seen in the genre. The show's success was further cemented at the 2025 National Film and Television Awards (NFTA), where lead actress Zenande Mfenyana walked away with the Best Actress in a Television Drama award for her gripping portrayal of Thumeka. The strength of Inimba lies in its formidable cast, which includes Lunathi Mampofu as the fierce Zoleka Bikitsha and Sisanda Hewana as the unshakeable Hlathi



Mabandla, a character now famous for the viral line, KukwaMabandla apha (this is Mabandla's home). Shirley Adonisi, the director of M-Net's local entertainment channels, found the renewal to be an easy decision. “Inimba has taken the 9pm slot by storm. It's a story that resonates deeply with our viewers because of the way it explores ambition, tradition, and the messy beauty of family dynamics,” said Adonisi. “The

overwhelming response proves just how connected audiences are to this world, and we're thrilled to give them more.”

Season 1 delivered moment after moment, from Zoleka's jaw-dropping return after two decades to the heated family showdowns, the adored “LaZo” love story between Zoleka and Lazarus, and the one-hour wedding special that trended for days. **Sunday World**



KIDNEY stones are hard objects made from chemicals in your pee.

They may be as tiny as a grain of salt or as big as a corn kernel. The stones can be brown or yellow, smooth or rough. They're a sign that you might be taking in too many minerals and not enough fluids. Sometimes, you don't have any symptoms from kidney stones. But other times, it will be obvious. Pain is the most common symptom of kidney stones. Flushing one out of your body as you pee can hurt, sometimes a lot.

Kidney Stone Pain

You may not have symptoms until the stone starts to stir. It can move around inside your kidney or into your ureter, the tube that connects your kidney to your bladder. These parts, along with your urethra (the tube taking urine from your bladder outside your body) make up your urinary tract. This illustration shows the parts of your urinary tract. (Photo Credit: iStock/Getty Images)

- You may feel pain:
- In your side or back, below your ribs
  - In your lower belly
  - In your groin or testicles

The pain can shift around to different places in your body. This means the stone is making its way from your kidney through the ureter to your bladder. It might also hurt more when you pee. Your pain may range from mild to so strong that you end up in a hospital. Waves of severe pain may last from 20 minutes to an hour, before stopping for a while and then returning.

Urinary Kidney Stone Symptoms

Besides pain, you might experience the following kidney stone symptoms:

- Burning when you pee. This means a stone is near or in your bladder. It can cause a burning feeling when you urinate.
- Needing to pee more often. The kidney stone is in the lower part of your urinary tract and is irritating your bladder, causing you to have the urge to pee.
- Trouble peeing. While the kidney stone is irritating your bladder, it's also blocking your urine flow.
- Pink, red, or brown blood in your urine (hematuria). If the stone is large enough, it can irritate the lining of your urinary tract and cause it to bleed.
- Small stones in your pee. They're sometimes called gravel. These may or may not cause you pain.
- Cloudy or bad-smelling pee. The kidney stone could lead to an infection in your urinary tract.

5 Facts About Your Kidneys

Your kidneys are like a janitor and a cardiologist all in one. What else does this amazing organ do?

Fever and Chills

- While most of your kidney stone symptoms will be in your urinary tract, you might also get the following symptoms that affect other parts of your body:
- Fever and chills. These are signs of infection. When your immune system is fighting an infection, your body temperature rises. You may feel chilly when the fever starts and hot when the fever breaks.
  - Nausea and vomiting. Kidney stones can affect nerve connections between your urinary tract and digestive system, which may result in nausea and vomiting.

Kidney Stone Symptoms in Women vs. Men



Women and men have the same kidney stone symptoms with a few differences:

- Men and people with penises may have pain in the testicles or groin because the stone is near those areas.
- Women and people with vaginas may have pelvic pain or get a urinary tract infection (UTI). A kidney stone can encourage bacterial growth, and women have shorter urethras than men, which makes it easier for bacteria to reach the bladder.
- Men are twice as likely as women to experience kidney stones. Scientists have been researching the reasons and point to these factors:
  - **Water intake.** Men often drink less water than women. Drinking too little water is a risk factor for kidney stones.
  - **Calcium intake.** A diet high in calcium lowers the risk of kidney stones, and women tend to consume more calcium than men.
  - **Protein intake.** Animal protein is associated with a higher risk of kidney stones in men and older women.
  - **Hormones.** Postmenopausal women are at a greater risk of kidney stones than premenopausal women, suggesting that the female hormone estrogen might have a protective effect.

► **Urinary makeup.** Men tend to have a lower urine volume and more of the minerals sodium and oxalate in their urine than women. These are all factors that raise the likelihood of kidney stones.

The number of women experiencing kidney stones is rising, which may be because of their lifestyle and dietary changes.

Kidney Stones Symptoms vs. UTI

Symptoms of kidney stones and UTIs can be similar, sometimes leaving you confused over which condition you might have.

Both conditions have the same symptoms of:

- Burning while peeing
  - Frequent urge to pee
  - Cloudy, bloody, or smelly urine
  - Pain in your body
- Here are some of the differences:
- With a kidney stone, you might have pain in your back or side. With a UTI, you might have pain in your bladder, groin, or lower abdomen.

- With kidney stones, your urine is more likely to contain blood.
- With a UTI, your pee is more likely to be cloudy and smell bad.
- With a UTI, you might have pain when having sex.

► With kidney stones, you might have fever, nausea, and vomiting if you get an infection. There's a strong connection between having UTIs and kidney stones, meaning that if you've had one of these conditions, you're at a raised risk of getting the other.

Do Bigger Stones Hurt More?

Generally, yes. If a stone gets stuck in one of your ureters, then it will cause a lot of pain. Your ureters are very narrow, only 3-4 millimeters (about 1/8 inch) wide. A big stone is more likely to get stuck there.

If the stone isn't moving through your ureter and is just sitting in your kidneys,

then it may not cause any pain even if it's big. Small stones that are on the move may cause you more pain.

How Long Can Kidney Stone Symptoms Last?

Symptoms last at least until your stones pass. So how long do stones take to pass? It depends on the size of the stone.

All in all, you might have pain and symptoms for at least a month. After the stone passes, you may still have a little residual pain and soreness from your urinary tract being irritated, but it should go away in a few days.

What Are the Symptoms of Passing a Kidney Stone?

The first one is pain. Kidney stone pain will ebb and flow with the movement (or nonmovement) of the stone. Most of the time, the pain goes away when the stone enters your bladder. Your urethra is at least twice as wide as one of your ureters, so a kidney stone shouldn't give much trouble exiting your bladder, unless it's very big.

Once your stone makes it to your bladder, your body pain usually subsides, but you might start to get bladder problems like burning and frequent pee. If your stone is very large, you might have more pain as it pushes through the urethra and out your body.

Kidney Stone Pain Relief

If you've been diagnosed with kidney stones, you should:

- Drink plenty of fluids to try to flush out the stone. Aim for 2-3 quarts a day. Water is best.
- Take over-the-counter pain medication such as ibuprofen or naproxen (but ask your doctor first; NSAIDs can be harmful to your kidneys). Ask your doctor about prescription medicines like nifedipine (Adalat and Procardia) or tamsulosin (Flomax) that relax your ureter to help stones pass through.

When to See a Doctor

- You should see a doctor if you have:
- Pain that prevents you from sitting comfortably
  - Pain with nausea and vomiting
  - Pain with fever and chills
  - Blood in your urine
  - Problems with peeing

These are all signs that you have a kidney stone. Your doctor can do blood and urine tests and a CT scan to confirm. They'll advise whether to wait for the stone to pass on its own or take other measures. In the case of larger stones, your doctor can give you treatments to break up the stones, install a stent to make the ureter temporarily wider for easier passage, or surgically remove the stones from your body.

See your doctor right away if you have severe pain or signs of an infection or urinary blockage. **WebMD**



# Salah 'left out of Liverpool squad' for Inter clash

**MOHAMED Salah has been left out of Liverpool's squad for their Champions League trip to Inter on Tuesday night following his explosive rant.**

That's according to a well-sourced report from RMC Sport, backed up by a story earlier on Monday from David Ornstein.

The club legend spoke out after not featuring against Leeds on Saturday, claiming it feels like the club "has thrown him under the bus" amid a wretched run of form for the Premier League champions and accusing them of breaking promises from the summer.

Salah also said there is "no relationship between us" when asked about under-fire manager Arne Slot, leaving his position in the team near-untenable.

The Egyptian added that he would say "goodbye" to Anfield after next weekend's home game against Brighton but stopped short of admitting he wants to leave, instead referencing his departure for the Africa Cup of Nations.

It feels very unlikely Salah will feature in that game either barring a dramatic change, with Liverpool moving on without him for a very



▲ Mohamed Salah has been left out of Liverpool's squad for their Champions League trip to Inter on Tuesday night following his explosive rant.

tough clash with Inter. The Reds are in danger of missing out on automatic qualification for the round of 16 having lost two of their five games so far, most recently a 4-1 hammering by PSV Eindhoven.

## Salah destroying his Liverpool legacy – Rooney

LIVERPOOL forward Mohamed Salah is destroying his legacy at the club with his fiery reaction to being left out of the side, former Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney said.

Salah has failed to start their last three matches and lashed out at the club and coach Arne Slot following Saturday's 3-3 Premier League draw with Leeds United, saying he had been made a scapegoat for their poor start to the season.

The Egyptian, who signed a two-year contract extension in April, has become an iconic figure in an eight-year spell at Liverpool in which he has won two Premier League titles and scored 250 goals in all competitions.

However, he has scored just five goals and appeared in 19 games in all competitions this season.

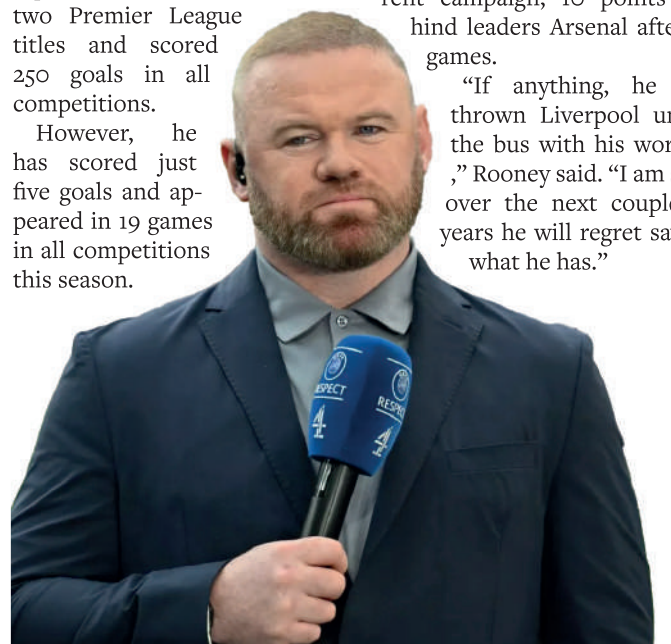
"He is absolutely destroying his legacy at Liverpool," Rooney said on his podcast. "It would be sad for him to throw it all away. He's gone about it all wrong."

"Arne Slot has to show his authority and pull him in and say, 'you are not travelling with the team, what you said is not acceptable.' Take yourself off to Afcon (Africa Cup of Nations) and let everything calm down. If I was him there would be no way he would be in the team."

Salah had said he felt as if he had been "thrown under the bus" with Liverpool failing to reproduce their title-winning form from last season.

They are ninth in the current campaign, 10 points behind leaders Arsenal after 15 games.

"If anything, he has thrown Liverpool under the bus with his words...," Rooney said. "I am sure over the next couple of years he will regret saying what he has."



▲ Former Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney.

## Tearful Norris takes F1 title

**ABU DHABI, - McLaren's Lando Norris sobbed tears of joy and relief as he won the Formula One championship for the first time and ended Max Verstappen's four-year reign with a nervy third place at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday.** Red Bull's Verstappen, whose eighth triumph of the campaign was one more than the new champion managed, won the season-ender with McLaren's Oscar Piastri runner-up and 12.5 seconds behind at the chequered flag. Norris, Britain's 11th Formula One world champion at the age of 26 and McLaren's eighth since 1974, took his points tally to 423 with Verstappen on 421 and Piastri third with 410.

"Thank you guys," he gasped over the team radio. "You have made my dreams come true."

McLaren, who secured the constructors' championship in October for the second year in a row, won both titles in the same season for the first time since 1998.

"I've not cried in a while. I didn't think I would cry but I did," an emotional Norris said in the post-race interview, after also shedding tears inside his helmet on the slowing down lap around the floodlit Yas Marina circuit. "It feels amazing. I now know what Max feels like a little bit."

"I want to congratulate Max and Oscar, my two biggest competitors the whole season. It's been a pleasure to race against both of them. It's been an honour, I've learned a lot from both," he added.

Norris's mother Cisca gave Piastri a con-



▲ McLaren's Lando Norris sobbed tears of joy and relief as he won the Formula One championship for the first time.

soling hug while both Verstappen and the Australian congratulated McLaren's first champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2008 in a show of sportsmanship.

The victory denied Verstappen five titles in a row, a feat only Ferrari great Michael Schumacher has managed to date.

"The way we fought back in the second half of the season, we can be really, really proud of that," said the Dutch driver, who was 104 points behind then-leader Piastri at the end of August, over the radio to his team.

"So, don't be too disappointed. I'm definitely not disappointed. I'm really proud of everyone for not giving up."

(Reuters)

## LIV Golf CEO says informal talks with PGA Tour ongoing, no deal imminent

LIV Golf CEO Scott O'Neil has said informal conversations between the Saudi-funded circuit and the PGA Tour are continuing but any hope of ending the sport's longest-running civil war is not currently on the horizon.

O'Neil maintains regular contact with PGA Tour CEO Brian Rolapp, a friend and former business-school classmate, but said their communication has not brought any meaningful progress towards finalising the framework agreement the two circuits announced in June 2023 before either were in their current role.

"The reality is we continue to have conversations, and Brian and I do have a relationship – we text, we talk relatively regularly," O'Neil told Reuters during an interview from LIV Golf's New York office.

"We are not in any serious negotiation at this point. We both believe that there are opportunities to work together, and we both believe that there is plenty of space in golf. We at LIV Golf are intently focused on developing LIV Golf around the world."

LIV Golf, which held its inaugural event in June 2022, has shaken up the golf world like never before and, with the help of mega-money contracts and lucrative purses, has lured several top names from the PGA Tour into its stable of players. LIV players

include the likes of Bryson DeChambeau -- considered golf's greatest showman -- and fellow major champions Jon Rahm, Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka.

After a year of acrimony, the PGA Tour, Europe-based DP World Tour and Saudi backers of LIV Golf announced in June 2023 a framework agreement to house their commercial operations in a new entity but have failed to reach a definitive agreement.

The divide has even captured the attention of U.S. President Donald Trump, an avid golfer who was part of two meetings on the matter at the White House in February when there was optimism that the schism between LIV Golf and the PGA Tour would soon be resolved.

O'Neil said he still felt LIV Golf should "do something" with the PGA Tour but did not elaborate on what any sort of agreement would look like. He also did not give details on when, or if, the two sides plan to meet next, a stance he said he shared with Rolapp. "We both agreed that we are going to keep all that stuff between the two of us," said O'Neil. "If there is ever anything to report we'll report it." When it comes to LIV's ongoing bid for world ranking points, which are considered critical given the majors use them to help determine their fields, O'Neil is hopeful a decision on the matter could happen in the coming weeks. (Reuters)



# Ouaddou banking on revived Rele to help Pirates win league

ORLANDO Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou has heaped praise on Relebohile Mofokeng, saying the revived 'President yama2K' could be the difference-maker in the Betway Premiership title race.

Mofokeng scored the winner for the Buccaneers in extra-time during the Carling Knockout final against Marumo Gallants at the New Peter Mokaba Stadium this past weekend. Overall, the 21-year-old forward has recorded one goal and two assists in his last five appearances since coming back from an injury.

Ouaddou believes a fit Mofokeng can help his team win the league title this season.

Pirates are currently top the league standings with 28 points from 12 matches. They lead second-placed Mamelodi Sundowns by two points and have a game in hand over them.

"The president (Relebohile Mofokeng) is very important for us," said Ouaddou. "I love his style, his personality. He's someone who lives football. He dreams of football 24 hours a day. When he's tired, you can see it, but when he's fit, even at 70%, he changes games."

Mofokeng missed three games in October and early November and that raised specula-

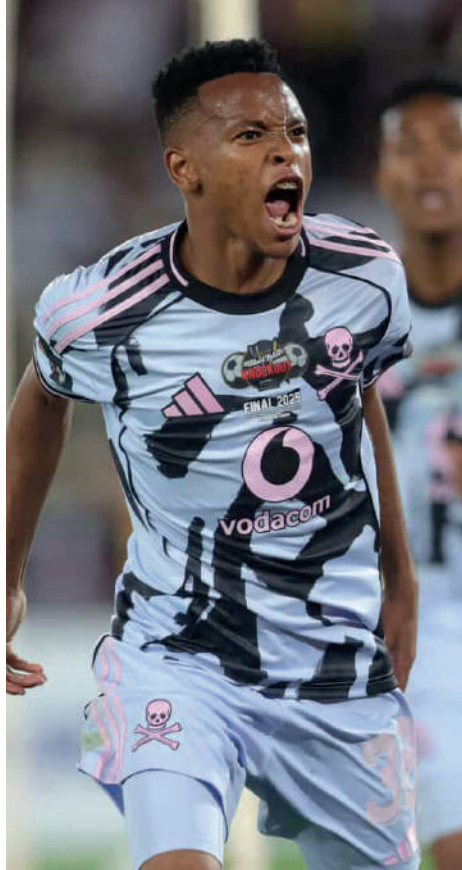
tion that the Bafana Bafana winger could be on his way out of Pirates. Ouaddou blames fatigue for the youngster's dip in form, adding that Mofokeng is not a robot, he does get tired.

"I cannot say too much about the beginning of the season. For me, when you play many games, qualification for the competition in the national team, I think he did not have a lot of time for rest. He only had 10 days or two weeks and the season before he played, maybe 40 or 45 games.

"So, he is not a robot. I can understand that he was a bit tired, we gave him some rest, and he came back with very good fitness."

"You can see in the last three, four matches he was part of the success of the team, he got some fantastic assists. You can see the difference between a fit Rele Mofokeng and a tired Rele Mofokeng. "If he reaches 100%, the president is someone who can make us win the league," concluded Ouaddou. The Carling Knockout final was the Buccaneers' last match for the year 2025 as the Premier Soccer League has taken a break due to the AFCON.

They will resume their league campaign with a clash against Sekhukhune United on 24 January. (The Citizen)



▲ Orlando Pirates star Relebohile Mofokeng.

## Nhleko backs Mbokazi's MLS move as springboard to Europe

FORMER Bafana Bafana striker Nkosinathi Nhleko believes Mbekezeli Mbokazi's move to Major League Soccer could prove an ideal springboard to European football.

Mbokazi recently completed his switch from Orlando Pirates to MLS side Chicago Fire, a move that has drawn mixed reactions from supporters. Some fans have questioned why the 20-year-old opted for the United States instead of targeting one of Europe's more traditional big leagues, but Nhleko insists the decision could serve him well.

The former Jomo Cosmos forward also spent time in North America with FC Dallas and says Mbokazi should view the MLS as a crucial step in his development. "Remember that all the big stars like John Obi Mikel, he started in Norway and later went to Chelsea," Nhleko told Thabiso Mosia on Radio 2000. "There are other countries in Europe where you can start like Belgium, Norway and Sweden to get the experience before you go straight to the big leagues. That is because in the big leagues, you will get frustrated because you have to prove yourself time and again while you don't have the experience.

(The Citizen)

# Cardoso blames injuries for Sundowns' inconsistency

MAMELODI Sundowns head coach Miguel Cardoso has urged the club's demanding supporters to show patience as the PSL pauses for the festive period and Africa Cup of Nations.

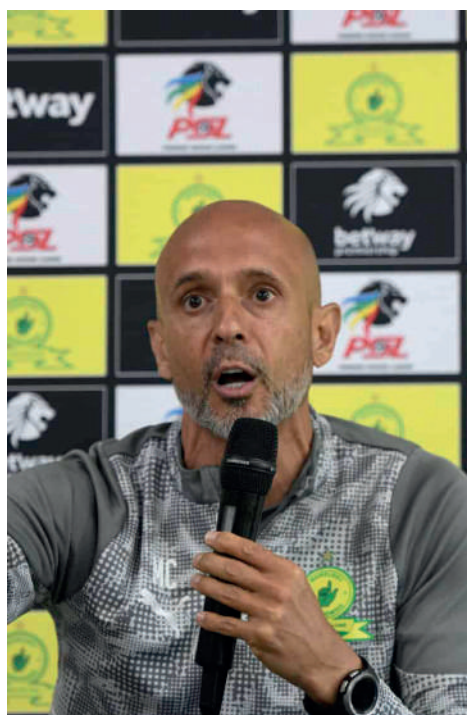
Cardoso's indifferent Sundowns The Brazilians have endured an indifferent first half of the season, with Orlando Pirates mounting a serious challenge to dethrone the defending champions.

After 12 matches, Pirates are on top of the Betway Premiership standings with 28 points, two ahead of Sundowns and with a game in hand. Sundowns' failure from both domestic cup competitions has added to growing frustration among the Masandawana faithful.

The Buccaneers have so far claimed the MTN8 and Carling Knockout while holding slight advantage in the league. The league schedule will only resume once the AFCON wraps up in the third week of January next year where Sundowns will also juggle their CAF Champions League commitments. Cardoso has pointed to a lengthy injury list among his key players as the primary cause of the side's inconsistency. "I'd like the Masandawana family to understand that unfortunately in the last two or three months, we had many players that had several long-term injuries," Cardoso said.

"Themba Zwane, Thapelo Morena, Fawaaz Basadien, Malibongwe Khoza and others [were injured]. These are national team players and probably because of that [injuries] they were not able to be on the thoughts of the national team head coach for AFCON.

"I would like to give my best wishes to the national team of South Africa. We as Sundowns and I speak for the players, we respect, totally support and we side with the national team of South Africa and we wish



▲ Mamelodi Sundowns head coach Miguel Cardoso.

them the best at AFCON."

Sundowns' AFCON stars

Despite the league break, several Sundowns players will remain in action, with Ronwen Williams, Khuliso Mudau, Aubrey Modiba, Bathusi Aubaas and Teboho Mokoena included in Bafana Bafana's AFCON squad while Iqraam Rayners has been named as a standby player by Hugo Broos. Bafana open their Group B campaign against Angola on December 22, with Egypt and Zimbabwe also in the same group. Sundowns' continental interest does not end there, as veteran goalkeeper Denis Onyango has been selected for Uganda's squad ahead of the tournament in Morocco. (The Citizen)

## Miller back for Proteas' T20s against India

WITH the next T20 World Cup, in India and Sri Lanka, now just weeks away (starting 7 February 2026), this week's series against India and then the SA20 that will follow, are hugely significant for the Proteas as they look to settle on a team and find confidence and momentum.

And one of the players who'll be keen to make a big impression is veteran star David Miller who returns to the Proteas set-up for the first time since March when he featured in the Champions Trophy.

At 36 Miller is in a fight for his place in the team, especially following the re-emergence of Dewald Brevis in recent months as well as the likes of Lhuan-dre Pretorius and Matthew Breetzke scoring big runs, while Quinton de Kock has also come out of retirement.

Having won the Test series 2-0, but lost the ODI series 2-1, the Proteas will hope for a good show in the five T20s, starting Tuesday in Cuttack. The other matches are in New Chandigarh, Dhaaramshala, Lucknow and Ahmedabad. 'Players putting up hands'

"It's been forever," said Miller on Monday. "It's been a while, but it's great to be back. It's been great watching the guys ... it makes one feel you want to be there." Miller will hope to get game-time in all three matches to show that he is still an option ahead of the World Cup. The other batters in the mix are Brevis, De Kock, Aiden Markram, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Tristan Stubbs and all-rounders Corbin Bosch, Marco Jansen and George Linde. "There's a big pool of players putting up their hands," admitted Miller, "so come the World Cup it's going to be tough for the selectors.

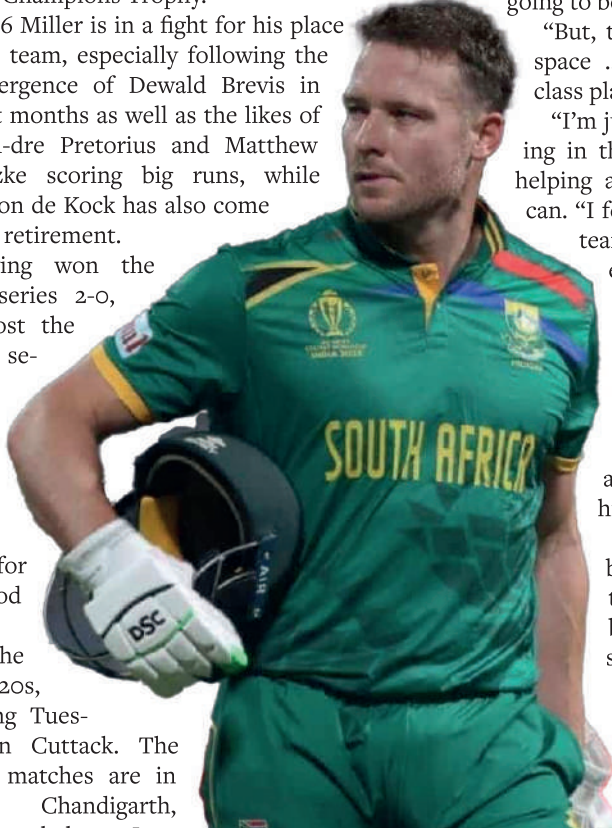
"But, the Proteas are in a good space ... we've got some world class players.

"I'm just looking forward to being in the mix, participating and helping and contributing where I can. "I feel I can add a part to the team. I've got a lot of experience and have some expertise."

'Feeling strong and fit' Miller said his time away from the game, to nurse a hamstring niggle, was good in the sense it allowed him to reflect on himself and his career.

"It was good to be away a bit. I've had time to reflect, try some things with the body, get into a different space," he said.

"At 36 I know I have to step up more when I'm away from the field. I have to be more diligent and consistent to be as fit as I can be ... but I'm feeling strong and fit and am ready to go." (The Citizen)



▲ Veteran star David Miller who returns to the Proteas set-up for the first time since March when he featured in the Champions Trophy.





Mbali Dlamini stunned the number one ranked Ncobile ‘Sncobesh’ Dlamini.



Nathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane.



Ncobile ‘Sncobesh’ Dlamini.

# Bharuka’, Mbali win E138 000 Guaranteed Pool Tourney

By Chris Dlamini

POOL star Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane and Mbali Dlamini have done it for Eswatini.

The duo was on Sunday crowned the champions of the second edition of the star-studded E138 000 Guaranteed REPS Pool Tournament at the Manzini Sports Lounge, Cardo Square in Ngwane Park, Manzini. Mondlane took home the E30 000 grand prize. The gifted Manzini Pool Club

(MPC) star had an all-Eswatini final as he edged Malkerns Pool Team and national team star, Nathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane to win the Singles Knockout category.

Interestingly, the top 8 is dominated by Eswatini players over the South African stars including their one-time national back-to-back champion Jerry ‘Gandaganda’ Naidoo. There were also players from Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Mondlane won 7-4. The runner-up received E15 000 and a further E2 000 as his other life entry of the two went as far as the quarters.

Meanwhile, Mbali stunned the country’s most gifted and respected national star, Ncobile ‘S’ncobesh’ Dlamini in the ladies category final. She emphatically annihilated the national team captain 7-2 to take home the gold medal and E7 000 cash prize.

S’ncobesh settled for second best and pocketed E3 000. After playing their two life entries to the top four, they further received E1 500 apiece.

**Open Singles Winners:**  
1. Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane (Esw) - E30 000  
2. Nathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane (Esw) - E15 000

**Ladies Winners:**  
1. Mbali Dlamini - E7 000  
2. Ncobile ‘S’ncobesh’ Dlamini - E3 000  
3. Mbali Dlamini - E1 500  
4. Ncobile ‘S’ncobesh’ Dlamini - E1 500  
5. Zweli ‘Siziba’ Dlamini (Esw) - E5 000  
6. Manyathela aka Robot (SA) - E5 000  
7. Nyawu (SA)  
8. Nathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane (Esw) - E2 000  
9. Zweli ‘Siziba’ Dlamini (Esw) - E2 000  
10. Jeremiah ‘Gandaganda’ Naidoo (SA)

By Chris Dlamini

STAR-STUDDED neighbours South Africa (SA) did not go home without a major triumph.

Their team, Siwela, also inclusive of Eswatini’s talent in Nathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane who has made ties there, beat another club from SA in the team category final.

Siwela won the tournament with a 13-9 margin in life 1 semi-finals before a 13-9 win in life 2 final, making them the overall champions and winners of the E30 000 grand prize.

Siwela is also having big names like Ryan Mashaba, Nyawu, Sjovo and Thami Jabavu. They beat Amabus to the title and E30 000 prize.

No team from Eswatini made the top four podium but Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Pool Team did put up a good challenge with life 1, only falling out in the semi-finals.

The runners-up took home E15 000 and 10 silver medals, while it was 10 gold medals and a trophy for the champions along with the cash.

For semi-finalists, both Siwela and Amabus were the winners, getting an extra E7 000 apiece.

## SA Team Siwela wins team category



South African side Siwela won the E138 000 REPS tournament knockout teams category.



MTN PREMIER LEAGUE 2025/26 REVIEW

‘Bull–ied’ to win!

... As Moneni Pirates clip ‘Birds’ wings, Green Mamba strikes ‘Weslians

By Chris Dlamini

ANOTHER weekend has come and gone in the MTN Premier League with matchweek nine leaving others thrilled, others sad, and some set to face the wrath of the league’s rules.

After every match since Friday to Sunday, it is defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs at the summit on head-to-head basis over second-placed Manzini Sea Birds, and better gial difference to third-placed and unbeaten Ezulwini United.

The latter remain the only team yet to lose a match. For the country’s crowd-pullers, also called the ‘Big 4’, things are not shaping up for basement hub giants Manzini Wanderers, while Mbabane Swallows crashed, Mbabane Highlanders and Moneni Pirates won their games.

Here’s the weekend wrap-up as the E120 000 first round ‘carrot’ race is on - only six games to it.

AT THE SUMMIT:

**Nsingizini Hotspurs - 1st (19 points)**  
- They played a goalless draw with Royal Leopard, only adding a point to have 19 at the top.

CLOSER TO SUMMIT:

**Manzini Sea Birds - 2nd (19 points)**  
- In what is so far their best start in history, Sea Birds are a threat and strong challengers for the first round leaders’ incentive. They beat a struggling Ubombo Sugar 2-0.

**Ezulwini United - 3rd (19 points)**  
- Taking on a wounded Young Buffaloes next, Ezulwini United can not be tajein lightly. This is their best run in their elite history and they look set to cause more misery for rivals.

THE UPSETS:

**Manzini Wanderers - 16 (5 points)**  
- Are they going to survive relegation this time? This is the million dollar question after the hub giants are in this league now mainly through a court verdict overturning their relegation last season. After the weekend 2-1 defeat to Green Mamba, they dropped to rock bottom in the standings.

**Mbabane Swallows - 11th (11 points)**  
- They just could not get the ball behind the Moneni Pirates net and lost 1-0.

AT ROCK BOTTOM:

**Manzini Wanderers - 16th (5 points)**  
- We’ve already gone through Wanderers and it is clear they got worse, moving from 15th to last.

THE INTOLERABLE:

**‘Juju’ motivated wars**  
- It waa disappointing to see a beautiful football game ruined by men pausing as officials of clubs. The half-time scuffle between Young Buffaloes and Mbabane Highlanders is uncalled for - all in the name of superstition. We call for a severe penalty on the perpetrators.

COACH (ES) OF THE WEEK:

**Musa Manyatsi (Ezulwini United)**  
- His team is the only unbeaten side in nine games now and they deservedly sit on third in the standings, level with joint leaders Nsingizini Hotspurs and Manzini Sea Birds.



▲ Highlanders' Thando Dube and Young Buffaloes Njabulo Maziya tussling for the ball. Highlanders won 2-1.



▲ Moneni Pirates striker Senanelo Nkhambule negotiating his way past Mbabane Swallows defenders Pirates won 1-0.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders head coach Ernest Mavuso lying on the floor during the half time tunnel tug of war between his team and Buffaloes.



▲ Young Buffaloes CEO Sandile Gwebu assisting police to pass through to stop the scuffle.

THE FANS CORNER:

Moneni Pirates supporters were the best in the Y’ello Sunday. They had their live band keep their grand stand lively and took their party to the parking lot in celebration. They licked Mbabane Swallows 1-0.

MATCHWEEK 9 RESULTS:

M. Sea Birds 2-0 U. Sugar  
R. Leopard 0-0 N. Hotspurs  
Rangers 2-3 E. United  
T. Celtics 2-1 Amawele  
G. Mamba 2-1 M. Wanderers  
M. Chiefs 1-1 Sisonkhe  
Y. Buffaloes 1-2 M. Highlanders  
M. Pirates 1-0 M. Swallows

WEDNESDAY FIXTURES (MATCHWEEK 10):

**KaLanga Technical Centre:**  
G. Mamba vs. R. Leopard 3pm

**Mayaluka Stadium:**  
Y. Buffaloes vs. M. Swallows 3pm

**King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium:**  
Rangers vs. M. Chiefs 3pm

**ambankulu Stadium:**  
T. Celtics vs. M. Pirates 3pm

**Prince of Wales Sports Ground:**  
Amawele vs. M. Sea Birds 3pm

**Nsukuwansuku Stadium:**  
Ez. United vs. N. Hotspurs 3pm

**Mavuso Sports Centre:**  
M. Highlanders vs. U. Sugar 5:30pm

**Mavuso Sports Centre:**



▲ Royal Leopard and Nsingizini Hotspurs players during the goalless draw.



CAPITAL CITY GIANTS HEAD COACH 'FLOORED':

# Ernest condemns E100 000 fine scuffle

By Chris Dlamini

PUNCHED or pushed to the floor, someone has to pay the PLE big bucks - a maximum E100 000 fine is a possibility.

PLE stands for Premier League of Eswatini. Following a half-time drama at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini on Sunday between army outfit Young Buffaloes and capital city giants Mbabane Highlanders, the latter's head coach Ernest Mavuso found himself down on the floor after falling off during the scuffle under the tunnel to the dressing rooms. Officials and players got involved, some appearing to be aggressively manhandling the other and hurling all sorts of insults. Sparking this was one of the marshals who the away team accused of blocking their way, suspecting him of using foreign substances where their players would pass. While police, some of both teams' officials, and PLE representatives were quick to intervene and separated the warring factions.

Some claimed to have been slapped in the midst of the scuffle that could see the teams charged and fined up to E100 000. This is according to Article 35 of the PLE Master Rules providing for such misconduct. A near similar case of misconduct between Buffaloes and Moneni Pirates in Mayaluka, Big Bend, got the former fined E40 000, with E20 000 suspended but they can not be charged and found guilty for a similar case until the end of the season, or it will get worse. "It's very bad for our football that we have to



▲ Mbabane Highlanders head coach Ernest Mavuso lying on the floor during the half time tunnel tug of war between his team and Buffaloes.

fight over a passage. We can't condone such but condemn it in the best possible way.

"We can't have a tunnel scuffle. We dont encourage it. Otherwise, I don't know how the scuffle involved me, but I got pushed as I was trying to open up space," he said. Mavuso said he missed his step during the pushing and shoving that was happening in the scuffle and fell. "I lost balance from the push I got during the scuffle and suddenly found myself rolling on the floor," he said. Mavuso then congregated his team and man of the match winner Msimisi Zwane.

"We have been working hard on the team cohesion, and in this game, it showed because we scored two, but there's still room for improvement," he said. He said they would definitely be beefing up the squad in the upcoming second transfer window. Mavuso will, on Wednesday, lead his team against Ubombo Sugar at the same venue, Mavuso Sports Centre, in the first match of two MTN Premier League fixtures. There was no immediate comment from PLE. However, it is anticipated that the PLE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will soon be in a position to state if any of the two teams are getting charged for the misconduct.

## We were unlucky – Caleb

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MBABANE Swallows head coach Caleb Ngwenya says they were unlucky in their match against Moneni Pirates.

This follows their 1-0 loss to the ' Sea Robbers ' on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

"We were very unfortunate not to get a result in the match where we did everything. I feel sorry for my players for the defeat, as they did their best to get positive results, but Mother Luck was not on our side. We must pick ourselves up and focus on the next match against Young Buffaloes," he said.

Meanwhile, the winning coach, Zenzile Mpofu, congratulated his players for the win. "Kudos to the boys for their positive results, and we are grateful for the support of our loyal supporters, which motivated the boys inside the field of play. We will continue working hard in the upcoming matches," he said. A Vukile Khumalo second-half penalty helped the ' Sea Robbers ' maintain their dominance over the capital city giants to three matches in all competitions. Pirates also produced the man of the match, Biko Sibandze, who won himself E2 500 for his splendid performance in front of over 2 000 fans.

## We'll stop unbeaten Stingers – Mnotfo

By Chris Dlamini

WHO will stop Ezulwini United's nine-match unbeaten run in the MTN Premier League?

As the games come thick and fast now, it is onto matchweek 10 on Wednesday (tomorrow).

One of the fixtures to mark out is the game between Ezulwini United, fondly known as The Stingers, and current leaders and defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs. "We visit Ezulwini on Wednesday in Mhlume.

After the unfortunate draw with Royal Leopard, we know we have to win and we will. "We know about Ezulwini being unbeaten, but now their time to lose has come," declared Nsingizini Public Relations Officer (PRO) Mnotfo Dlamini on Monday's national radio, EBIS' Sport Show. Dlamini said several teams have been crying each time after playing Ezulwini's resilience. "With us, it stops.

All those who lost to them, send us (tfuma tsine) to do the job. Whether they want or not, we'll tear the Stingers apart," declared Dlamini.

The game is billed for Nsukuwansuku Stadium, Mhlume on Wednesday at 3pm.

Meanwhile, his Leopard counterpart Frank Hurube said they were now

eyeing the security forces derby against Correctional Services outfit Green Mamba on Wednesday and wanted nothing but victory.

Green Mamba's Ntuthuko Dlamini responded by saying this was their game and Hurube will have to go up the stairs to apologise to his superiors after losing.

The detailed midweek fixture, aa released by the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) is included in this article.

### MTN Premier League Fixture (Matchweek 10):

Wednesday, December 10, 2025  
KaLanga Technical Centre:  
G. Mamba vs. R. Leopard 3pm

Mayaluka Stadium:  
Y. Buffaloes vs. M. Swallows 3pm

King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium:  
Rangers vs. M. Chiefs 3pm

Prince of Wales:  
Amawele vs. Sea Birds 3pm

Nsukuwansuku Stadium:  
Ez. United vs. N. Hotspurs 3pm

Mavuso Sports Centre:  
M. Highlanders vs. U. Sugar 5.30pm  
M. Wanderers vs. Sisonkhe 7.45pm



▲ Eswatini boxer Mukelo Dlamini.

## EBA congratulates Mukelo Dlamini

By Chris Dlamini

THE Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) has congratulated boxer Mukelo Dlamini for advancing to the last 16 of the International Boxing Association World Championships in Dubai.

This follows his victory over Rwandan boxer Havyarimana Abdulon on a unanimous decision to advance to the last 16 on Sunday. He is the only boxer from Eswatini in the ongoing global showpiece, following the exit of Sibonelo Ndzimandze against Colombian boxer Jhan Carlos Ubarnes Urango.

"We are proud of Mukelo's achievement and urge him to continue working hard in the competition. We wish him the best of luck during the last 16," he said. Dlamini will now be in action on Tuesday (December 9, 2025) in the last 16. Other boxers Thabiso Dlamini, Khaya Shongwe, Khaya Mkhabela and Qhawe Gamedze exited the competition in the preliminary round. The national team is under the guidance of seasoned coach Douglas Simelane, who is assisted by Muzi Shongwe.

### Statement

Meanwhile, IBA president Umar Kremlev thanked the Gulf nation for hosting the tournament through a press statement.

"Throughout its history, the IBA Men's World Boxing Championships has delivered countless moments of triumph, passion, and inspiration. For many athletes, it serves as a life-defining experience, shaping their futures both inside and outside the ring. Our mission remains steadfast: to empower every boxer to flourish, earn a living, grow professionally, and etch their names into the annals of history for themselves and their nations. Boxing knows no boundaries; it is a universal language that unites people across continents, and we are dedicated to bringing the spirit of boxing to every corner of the world," he said. EOCGA board member Pearl Dlamini is also an executive member for IBA. IBA is funding several initiatives in Africa, such as the Mandela Boxing Cup.

Kremlev once funded a one-year training program for local boxer Thabiso Dlamini in Russia through their Boxing Federation.





**Salah left out of  
Liverpool squad  
for Inter clash**

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**EBA  
congratulates  
Mukelo**

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**Eswatini** Tuesday 9  
**Daily News** December, 2025  
**Sport**

**CAPITAL CITY GIANTS HEAD  
COACH 'FLOORED'...**

**Ernest  
condemns E100  
000 fine scuffle**

**... Says he was not punched but pushed in half-time violent drama  
between his club and army team Young Buffaloes on Sunday.**

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