

PM deepens Eswatini-Turkmenistan bilateral relation

▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini joined Heads of State and Government in a flower-laying ceremony at the Neutrality Monument in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The monument was built to eternalise the neutrality status of Independent Turkmenistan, as recognised by the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995 as the first neutral state in the world. (Story on page 3)

Accelerating women's empowerment:

By Siphesihle Dlamini

Princess Lindiwe calls for stronger global partnerships

MINISTER for Home Affairs, Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe, has urged nations to deepen multilateral cooperation as a critical pathway to accelerating women's empowerment, asserting that no country can advance the cause of women in isolation.

The Minister was addressing delegates at the International Conference on 'The Role of Women in Modern Society: Developing International Cooperation for Sustainable Development,' held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, where policymakers, development practitioners and international partners gathered to reflect on women's leadership in a rapidly changing global landscape.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Govt expands housing support by over 2000 houses

Page 2



Govt affirms medicine security for festive season

Page 3



A Rubicon Media Group publication

ESWATINI MEAT INDUSTRIES

WIN A BRAAI MASTER PACK

Terms and Conditions

SPEND E100 OR MORE

**Write name and number
on slip, and drop in a box**

Making Meal Times Special

Eligibility:
Open to all active Eswatini Meat Industries customers aged 18 years and above.

Publicity:
By participating, winners agree that Eswatini Meat Industries may use their names, photographs, and entry details for marketing and promotional purposes without additional compensation.

How to Enter:

General:
Spend E100.00 or more at any Embiveni Meat Market to qualify for an entry. Eswatini Meat Industries reserves the right to amend, suspend, or cancel the promotion at any time, should unforeseen

Prize Conditions:
circumstances arise. Prizes are non-transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. Winners will receive the Braai Master Pack as stipulated.

Live draw will be on the 22nd of Dec 2025

Princess Lindiwe calls for stronger global partnerships to accelerate women’s empowerment

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

MINISTER for Home Affairs, Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe, has urged nations to deepen multilateral cooperation as a critical pathway to accelerating women’s empowerment, asserting that no country can advance the cause of women in isolation.

The Minister was addressing delegates at the International Conference on ‘The Role of Women in Modern Society: Developing International Cooperation for Sustainable Development,’ held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, where policymakers, development practitioners and international partners gathered to reflect on women’s leadership in a rapidly changing global landscape.

Speaking under the theme “Expanding Multilateral Dialogue and Partnership as a Factor in Strengthening the Role of Women in Political, Economic and Socio-Humanitarian Dimensions,” Princess Lindiwe emphasised that collaboration, shared responsibility, and inclusive partnerships were indispensable to achieving meaningful and sustainable progress for women worldwide.



▲ Minister for Home Affairs Her Royal Highness Princess Lindiwe delivering her remarks.

“No nation can succeed alone in advancing women’s development,” she said. “Cooperation, shared commitment and inclusive partnerships are essential if we are to translate

aspirations into real outcomes.” Drawing from Eswatini’s national experience, Princess Lindiwe said the Kingdom’s commitment to women’s empowerment is firmly grounded in constitutional guarantees and reinforced by cultural values that recognise the central role of women in society.

Progress

“In Eswatini, our commitment to women’s empowerment is rooted in our Constitutional guarantees and the strength of our cultural heritage, which provides a formidable foundation for progress,” she told the conference. “We firmly believe that sustainable development is realised when women participate equally in leadership and governance.”

She highlighted that Eswatini’s Constitution provides a clear legal framework for gender equality, noting that it explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender and promotes equitable representation in public life. “Our Constitution ensures equality before the law,” Princess Lindiwe said. “Sections 84, 86 and 95 guarantee the right to equitable representation for women and vulnerable groups in Parliament and public structures.”

These constitutional provisions, she explained, paved the way for targeted legisla-

tive interventions, including the Election of Women into the House of Assembly Act of 2018, which was enacted to enhance women’s participation in Parliament. Princess Lindiwe reported steady progress in women’s political representation, revealing that women currently make up 29 per cent of the 11th Parliament. Beyond Parliament, she said, women now occupy a significant number of senior leadership positions across the public and private sectors.

“Women also constitute a significant ratio in crucial leadership positions of Principal Secretaries, Ambassadors, Judges and Senior Directors,” she said. She further acknowledged the pivotal role of Her Majesty the Queen Mother, describing her as the principal symbol of women’s leadership in Eswatini and an ardent champion for the rights and advancement of women and girls.

Turning to economic participation, Princess Lindiwe stressed that empowering women economically is central to restoring dignity, reducing inequality and driving sustainable growth. “Economic empowerment is central to the dignity and advancement of women in our Kingdom,” she said. “Our targeted strategies ensure women are drivers of economic transformation, not just beneficiaries.”

Government expands housing support by over 2000 houses

By Delisa Magagula

THE Government of Eswatini continues to make steady progress in improving the welfare of public servants, with the provision of housing emerging as one of the most tangible achievements of the Ministry of Public Service during the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

Presenting the Ministry’s second Quarter Performance Report, Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko said the availability of government accommodation remains a critical enabler of efficiency and stability within the public service.

“As a Ministry, our responsibility is to ensure that public servants are supported in a manner that allows them to serve the nation effectively. Adequate accommodation is not a privilege, but a necessity that directly affects performance, morale and service delivery,” said Maseko.

According to the report, the Ministry currently manages a total of 2,684 houses designated for the accommodation of public servants across the country. Of these, 1,104 are government pool houses, excluding institutional houses, while 1,580 houses are leased from private landlords. This housing portfolio represents one of the largest coordinated accommodation programmes within government, aimed at reducing housing insecurity among public officers.

The Minister explained that the housing programme is aligned with the Ministry’s broader mandate to create an enabling environment for effective public service delivery.

During the period under review, the Ministry realigned its Ministerial Statement, Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values to reflect the aspirations of emaSwati as articulated at Sibaya in 2023, the Government Programme of Action and the National Development Plan.

“We have deliberately repositioned the



▲ Some of government’s houses for civil servants.

Ministry to respond to the expectations of the nation. This includes setting SMART objectives that are measurable and responsive to the realities faced by public servants on the ground,” Maseko said.

He further said, demand for government accommodation remains high, reflecting both population growth within the public service and rising housing costs in urban centres. The report further reveals that during the first quarter, the Housing Allocation Committee received 1,900 applications for government quarters from officers across various ministries.

From these applications, 18 officers were allocated government houses based on availability and established allocation criteria.

Maseko said the continued rise in housing requests underscores the importance of government intervention in the accommodation sector. “The volume of applications we receive shows clearly that government housing remains essential. While supply cannot immediately meet demand, we are continuously exploring alternative mechanisms to support our officers,” she said.

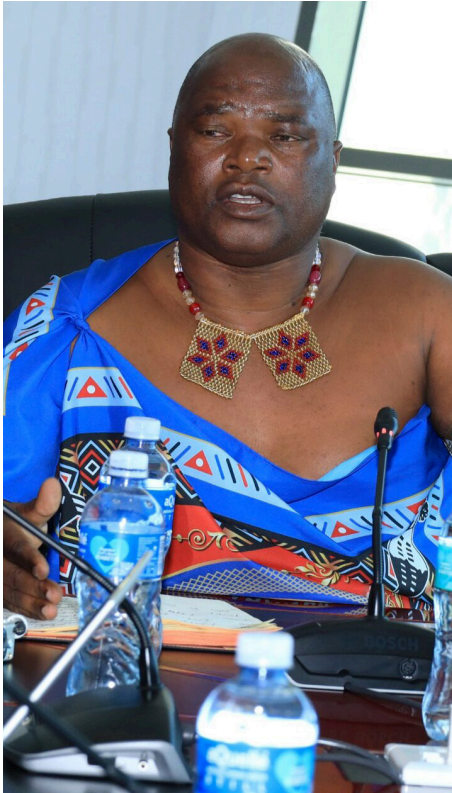
In addition to new allocations, the Ministry processed requests for house and office

swaps, a mechanism designed to address changing personal and operational needs among public servants.

During the quarter, the Housing Allocation Committee approved eight swaps from 65 requests received.

“These swaps may appear small in number, but they have a meaningful impact. They allow us to optimise existing housing stock and ensure that officers are placed where they can function more effectively,” the Minister noted. The report also highlights decisive action taken in the management of leased properties. All lease agreements submitted during the quarter were renewed, and rental payments were maintained in good standing. Importantly, the Ministry terminated five leased houses due to failure by landlords to meet maintenance standards.

“We are firm on this issue. Government will not continue paying for houses that are not properly maintained. This is about accountability and ensuring decent living conditions for our public servants,” said Maseko in his report.



▲ Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

Prime Minister deepens Eswatini, Turkmenistan bilateral relations

Prime Minister Russell Dlamini has reinforced Eswatini's commitment to peaceful coexistence, dialogue and principled multilateralism during an official visit to Turkmenistan, where he held high-level bilateral talks with President H.E. Serdar Gurbangulyýewiç Berdimuhamedow.

The bilateral meeting, held at the Oguzkent Hotel, focused on strengthening the growing relations between the Kingdom of Eswatini and Turkmenistan, following the recent establishment of formal diplomatic ties. The Prime Minister also conveyed a message of goodwill from His Majesty King Mswati III to the Government and people of Turkmenistan on the 30th Anniversary of the Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan, a milestone widely recognised in international diplomacy.

Eswatini and Turkmenistan formally established diplomatic relations during His Majesty King Mswati III's visit to Turkmenistan in August, when the King attended the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3). The Prime Minister's visit is viewed as a continuation of that historic engagement, aimed at translating diplomatic goodwill into practical cooperation.

The Prime Minister also participated with Heads of State and Government in a flower-laying ceremony at the Neutrality Monument in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. This monument was erected to commemorate Turkmenistan's status as a neutral country, officially recognized by the UN General Assembly on December 12, 1995, marking it as the world's first neutral state. Meanwhile, beyond bilateral discussions, Dlamini delivered a powerful address at the International Forum dedicated to the International Year of Peace and Trust, the International Day of Neutrality, and the 30th Anniversary of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality, speaking on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III.

Held under the theme "Peace and Trust: Unity of Goals for a Sustainable Future," the forum brought together an extraordinary gathering of global leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the Presidents of Türkiye, Iraq, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Ka-



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini held high-level bilateral talks with Turkmenistan President H.E. Serdar Gurbangulyýewiç Berdimuhamedow.

zakhstan, Tajikistan, and Sao Tome and Principe, as well as the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Myanmar.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister urged nations to draw inspiration from Eswatini's foundational principle of "Anginasitsa – I have no enemy," first declared by His Majesty King Sobhuza II, and to adopt peace-oriented philosophies as cornerstones of statecraft.

"Anginasitsa is the heartbeat of Swazi statecraft," Dlamini said. "It is our solemn declaration that we regard no nation as an enemy, that we will never initiate aggression, that our territory will never be used against others, and that every difference must be resolved through patient dialogue and mutual respect."

He drew a clear parallel between Eswatini's philosophy and Turkmenistan's internationally recognised status of permanent neutrality, emphasising that both approaches reflect an active commitment to peace rather than withdrawal from global affairs. "Like Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality, Anginasitsa is not withdrawal from the world; it is the highest form of engagement, an active, principled commitment to peace," he said.

The PM stressed that in an increasingly polarised and conflict-prone world, nations must re-

sist the temptation to normalise confrontation and instead invest in dialogue and negotiation. "It is important to remember that in any conflict there is no true winner; the alternative to war is always better," he said. "Although the world is increasingly confronted with disputes, these challenges must be addressed through dialogue, negotiation and perseverance. We must never give up on peaceful solutions."

He noted that Eswatini consistently carries these values into its participation in international and multilateral platforms, guided by honesty, respect and fidelity to national interests. "Truthfulness serves as our compass; integrity is our guiding star," the Prime Minister said. "Multilateralism, for Eswatini, must never mean simply following the majority for its own sake; it must be grounded in sovereign equality and the courage to remain true to oneself."

Highlighting the moral convergence between Eswatini and Turkmenistan, the premier said the two nations, despite their different histories and regions, had arrived at the same profound understanding of peace. "We therefore see in Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality a powerful reflection of our own Anginasitsa," he said. "Two nations, from different regions and histories, arriving at the same profound truth: a



country contributes most to global peace when it refuses to add fuel to any fire and instead declares, with quiet strength, 'I have no enemy.'"

Dlamini also used the platform to outline Eswatini's forthcoming role on the regional stage, as the Kingdom prepares to assume the Chairmanship of the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. "As the Kingdom of Eswatini prepares to assume the chairmanship of the SADC Organ Troika, we will carry forward both the spirit of Anginasitsa and the inspiring example of Turkmenistan's neutrality," he said. "We will promote African-led solutions, preventive diplomacy and dialogue in full harmony with the objectives of this Forum and relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions."

He concluded by reaffirming Eswatini's unwavering belief that lasting peace is built on trust, dialogue and principled restraint. "The Kingdom of Eswatini reaffirms that sustainable peace is achieved when nations, guided by philosophies such as Anginasitsa and Permanent Neutrality, choose trust over suspicion, dialogue over division, and friendship over enmity," Prime Minister Dlamini said.

Eswatini shifts revenue payments to post offices, digital platforms

THE Government of Eswatini is undertaking a significant overhaul of its revenue collection system, aiming to improve accessibility and efficiency for taxpayers across the country.

Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg announced that the traditional government revenue offices will soon be phased out and their functions transferred to the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS). "At this time of the year, there is always a lot of pressure on revenue offices," Minister Rijkenberg explained during his weekly Finance in Focus briefing.

Transition

He highlighted that the government is currently in a transition phase, where ERS is partnering with the Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) to use post offices as new revenue collection points. This initiative aims to decentralise revenue services and make them more accessible to the public.

The transition has already seen the Manzini and Mbabane post offices open for revenue transactions, with plans to gradually roll out more locations.

"Anyone doing revenue payments can now go and pay at those two post offices," Rijkenberg said, adding that weekly updates will inform citizens about additional post



▲ Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg said the government is currently in a transition phase, where ERS is partnering with the Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) to use post offices as new revenue collection points.

offices becoming operational for these services. While the shift promises greater convenience, some initial challenges have emerged. The Minister acknowledged reports of payment receipts issued at post offices not being immediately recognised but reassured the public that these teething problems are being resolved. "That problem has been sorted out," he confirmed.

Beyond physical locations, the government is also pushing for digital transformation. Rijkenberg emphasised the growing role of digital payments, encouraging citizens who to pay online via their phones, laptops, or other devices. "You can actually do this from your cell phone or from your laptop or from a device to be able to make these payments to the government," he said, underscoring

the goal of reducing queues and improving service speed.

The finance minister projected that within a few months, the full transition from traditional revenue offices to post office-based and digital payment systems will be complete. Once the post offices are fully equipped and operational, the old revenue offices will be systematically shut down.

By Delisa Magagula

Govt affirms medicine security for festive season

THE Government has assured the nation of uninterrupted availability of essential medicines across all public health facilities as the festive season approaches.

The assurance was given by Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula during a visit to the Central Medical Stores (CMS) in Matsapha.

The visit coincided with the receipt of a consignment of antimalarial medicines valued at E500 000, donated by the End Malaria Fund as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Eswatini’s malaria response.

Matsebula said the availability of medicines nationwide reflected government’s continued investment in building a resilient and responsive health system capable of meeting the needs of citizens at all times, particularly during peak periods such as the festive season.

“The availability of medicines across the country demonstrates government’s unwavering commitment to providing quality healthcare for all citizens. We have put measures in place to ensure uninterrupted supply to hospitals, health centres and clinics nationwide,” said Matsebula.

He said the festive season often places additional strain on health services due to increased travel, social gatherings and higher exposure to communicable diseases, making it critical for facilities to be fully stocked and operational.

“This donation strengthens our national response to malaria and reinforces our preparedness as a health system. Government will ensure that these medicines are distributed efficiently so that all public health facilities receive what they need to serve the nation,” the Minister said.

Matsebula also appealed to the public to handle medicines responsibly and to adhere strictly to prescribed usage, noting that misuse of medicines undermines treatment outcomes and places unnecessary pressure on limited resources.

“Proper use of medicines plays a critical role in improving health outcomes and preserving the effectiveness of our treatments. We urge the public to follow medical guidance at all times,” he said.



▲ Minister of Health Mduduzi Matsebula.

During the visit, the Minister invited Central Medical Stores Acting Director Sifundo Zwane to brief the nation on the current state of medicine availability and distribution capacity. Zwane confirmed that CMS was fully operational and adequately stocked to supply all public health facilities across the country.

Report

“I am pleased to report that CMS has sufficient stock and the capacity to distribute medicines efficiently. We are prepared to supply all public health facilities, ensuring that no community is left without access to essential drugs,” said Zwane.

She added that the current state of readiness at CMS should provide reassurance not only to the Ministry of Health, but also to government and the public at large.

Demand

Meanwhile according to the World Health Organisation, Eswatini has a total of 327 public health facilities, including hospitals, health centres and clinics, all of which rely on CMS for medical supplies.

Zwane said CMS continued to strengthen its logistics and inventory management systems to ensure timely delivery and minimise the risk of stock-outs, particularly

during periods of heightened demand.

The donation from the End Malaria Fund was described as a significant contribution to Eswatini’s fight against malaria, a disease that remains a public health concern in certain regions of the country.

The partnership highlights the importance of collaboration between government and development partners in advancing national health priorities.

As part of his address, Minister Matsebula also cautioned the nation against complacency regarding Covid-19, reminding citizens that the virus remains present despite reduced case numbers in recent months.

“Covid-19 is not over. We urge the nation to continue observing basic preventive measures, especially during the festive season when there is increased movement and social interaction,” he said.

The Minister encouraged the public to practice good hygiene, seek medical attention when experiencing symptoms, and protect vulnerable members of society, including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

Vigilant

He said government remained vigilant and continued to monitor disease trends to ensure early detection and response to any potential resurgence.

“As government, we remain committed to safeguarding the health of emaSwati. The availability of medicines, combined with public cooperation in disease prevention, is key to maintaining a strong and resilient health system,” Matsebula said.

The Ministry of Health reiterated its commitment to ensuring that healthcare services remain accessible, reliable and responsive throughout the festive period.

“The assurance of adequate medicine supplies offers confidence to the nation and reflects continued progress towards strengthening Eswatini’s public health system through effective planning, partnerships and investment,” concluded the Minister.

Home Affairs Minister engages Turkmenistan Charity Leader on Women’s Role in development

By Ncaba Ntshakala
ncaban@rubiconmedia.group

MINISTER of Home Affairs Princess Lindiwe held a bilateral engagement with the Vice-President for Medical Activities of the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Foundation, Oguljahan Atabayeva, on the sidelines of the International Conference on the Role of Women in Modern Society: Developing International Cooperation for Sustainable Development, held in Awaza, Turkmenistan.

The meeting focused on the critical role women continue to play in shaping societies and influencing decision-making at the highest levels. Princess Lindiwe highlighted the growing recognition of women as drivers of social transformation, governance, and sustainable development, noting that their participation in leadership and policy spaces remains central to inclusive progress.

She further commended Atabayeva for her extensive charitable work, particularly in advancing health and social protection initiatives for vulnerable groups. In response,



▲ Minister for Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe seated with the Vice-President for Medical Activities of the Charitable Foundation, Oguljahan Atabayeva during their talks.

Atabayeva expressed interest in learning more about Eswatini, including its social development programmes and the country’s approach to community welfare and inclusivity. Earlier in the day, Princess

Lindiwe attended the official opening ceremony of the Awaza branch of the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Foundation for Assistance to Children in Need of Guardianship. The facility is

aimed at strengthening support systems for children requiring care and protection, reinforcing Turkmenistan’s commitment to social development and humanitarian support.

By Delisa Magagula

Eswatini, US enjoy E15 bln worth bilateral relation

ESWATINI and the United States have marked more than two decades of deepening cooperation in the health sector.

This is a partnership that has seen over E15 billion invested in saving lives, strengthening health systems and transforming the country's response to HIV, tuberculosis and other public health challenges.

The milestone was reaffirmed last week with the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding committing more than E4 billion in additional support to Eswatini's health sector over the next five years.

The agreement builds on 23 years of sustained bilateral relations that have positioned Eswatini as a global success story in the fight against HIV.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, United States Chargé d'Affaires to Eswatini Marc Weinstock said American support had played a decisive role in reversing once-devastating health trends and building a resilient national health system.

"America's support has saved thousands of lives in this country. Over the past two decades, more than E15 billion has been invested in Eswatini's health sector, primarily to combat HIV and tuberculosis, strengthen laboratories, train healthcare workers and ensure medicines reach those who need them," said Weinstock.

He said the new agreement was not a departure from past commitments, but a continuation of a long-standing partnership rooted in shared responsibility and mutual trust. "This MoU builds on a relationship that began at a time when Eswatini was facing one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. Together, we made a commitment to act decisively, and the results are visible today," Weinstock said.

Worth noting, United States support to Eswatini's health sector dates back to the early 2000s, when the country was grappling with a rapidly expanding HIV epidemic that placed immense pressure on households, public services and the economy.

Through programmes such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the United States became a key partner in scaling up HIV testing, treatment and prevention.

Over time, this support expanded to include tuberculosis control, laboratory strengthening, disease surveillance, health information systems and workforce development.

The partnership also supported the decentralisation of health services, bringing care closer to communities and improving access for rural populations.

Minister for Health Mduduzi Matsebula



▲ Eswatini and the United States of America inked over E4 billion Health Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

said the cumulative impact of this cooperation had fundamentally reshaped Eswatini's health landscape.

"This partnership has been instrumental in helping Eswatini turn the tide against HIV and TB. Thousands of emaSwati are alive today because of timely access to treatment, strong systems and consistent support," said Matsebula.

He said the newly signed E4 billion agreement marked a critical phase focused on sustainability and national ownership, while ensuring that gains made over the years are protected.

Leadership

"We are entering a phase where Eswatini is strengthening its leadership of the health response. This agreement supports that transition while ensuring that quality of care is not compromised," Matsebula said.

Under the new framework, the United States will continue to support essential services, including antiretroviral therapy, HIV prevention programmes, laboratory services and health worker support, while working closely with government to progressively increase domestic financing.

Worth noting Eswatini has achieved

remarkable progress in HIV outcomes. The vast majority of people living with HIV are now aware of their status, enrolled on treatment and virally suppressed.

New infections and AIDS-related deaths have declined significantly over the past decade, placing the country among a small group globally that has reached epidemic control targets.

Support

Beyond HIV, US support has strengthened the national tuberculosis programme through improved diagnostics, case detection and treatment outcomes.

Investments in laboratory infrastructure and surveillance systems have also enhanced Eswatini's ability to respond to emerging health threats, including outbreaks and pandemics.

Weinstock said the success of the partnership lies in its collaborative approach.

"This has never been about one side acting alone. It is about partnership, shared accountability and building systems that last," he said.

The relationship has also contributed to broader health system resilience, including

improvements in supply chain management, data systems and public health preparedness.

These gains were particularly evident during recent public health emergencies, where existing systems enabled quicker coordination and response.

Minister Matsebula said government remains committed to ensuring that external support translates into long-term national capacity.

"Our priority is to ensure that every lilangeni invested strengthens our systems and benefits our people. We value this partnership because it aligns with our national development goals and places the wellbeing of emaSwati at the centre," he said.

The Minister for Health emphasised that while Eswatini and the United States mark 23 years of cooperation, both parties describe the relationship as one anchored in results, trust and shared purpose.

"The E15 billion invested to date stands as one of the most significant bilateral health partnerships in the country's history, with the latest agreement signalling continued collaboration toward a healthier and more resilient Eswatini," said Matsebula.

Missing individuals found alive in Lubombo and Ndabazwezwe

By Ncaba Ntshakala
ncaban@rubiconmedia.group

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has expressed heartfelt gratitude to the public following the safe recovery of two missing individuals, highlighting the critical role of community cooperation in safeguarding lives.

Sebenzile Mngometulu was located alive in the Ndabazwezwe area after members of the public provided timely information on her whereabouts. Police confirmed that she was found walking along the road and thanked emaSwati for their swift response,

noting that the successful recovery was a direct result of the community's vigilance and proactive engagement with law enforcement.

In a separate but equally reassuring incident, four-year-old Andzile Maphanga, who had gone missing in the Ntsambo area, Engcamini (Matseta) in the Lubombo Region, was found on Sunday afternoon around 4pm in the bushes at kaLanga. The child had been reported missing after leaving an older relative while collecting firewood and attempting to return home on his own. Following a coordinated search operation led by Siteki Police Station and supported by community members, Andzile was safely recovered and is currently admitted to hospital for observation.

MISSING

PLEASE HELP US LOCATE AND FIND

NAME(S): SEBENZILE MNGOMETULU
AGE: 21
NATIONALITY: LISI
AREA OF ORIGIN: MATSANJENI
CIRCUMSTANCES: SHE WAS LAST SEEN ON 07/12/25 AT THE NKHUNJINI AREA. SHE WAS WEARING A BLACK SKIRT AND A WHITE TOP.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, CAN YOU CONTACT MR R.V. DLAMINI ON 7606 7447 OR LAVUMISA ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE SGT M. NHLABATSI ON 7626 6963 OR THE INVESTIGATING OFFICER SGT R.S. MATSE ON 7605 9420

LOCATED

ALTERNATIVELY DIAL 999/9999 OR 112

SIMEMETELO

Sicela takhamuti tasenzaweni yase Engcamini nasemacentselweni kutsi tisifunisi ngumfana longu ANDILE MAPHANGA (4) lolahleke itolo ntsambama ngetitfuba (10:00PM). Kusolakala kutsi ANDILE MAPHANGA utfolwe ngumunye wetakhamuti letidze kubonakala khona. ANDILE ababizwa ngamaNtshakala loluhlata esifubeni kanye nemabala. Kucela kubizwa ngamaNtshakala loluhlata ashayele SERGEANT MKHABALALA noma loneluhlala ashayele SERGEANT MKHABALALA noma inombolo yemaphoyisa yenhlaliso 999/9999 noma 112. Simemetelo sikhishwa ngulowatisa aphindze achumanise sive nemaphoyisa.

LOCATED

REPS has reiterated the importance of community participation in locating missing persons and preventing incidents from escalating.

Week 2: Eswatini Mobile Red Christmas Trolley



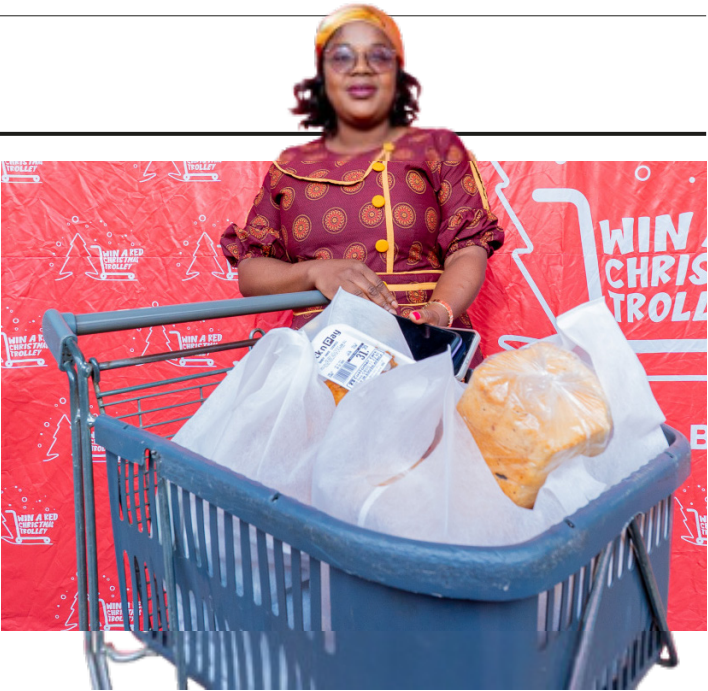
▲ Bathobile Gamedze of Mlindazwe and Phindile Magagula of kaShoba were ecstatic about having their bill paid for at Shoprite, Siteki.



▲ More Christmas trolleys were paid for at Spar, Matsapha Lifestyle.



▲ The Chrshitmas cart clearance proceeded to Embiveni Meat Plaza in Matsapha.



▲ Dumsile Malaza from Lobamba expressed delight over having her bill paid at PnP Crescent.



▲ Anthony Mabuza of Mahlanya and Lungelo Mabinzela of Buka posing with their paid for Christmas trolleys at Shoprite, Gables.



▲ Thobile Magagula from Mphini reacting to having her bill settled at Spar, Manzini Lifestyle.



▲ Gladys Dlamini posing for a group picture with the Eswatini Mobile team at PnP, The Crescent.



Your Christmas Shopping Trolley is on us!

Join us today at these stores and times for your chance to win a **Red Christmas Trolley** with goodies worth up to **E2,000**

Tuesday, 16 December
Matsapha Link Pnp - 1PM, Malkerns Link PnP - 4PM



BRIEFS

Stocks catch a break
after bruising AI selloff

U.S. stock and bond markets caught a break on Monday after another unnerving AI-related shakeout late last week, with attention switching to Tuesday's big payrolls report and China's latest sweep of disappointing economic readouts.

As Wall Street enters the last full trading week of the year, the mood surrounding the dominant artificial intelligence theme could hardly be shakier. Expensive tech stocks were hit with a one-two volley of disappointing news from Oracle and Broadcom last week, with shares in the two AI bellwethers sliding 18% and 11% respectively on Thursday and Friday - and dragging kingpin Nvidia down 3% on Friday, too.

Kenya signs \$311 mln
power lines deal

KENYA on Monday signed an agreement for the investment of \$311 million in the construction of two high-voltage electricity transmission lines with a pan-African infrastructure fund and PowerGrid Corporation of India, the finance ministry said.

The East African nation has turned to public-private partnerships, and securitisation of some revenue streams, to provide funds for infrastructure projects in the face of high public debt and tight fiscal space. (Reuters)

EswatiniBank

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	



Govt bond stock rises to E7.47 billion in November

Stories By Delisa Magagula

AS at November 30, 2025, the total value of Eswatini government bonds stood at E7,470,615,000.00, reflecting a month on month increase of 4.15 per cent from E7,172,784,000.00 recorded at the end of October 2025.

The increase was attributed to a higher value of bonds commencing during the period compared to a lower value of bonds that reached maturity. This is according to the latest Eswatini Stock Exchange (ESE) monthly report.

The report states that the net issuance position resulted in a continued expansion of the government bond stock, consistent with financing requirements during the review period.

“On an annual basis, government bonds grew by 13.22 per cent, rising from E6, 598,253,000.00 in November 2024 to E7, 470,615,000.00 in November 2025. The year on year growth reflects sustained reliance on domestic debt instruments as part of government financing operations,” reads the ESE report in part.

Meanwhile the steady expansion of the bond portfolio indicates active participation in the domestic capital market, with bonds continuing to play a central role in funding government obligations, as mentioned by the ESE report.

ESE further states the issuance pattern suggests a preference for longer term financing



▲ The CBE report states that the net issuance position resulted in a continued expansion of the government bond stock, consistent with financing requirements during the review period.

instruments relative to short term securities, helping to manage refinancing risks.

The month under review also showed improved balance between bond issuance and maturities, with maturing instruments remaining lower than new issuances. This contributed to the overall upward movement in the outstanding bond stock.

Worth noting, Government bonds remain a key component of the domestic debt structure, providing investment opportunities for institutional investors such as pension funds,

insurance companies and banks.

Their performance also reflects broader conditions in the financial market, including liquidity availability and investor appetite for fixed income assets.

According to ESE, the increase recorded in November continues the upward trajectory observed over the past year, underscoring the importance of prudent debt management practices to ensure sustainability while meeting fiscal financing needs.

Household credit demand rebounds across banking sector

BETWEEN June 2024 and June 2025, Eswatini's household sector recorded a moderate but broad based recovery in credit demand, supported by improvements across several loan categories and income groups.

Total household credit extended by banks grew by 3.8 per cent during the period under review.

The growth was primarily driven by a significant increase in motor vehicle loans, which rose by 15.5 per cent, alongside a 6.9 per cent increase in unsecured lending.

This information was released by the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) in their financial review report which was presented by the Governor Dr Phil Mnisi. Mnisi said the rebound in household credit demand was supported by a strengthening macroeconomic environment, easing inflationary pressures, and sustained monetary policy accommodation.

He said these factors helped improve borrowing conditions and affordability for households.

“The pace of credit growth remained broadly aligned with income gains, suggesting that households did not significantly increase leverage levels during the period. Stable employment conditions and gradual income growth also contributed to maintaining manageable debt levels,” he said.

In contrast, household lending by non-bank financial institutions declined marginally by 0.05 per cent.

The Governor mentioned the decline was mainly driven by reduced credit extension by credit finance institutions and building societies.



▲ Central Bank of Eswatini.

The contraction was partially offset by continued growth in lending by savings and credit cooperatives.

Although the overall decline in non-bank lending eased near term pressure on household balance sheets, the faster expansion of unsecured lending remained a notable trend. Unsecured credit continues to grow at a quicker pace relative to secured lending, particularly within the banking sector.

The composition of household borrowing re-

flects changing consumption patterns, with increased demand for short term credit products.

“While this supports consumption activity, it also requires close monitoring to ensure that repayment capacity remains intact under changing economic conditions,” noted Mnisi.

Overall, household credit developments during the period reflected a gradual recovery rather than excessive borrowing, supported by improving economic fundamentals, as mentioned by CBE.

Stories By Delisa Magagula

STRUCTURAL changes in Eswatini’s household credit profile have become more pronounced, with borrowing increasingly concentrated in shorter term and consumption linked loan products.

Unsecured lending has continued to increase as a share of total bank credit, reflecting households’ preference for flexible financing options.

While this trend provides immediate liquidity support and stimulates consumption, it also increases household exposure to income and employment shocks.

According to the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) Financial Review report, the faster expansion of unsecured borrowing raises concerns regarding vulnerability among highly leveraged households.

“Elevated reliance on unsecured credit may weaken repayment capacity, particularly in adverse economic conditions, and could amplify credit risk transmission within the broader financial system,” reads the report in part.

The report further states, that

Rising unsecured borrowing shifts household credit structure

despite these risks, affordability indicators showed modest improvement during the review period.

“The household debt service to income ratio declined to 34 per cent in June 2025 from 34.7 per cent in June 2024. The improvement was supported by lower borrowing costs, stable employment levels and gradual income gains,” reads the report.

Meanwhile household indebtedness also declined to 74.1 per cent of income from 76.8 per cent recorded a year earlier.

Incomes

The reduction coincided with rising household incomes, suggesting improved balance sheet conditions.

However, the disposable income to GDP ratio declined to 19.6 per cent from 23.3 per cent, indicating slower growth in household disposable income relative to overall economic output.

Household credit to GDP also declined from 15 per cent to 14.5 per cent, widening the household credit to GDP gap to 14.1 percentage points.

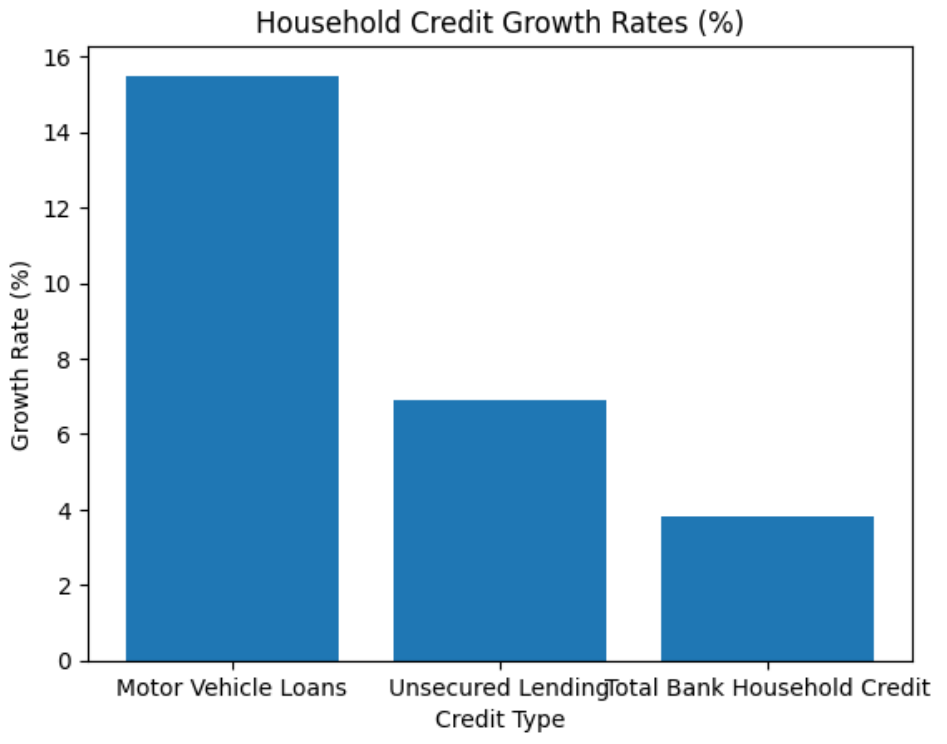
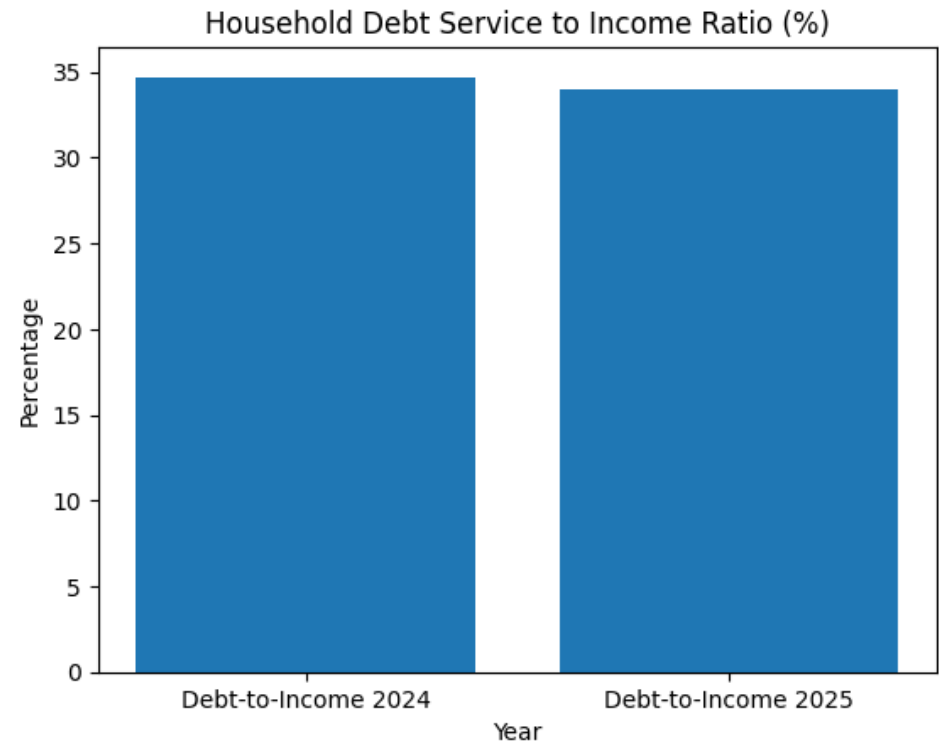
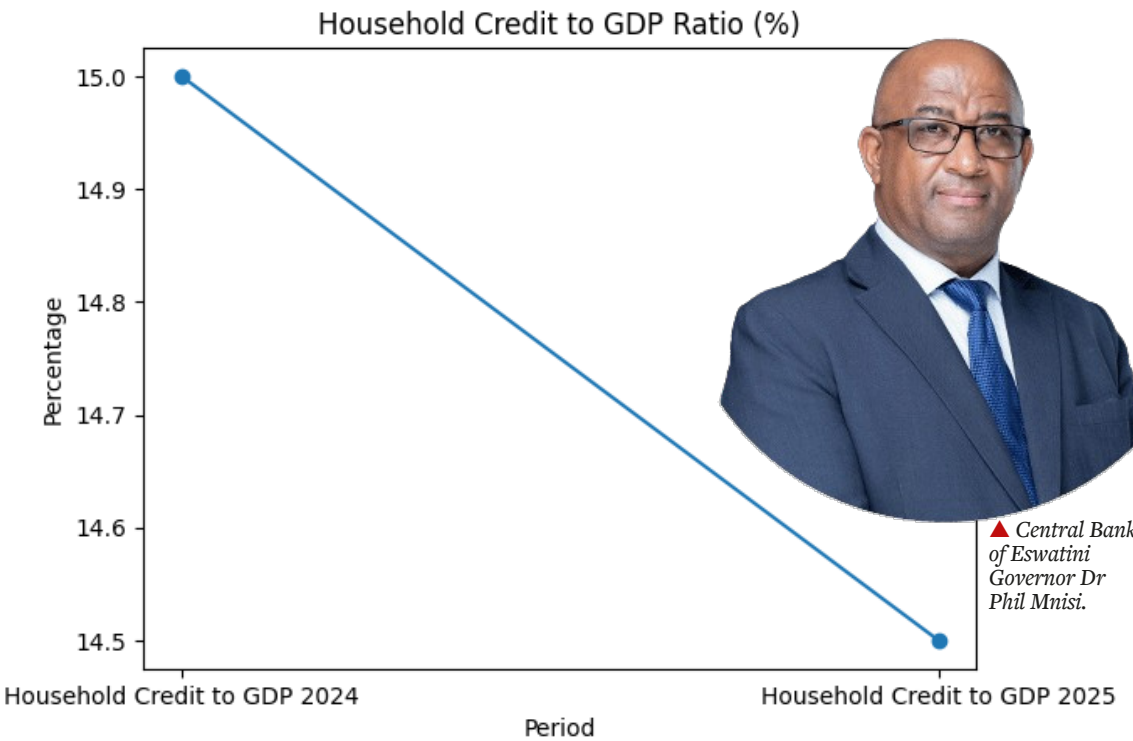
These developments, according

to the review report suggest more cautious borrowing behaviour among households, potentially influenced by heightened risk awareness, tighter lending standards, or shifting consumer preferences.

The observed under leveraging trend reflects a measured approach to debt accumulation rather than credit driven expansion.

“Sustained employment stability, civil service salary adjustments and financial literacy

initiatives remain important in maintaining affordability and limiting repayment stress as borrowing patterns evolve,” read the report partly.



RECENT household credit indicators point to a gradual moderation in leverage supported by income growth and improved affordability metrics.

According to the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) Financial Report, between June 2024 and June 2025, household debt service obligations eased, with the debt service to income ratio declining to 34 per cent from 34.7 per cent.

This reduction reflects the combined effects of lower interest rates, stable employment conditions and incremental income gains.

“Household indebtedness also declined to 74.1 per cent of income from 76.8 per cent recorded in the previous year. The improvement was linked to rising household incomes rather than aggressive debt accumulation,” reads the report.

Household leverage trends point to cautious borrowing behaviour

The report further states that at macroeconomic level, household credit to GDP declined from 15 per cent to 14.5 per cent, while the disposable income to GDP ratio fell to 19.6 per cent from 23.3 per cent. These shifts widened the household credit to GDP gap to 14.1 percentage points.

According to the report, the trends suggest that households are exercising greater caution in borrowing decisions, possibly influenced by tighter credit assessments, increased risk awareness or changing consumption preferences.

Credit growth appears to be driven by

necessity and targeted consumption rather than speculative borrowing.

Worth noting, while banks recorded moderate growth in household lending, non-bank financial institutions saw marginal contraction, further reinforcing the picture of restrained credit expansion.

The faster growth of unsecured lending remains a key feature of the credit landscape, warranting continued monitoring.

Parallel to credit developments, the Ministry of Public Service continues to manage a stock of 2,684 houses allocated

for accommodating public servants. The availability of government owned housing supports household stability by reducing rental pressures for eligible employees.

Overall, household leverage indicators point to a measured recovery in credit demand, underpinned by improving economic conditions while maintaining affordability.

The balance between access to credit and financial resilience remains central to sustaining household sector stability going forward.

U.S. stock and bond markets caught a break on Monday after another unnerving AI-related shakeout late last week, with attention switching to Tuesday’s big payrolls report and China’s latest sweep of disappointing economic readouts.

As Wall Street enters the last full trading week of the year, the mood surrounding the dominant artificial intelligence theme could hardly be shakier. Expensive tech stocks were hit with a one-two volley of disappointing news from Oracle and Broadcom last week, with shares in the two AI bellwethers sliding 18% and 11% respectively on Thursday and Friday - and dragging kingpin Nvidia down 3% on Friday, too.

Nvidia regained some ground on Monday after it told Chinese clients it is evaluating adding production capacity for its powerful H200 AI chips as orders exceeded its current output level, according to Reuters’ sources. And Micron is due to report earnings later in the week.

But there appears to be considerable sector rotation afoot in the wider market as the year comes to a close.

The tech pullback saw the Nasdaq lose 1.6% on Friday, but the Dow Jones Industrials index gained 1% and hit a record high during the day.

Yields

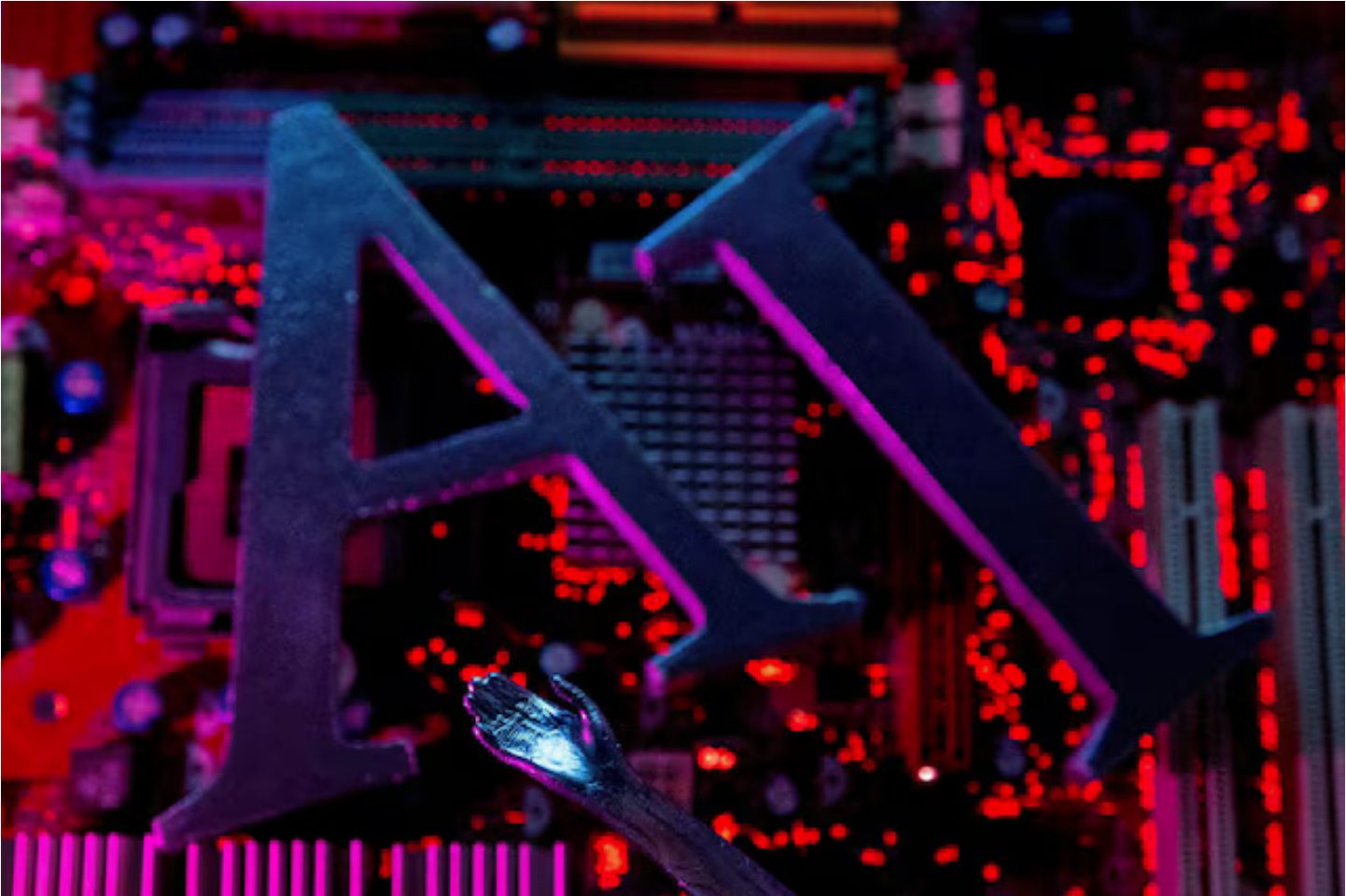
U.S. index futures were higher across the board into Monday’s open, with some relief coming from easier Treasury yields overnight.

Even as Big Tech swooned on Friday, long-dated Treasuries fell too - with the 30-year bond yield hitting 3-month highs and the 2-30 yield curve gap also steepening to the widest since September.

While yields fell back somewhat overnight, bonds are navigating numerous factors into yearend - not least the critical and long-delayed November payrolls report on Tuesday.

But Treasuries also have to contend

Stocks catch a break after bruising AI selloff



▲ AI (Artificial Intelligence) letters and robot hand are placed on computer motherboard in this illustration

with a likely Bank of Japan interest rate rise on Friday, which will have important implications for Japanese and global bond markets, and a 20-year U.S. bond auction on Wednesday.

And the latest political signals about the next Federal Reserve chair from next May were also being digested.

Late Friday, President Donald Trump told the Wall Street Journal that he has

narrowed his search for a new Fed chair to two people - former Fed Governor Kevin Warsh or National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett. “The two Kevins are great,” he said. (Reuters)

Kenya signs \$311 mln power lines deal with Africa fund, Indian firm

KENYA on Monday signed an agreement for the investment of \$311 million in the construction of two high-voltage electricity transmission lines with a pan-African infrastructure fund and PowerGrid Corporation of India, the finance ministry said. The East African nation has turned to public-private partnerships, and securitisation of some revenue streams, to provide funds for infrastructure projects in the face of high public debt and tight fiscal space.

Under the power lines deal, Africa50, a Morocco-based

infrastructure fund that is mainly owned by African states, will join forces with PowerGrid to design, finance, construct and operate the transmission lines and associated sub-stations, the ministry said.

The project company will “undertake the entire lifecycle of the transmission infrastructure, from construction to operation—over a 30-year concession period”, Africa50 said in a statement.

The two lines would “unlock cleaner, affordable, and more reliable power for millions of Kenyans,” it said.

(Reuters)



▲ Pylons of high-tension electricity power lines are seen at the Olkaria II Geothermal power plant near the Rift Valley town of Naivasha, Kenya.

UNTIL
20
DECEMBER

DISKI BET

NDIZA NATSI
5 ASIDE AVIATOR TOURNAMENT

WIN A SHARE OF
E100 000

WITH **A BONUS COW AND GOAT**
FOR THE WINNER'S SELECTED COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY

HOW TO JOIN?

ASSEMBLE A TEAM OF 5 MEMBERS AND NO LESS TO JOIN THE NDIZA NATSI AVIATOR TOURNAMENT. CREATE A WHATS'APP GROUP AND ADD THE DISKIBET NUMBER +268 7825 0350.

To Play, visit
www.diskibet.com

Tesla board made \$3 billion via stock awards that dwarfed tech peers



▲ A Tesla Model S is parked in front of Osloffjorden, Oslo, Norway.

TESLA'S board of directors has earned more than \$3 billion through stock awards that far exceeded the value of those given to peers at the biggest U.S. technology firms at the time they were paid, according to an analysis performed for Reuters by compensation and governance specialist Equilar.

The analysis found CEO Elon Musk's brother Kimbal has earned nearly \$1 billion since 2004, based on the appreciated value of stock options held or liquidated. Director Ira Ehrenpreis has collected \$869 million since 2007. Board chair Robyn Denholm has made \$650 million since 2014.

Directors reaped such windfalls even though they haven't awarded themselves new stock grants since 2020. The board

agreed to suspend director compensation starting in 2021 to settle, opens new tab a shareholder lawsuit alleging excessive board-member pay. Between 2018 and 2020, however, the average Tesla director received a total of about \$12 million in cash-and-stock compensation. That was about eight times as much as the average director at Alphabet, the next highest-paid among the "Magnificent Seven" companies over the same period.

The value of those original awards skyrocketed along with Tesla's share price in subsequent years. That's also true of the other six firms in the Magnificent Seven – Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab, Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab, Meta (META.O), opens new tab, Apple (AAPL.O),

opens new tab, Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab and Amazon (AMZN.O), opens new tab – which got that name because their soaring stocks have been a big driver of the long-running bull market.

But Tesla is the only company among that cohort where the size of directors' original stock awards played such an outsized role in the vast wealth they've earned from these part-time jobs, the Equilar analysis shows. Tesla directors' average compensation between 2018 and 2024 – including the four years of suspended pay – was still two-and-a-half times that of Meta directors, the next highest-paid over the seven-year period.

In a statement to Reuters, a Tesla spokesperson said its directors' compensation "is not excessive but directly tied to stock performance and shareholder value creation." The statement added that board members provide extraordinary service to Tesla and devote "substantial time and effort," for example by attending 58 full-board or committee meetings in 2024. The spokesperson said that meeting frequency was well above industry norms.

Tesla's board also paid itself in stock options instead of shares, a rare practice criticized by some corporate-governance specialists because it magnifies directors' upside potential with no downside risk. Tesla directors have exercised tens or hundreds of millions of dollars in options to date but also continue to hold similarly large amounts, Equilar found.

Stock options are the right to buy the company's stock after a specified period for a preset price. Option holders face no risk, corporate-governance experts say, be-

cause they're not required to buy the stock if its value drops below the preset price. If it appreciates, they can buy the shares at a discount and immediately unload them at a profit.

Instead, many governance experts advise boards to pay directors in shares to align their interests with shareholders. When directors directly own shares, rather than options to buy shares, the value of their holdings drops if their company's stock price falls. Only 5% of the largest 200 companies in the S&P 500 by revenue issue directors options, according to the National Association of Corporate Directors.

The Tesla spokesperson said options create a more "at-risk" incentive structure for directors because they only get compensated if the stock rises. Directors at other firms who receive shares still get some value, even if share prices fall, "as long as the stock exceeds \$0," the spokesperson said.

Four corporate-governance experts who reviewed Equilar's analysis for Reuters said the Tesla board's extraordinary compensation undermines directors' independence in overseeing Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk.

"Tesla directors are ridiculously overpaid," said Douglas Chia, an independent corporate-governance consultant at Soundboard Governance LLC. "Are you actually incentivized to do a better job by being paid this much? Probably not."

Charles Elson, the founding director of the University of Delaware's corporate-governance institute, acknowledged Tesla's argument that directors only make money if the company's stock goes up.

(Reuters)

Investors say Elon Musk's SpaceX trading debut will be 'craziest IPO' ever

INVESTORS welcomed reports that SpaceX was mulling a potential IPO that would help fund Elon Musk's Mars ambitions and value the rocket and satellite company at more than \$1 trillion, as some have been waiting for years to buy into the company.

SpaceX is looking to raise more than \$25 billion in an initial public offering that could come as early as June, a person familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Though it is a high-risk and capital-intensive business, the demand for shares from retail investors will be "substantial," Shay Boloor, chief market strategist for Futurum Equities Research, said in an interview.

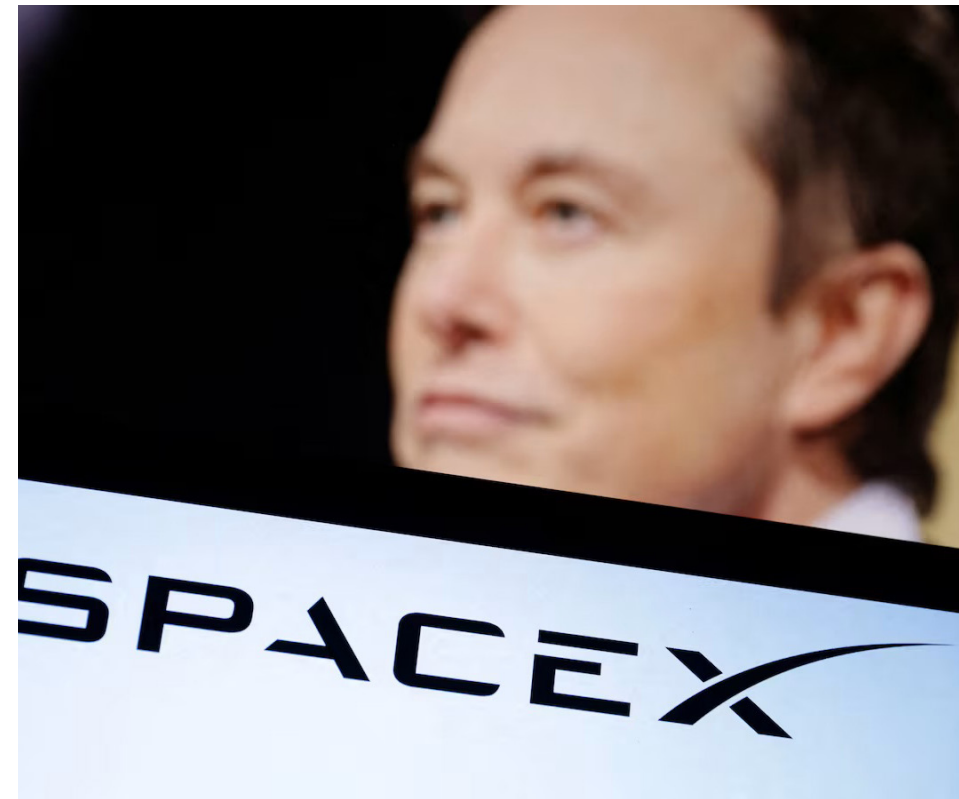
"It's going to be the craziest IPO in the history of the stock market. If it's trying to go for \$1.5 trillion, I wouldn't be surprised if it goes up to over \$2 trillion once it gets open," Boloor said.

RISKS AND DRAMA

SpaceX CEO, chief designer and founder Musk's well-documented unorthodox management style and anti-establishment rhetoric are not a deterrent, investors and analysts said.

Of the five companies Musk currently leads, including infrastructure firm The Boring Company and artificial intelligence start-up and X owner xAI, his oversight of the only publicly traded one – electric vehicle maker Tesla – has been fraught with civil fines and clashes with regulators.

He once called U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission officials "bastards" after they stripped him of his role as chairman at Tesla and restricted his social media use over his 2018 tweet saying he had "funding



▲ SpaceX logo and Elon Musk photo are seen in this illustration.

secured" to take Tesla private.

Musk, who is already the world's richest person with a net worth of more than \$460 billion, threatened to leave Tesla earlier this year if the board did not approve an unprecedented 10-year, \$1 trillion pay package. Tesla's shares and sales suffered after Musk's four-month stint running the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency.

The risks and drama an innovative CEO like Musk brings to a company are "part and parcel of being an investor in these types of companies, the reward has to compensate holders for the risk," said Christopher Marangi, co-chief investment officer for value at Mario Gabelli's GAMCO Investors.

GAMCO has exposure to SpaceX through its investment in EchoStar (SATS.O), opens new tab, which took the company's shares as

part of a spectrum deal in September.

It is "too speculative" to say whether GAMCO would buy more shares in a SpaceX IPO, but "conceptually we would be excited for the prospect of space-oriented companies," Marangi said, noting that GAMCO also has a stake in Telesat's STEAK AND SIZZLE.

Dan Hanson, senior portfolio manager who oversees Neuberger Berman's \$2.1 billion Quality Equity Fund, said SpaceX's combination of strong current operations and future potential should draw plenty of interest in an IPO. The fund had about 5% of its assets in unlisted shares of SpaceX as of the end of November.

"This is the rare situation where you have both the steak and the sizzle," he said.

While theoretical projects like sending humans to Mars might attract popular interest, Hanson said SpaceX's launch business and Starlink communications products are both established and would help it get a strong valuation – making it ready for an IPO.

Proceeds from an IPO could help SpaceX fund new technologies like space-based data centers that would not need as much energy-consuming cooling as Earth-based centers, Hanson said.

"It has all the markings of a market darling in today's technology revolution," said James St Aubin, chief investment officer of Ocean Park Asset Management, which does not have a stake in SpaceX. "There is a blue-sky outlook for its services. This allows the investors to side-step any valuation concerns while letting forecasts for growth prospects run wild."

(Reuters)

AUSTRALIA vowed stricter gun laws on Monday as it began mourning victims of its worst mass shooting in almost 30 years, in which police accused a father and son of killing 15 people at a Jewish celebration at Sydney's famed Bondi Beach.

The older gunman, aged 50, was killed at the scene, taking the tally of dead to 16, while his 24-year-old son was in a critical condition in hospital, police told a press conference.

Police have not released the suspects' names but national broadcaster ABC and other media have identified them as Sajid Akram and his son Naveed Akram. Two flags of militant group Islamic State were found in the gunmen's vehicle, ABC News reported, without citing a source.

The incident has raised questions about whether Australia's gun laws, among the toughest in the world, need an overhaul, with police saying the older suspect had held a firearms licence since 2015, along with six registered weapons.

For between 10 and 20 minutes on Sunday evening, the gunmen had fired on attendees at the Hanukkah event, gunning down men, women and children as terrified beachgoers fled.

The victims were aged between 10 and 87. Among them were a rabbi who was a father of five, a Holocaust survivor, a Slovak woman, and a 10-year-old girl, according to interviews, officials and local media reports. The 40 people taken to hospital after the attack included two police officers who were in a serious but stable condition, police said.

CABINET AGREES TOUGHER GUN LAWS

"What we saw yesterday was an act of pure evil, an act of antisemitism, an act of terror-

Australia Moves to Tighten Gun Laws After Bondi Killings



▲ People embrace as they visit a makeshift memorial following the attack on a Jewish holiday celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach, in Sydney, Australia.

ism," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told reporters after laying flowers at Bondi Beach.

"The Jewish community are hurting today," he added. "Today, all Australians wrap our arms around them and say, we stand with you. We will do whatever is necessary to stamp out antisemitism. It is a scourge,

and we will eradicate it together."

Mourners paid respects and laid flowers at a makeshift memorial at the Bondi pavilion draped in Israeli and Australian flags as police and private Jewish security guards patrolled.

Albanese said his cabinet had agreed to

strengthen gun laws and work on a national firearms register to tackle aspects such as the number of weapons permitted by gun licences, and how long the latter are valid.

"People's circumstances can change," he told reporters before the cabinet met. "People can be radicalised over a period of time. Licences should not be in perpetuity."

Security officials said one of the gunmen was known to authorities but had not been deemed an immediate threat.

"We are very much working through the background of both persons. At this stage, we know very little about them," New South Wales Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon told reporters.

Home Minister Tony Burke said the father arrived in Australia in 1998 on a student visa, while his son is an Australian-born citizen.

Police gave no details of their firearms, but videos from the scene showed the men firing weapons that appeared to be a bolt-action rifle and a shotgun.

Albanese said measures being considered ranged from curbs on open-ended licences to limits on weapons held by a single individual and the types that are legal, including modifications, with permits restricted to Australian citizens.

(Reuters)

'Hero' who disarmed Bondi gunman recovers in hospital as donations pour in

DONATIONS for a Sydney man who wrestled a gun from one of the alleged attackers during a mass shooting at Bondi Beach have surged past A\$1.1 million (\$744,000), as he recovers in hospital after surgery for bullet wounds.

Forty-three-year-old Ahmed al Ahmed, a Muslim father-of-two, hid behind parked cars before charging at one of the gunmen from behind, seizing his rifle and knocking him to the ground.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Ahmed's bravery saved lives.

"What we've seen in the last 24 hours was the worst of humanity in a terrorist act. But we also saw an example of the best of humanity in Ahmed Al Ahmed running towards danger, putting his own life at risk," Albanese told state broadcaster ABC News.

He was shot twice by a second perpetrator, Albanese said.

Ahmed's family said he was hit in the hand and arm.

Australian police on Monday said a 50-year-old father and his 24-year-old son carried out the attack at a Jewish celebration on Sunday afternoon, killing 15 people in the country's worst mass shooting in almost 30 years.

HAILED A HERO FOR DISARMING THE GUNMAN

Ahmed's father, Mohamed Fateh al Ahmed, told ABC News in an interview that his son was an Australian citizen and sells fruits and vegetables.

"My son is a hero. He served in the



▲ Police officers stand guard following the attack on a Jewish holiday celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach, in Sydney, Australia.

police, he has the passion to defend people."

"When he saw people lying on the ground and the blood, quickly his conscience pushed him to attack one of the terrorists and take away his weapon," Mohamed Fateh said.

Jozay Alkanji, Ahmed's cousin, said he had had initial surgery and may need more.

AHMED PICTURED IN HOSPITAL

Tributes have poured in from leaders both abroad and at home.

Chris Minns, the premier of New South Wales, where Sydney is lo-

cated, said in a social media post he visited Ahmed at St George Hospital and conveyed the gratitude of people across the state.

"Ahmed is a real-life hero," his post said. "Thank you, Ahmed." A photo showed Minns at his bedside, and Ahmed propped on pillows with his left arm in a cast.

U.S. President Donald Trump called Ahmed "a very, very brave person" who saved many lives.

A GoFundMe campaign set up for Ahmed has raised more than A\$1.1 million within one day.

(Reuters)

Nigeria's richest man Dangote escalates oil fight with regulator, seeks corruption probe

NIGERIA'S richest man Aliko Dangote escalated his fight with regulators on Sunday, accusing them of enabling cheap fuel imports that threaten local refineries.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer but relies heavily on imports and Dangote's refinery was meant to change that.

Dangote said if imports continue unchecked, they will threaten jobs, investment and energy security.

Speaking at his 650,000-barrel-per-day oil refinery in Lagos, Dangote said imports were being used "to checkmate do-

mestic potential", creating jobs abroad while Nigeria struggles to industrialise.

"You don't use imports to checkmate domestic potential," he told reporters.

Dangote called for an official inquiry into Farouk Ahmed, head of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, citing concerns over his management of the sector and allegations of private expenditures exceeding legitimate earnings.

(Reuters)



▲ Nigerian multinational industrial conglomerate Dangote Group's CEO Aliko Dangote looks on as he attends a meeting during the seventh "Choose France Summit", aiming to attract foreign investors to the country, at the Chateau de Versailles, outside Paris, France.

Big Zulu to headline ‘Stush in the Bush’ Launch

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

BIG ZULU, a towering figure in South African music, is set to headline the much-anticipated official launch of ‘Stush in The Bush.’

Scheduled for December 20, 2025, at KaLanga, Ngcina, this launch is poised to attract music lovers from across the region, eager to experience a night filled with dynamic performances and cultural pride.

The event boasts a rich lineup of supporting artists, including Zulu D, Young Zesh, Linda Dlamini, MBO, Culolam, Proness, Lady Zee, and Gifted Kosie. The evening will be expertly hosted by MCs Bayanda and Tiso, ensuring a seamless flow of entertainment.

Ticket pricing has been structured to accommodate a broad audience, with pre-sale general tickets available for E150 and increasing to E200 at the gate. VIP tickets offer an elevated experience, priced at E300 presale and rising to E400 on the day of the event. Tickets can be purchased conveniently through MojaTicket, with strict security measures in place, attendees are reminded that no food, drinks, or weapons will be permitted inside the venue to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for all.

Siyabonga Nene, better known by his stage name Big Zulu, hails from Bergville in KwaZulu-Natal and has become an influential voice in South African music, particularly within the maskandi genre. Born in 1987, Big Zulu’s artistry is deeply embedded in Zulu culture and tradition.



▲ South Africa’s Big Zulu.

His music is a powerful reflection of the working-class experience in South Africa, imbued with storytelling that honours Zulu heritage and lore.

Big Zulu’s rise to prominence began in 2008 after a stint in the taxi industry, where he gained firsthand insight into the daily challenges faced by many South Africans. This background informs his music, which is performed exclusively in isiZulu, allowing him to connect authentically with his audience. His breakout hit, “Mali

Eningi,” released in 2020, is a testament to his respect for the genre’s roots, featuring elements from the late maskandi legend Bhukumuzi Luthuli.

Over the years, Big Zulu has evolved from a backpack rapper into a crossover artist who skillfully blends hip-hop with indigenous sounds, appealing to a wide demographic. His lyrical content remains grounded in real-life struggles and aspirations, resonating deeply with fans across the country.

‘Inkhanyeti’ shines to 6 000 YouTube views

AS 4 Jerry P’s latest single “Inkhanyeti” has quickly captured the attention of music fans, soaring to 6,000 views on YouTube within days of its release.

Dropped last Friday across all major digital streaming platforms, the track marks a significant milestone for the Eswatini-born artist, known for his breakthrough hit “Mlentengamunye.” “Inkhanyeti,” which translates to “Star” in English, is a deeply motivational and personal song that explores themes of growth, purpose, and the inner light that exists within every individual. As 4 Jerry P shared with this publication, the inspiration for the song comes from his own life journey, rising from humble beginnings, overcoming adversity, and choosing to believe in his potential despite challenges and doubts.

“The song was inspired by my personal journey rising from humble beginnings, overcoming challenges, and choosing to believe in my own potential even when circumstances were against me,” As 4 Jerry P explained. A key highlight of the track is the collaboration with Eswatini artist Lyrikal Busta, whose verse adds emotional depth and power to the song. “The collaboration with Lyrikal Busta adds power and emotion, bringing two unique voices together to deliver a song that motivates anyone who has ever doubted their worth. The title represents that no matter where

you come from, you were born to shine,” he remarked.

At its core, “Inkhanyeti” delivers a simple yet profound message: everyone harbours a star within themselves. The lyrics speak directly to those moments when individuals feel invisible or underestimated, reminding listeners that their dreams are valid and their journeys matter. The song encourages rising above negativity, maintaining focus, and confidently pursuing one’s purpose. “It’s a reminder that your breakthrough is possible, and that nobody can dim the light that God placed inside you,” As 4 Jerry P added.

Creative process

The creative process behind “Inkhanyeti” was described as organic and inspiring. The beat, produced by Seimestones DPR, immediately resonated with the artist, sparking a natural flow of ideas that shaped the song’s concept. This collaboration came shortly after As 4 Jerry P signed with Upscale, marking a new chapter in his career. After completing the initial track, it was sent to Sibusiso Simelane at Upscale Live, who facilitated the addition of Lyrikal Busta’s verse. The final product exceeded expectations, fueling excitement about making “Inkhanyeti” the lead single for As 4 Jerry P’s upcoming album. However, following his manager’s advice, the artist chose to release “Mlentengamunye” first



▲ As 4 Jerry.

before unveiling this new work.

Musically, “Inkhanyeti” blends Hip Hop and African trap elements with strong emotional vocals, rhythmic melodies, and a warm Swati influence. This fusion creates a sound that is both contemporary and deeply rooted in cultural identity. As 4 Jerry P urged fans and music lovers to stream “Inkhanyeti,” he emphasised the importance of their support. “Your support means everything to my team and me,” he concluded.



▲ Celumusa.

Celumusa to release ‘Phumelela’ music video

ESWATINI’S music scene is about to welcome a new visual masterpiece as acclaimed musician Celumusa prepares to release the music video for his latest single, “Phumelela.”

The video is set to be a vivid celebration of perseverance, community, and cultural heritage, set against the evocative backdrop of lush maize fields. “Phumelela,” which translates to “succeed” or “win” in SiSwati, carries a powerful message of hope and resilience. Celumusa’s decision to shoot the video in golden maize fields is deeply symbolic.

Maize, a staple crop in Eswatini and much of Southern Africa, represents sustenance, growth, and the fruits of hard labour. The imagery of the swaying maize under a bright sky is carefully chosen to reflect the themes embedded in the song’s lyrics. In the video, Celumusa is seen walking through expansive maize fields, his journey mirroring the perseverance required to overcome life’s challenges.

The camera captures not only the artist’s movement but also the natural rhythm of the maize, which seems to dance in the wind, symbolising resilience and the eventual harvest of one’s dreams. This visual metaphor reinforces the song’s uplifting narrative, encouraging listeners to remain steadfast in pursuit of their goals.

Interspersed with scenes of Celumusa’s solitary walk are powerful glimpses of local community members engaged in traditional farming activities. These moments highlight the collective effort and unity that underpin success, drawing attention to the importance of cultural values and communal support. Showcasing everyday people tending to the land, the video pays homage to Eswatini’s rural heritage and the deep connection between people and their environment.

Celumusa elaborated on the concept behind the video, stating, “This concept weaves the natural setting of maize fields into the narrative of the song, emphasising cultural roots and inspirational messages.” The musician further called for people to stream the music video upon release.

Thandiswa Mazwai wins four SAMAs

JOHANNESBURG - Singer Thandiswa Mazwai has added another remarkable chapter to her illustrious career after scooping four South African Music Awards (Samas) for her critically acclaimed 2024 album, Sankofa.

The multiple award wins reaffirm Thandiswa's status as one of the most influential and respected voices in African music, celebrating her artistic bravery, cultural depth and sonic innovation. At the prestigious ceremony, Sankofa walked away with these accolades:

- Best Female Artist of the Year;
- Best Produced Album of the Year;
- Best African Adult Contemporary Album; and
- Best Engineer.

The wins recognise an album that boldly draws from heritage, memory and future-facing African expression. Since its release, Sankofa has resonated deeply with audiences and critics, standing out as one of the most impactful bodies of work of the year.

Accepting the honours, Thandiswa expressed her gratitude, saying: "Thank you to the Samas for this incredible honour. This has truly been the year of Sankofa."

Hot on the heels of her Sama success, Thandiswa is now shifting her focus to the highly anticipated Sankofa Festival, set to take place on February 28 at Carnival City. Inspired by the same themes that underpin the award-winning album, the festival promises to be a powerful celebration of music, culture and creative legacy.

Speaking about the vision behind the event, Thandiswa said: "Sankofa Heritage Fest is important for us to come together as a community to foster a culture of love, healing and joy."

The evening will be headlined by Thandiswa, whose genre-defying career spans decades, from her groundbreaking days with Bongo Maffin to her celebrated

... builds momentum toward Sankofa Festival 2026



▲ Thandiswa Mazwai.

solo catalogue, including Sankofa, which earned five Sama nominations. She will be joined by friends and collaborators from across the African music spectrum, bringing together generations and genres. The full line-up will be revealed in the coming months.

Reflecting on her journey, Thandiswa said: "It's almost unbelievable that I am now turning 50 and I have spent more than half my life in the music world. My first radio hit was 30 years ago with a group called Jackknife, and I am honoured to still be one of the top nominated artists at the Samas for my album Sankofa. I have been truly blessed."

The Sankofa Heritage Festival is dedicated to preserving and celebrating indigenous African music. Each performance will honour ancestral rhythms while bridging the past, present and future of African sound. Organisers believe the festival will become an annual cultural celebration, rooted in heritage and artistic freedom.

"There is a need for more artist-curated festivals that centre music, freedom and community," Thandiswa added. "I am excited to add my own voice to that intention. I am creating this festival to not only give space to upcoming artists but also to celebrate our cultures and collective humanity." **TshisaLive**

Russell Simmons claps back at ex's co-parenting remarks

RUSSELL Simmons slammed his ex Kimora Lee Simmons's claims after she said she 'doesn't have a relationship' with the fathers of her children.

The music mogul, who was previously with Kimora for 14 years and married for eight before their split in 2006, shared his own statement on social media after she disavowed his involvement in their kids' lives.

He claimed he has been 'fighting' for their daughters' love, adding that 'there are two sides to every story' before suggesting that she had previously 'threatened' him that he would 'never speak to [their] kids again.'

Russell, 68, and his ex-wife, 50, share two daughters: Ming, 25, and Aoki, 23.

Additionally, she shares Kenzo, 16, with actor Dijimon Hounsou as well as Wolfe with former investment banker Tim Leissner.

She is also mother to 16-year-old Gary Lee, her son she adopted from Jamaica in 2020, and 19-year-old Jayden, whom she has called her 'bonus son' as he has lived with their family since he was in the fourth grade.

On Sunday, he took to social media to address Kimora directly, writing on Instagram's Threads: 'I gave u 50,000 a month for 20 years. I was ur best / only friend. I'm the godfather to your 3 kids, until



▲ Russell Simmons.

one day you stole my stock.'

He continued: 'I have been fighting for my kids love and my bread ever since.'

'You threatened that if I sued you, I would never speak to my kids again,' he claimed. 'There are two sides to every story.'

This comes after the mother-of-six told People that she is the 'primary parent' in all of her children's lives.

'Usually I would say that I co-parent okay, but the kids are with me full-time,' she told the outlet earlier this week.



▲ Kimora Lee Simmons.

She also credited her 'village' of 'friends and family and people my kids can rely on' to parent her six children.

'I'm pretty much the primary parent. It's difficult, but I don't know sometimes what other people are thinking. Guys are weird.'

'Ming and Aoki are older, but I think they still feel very much like I'm "mom," and I think that's okay,' she continued. 'For sure they can come to me. They live at home, they travel the world and they have a place in New York.' **TMZ**



▲ Actress Masasa Mbangeni.

Actress Masasa Mbangeni celebrates honours degree

AWARD-winning former Scandal actress, Masasa Mbangeni, concluded the year on a high note, leaving the internet impressed with an honours degree from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).

Mbangeni has consistently demonstrated both dedication and talent throughout her impressive acting career and academic pursuits. Following her memorable portrayal of a villain on Scandal, Mzansi is now eagerly anticipating her future film appearances.

Holding an honours degree from Wits, which enables her to teach drama, she also previously studied at Trinity College in London.

Mbangeni is a highly talented South African actress, most recognised for her memorable portrayal of the villainous character, Thembeke Shezi, in the popular TV soap opera, "Scandal!" Her performance in this role earned her the Best Actress Award at both the 2015 SAFTA (South African Film and Television Awards) and the Royalty Soapie Awards.

Additionally, she was honoured with the Best Supporting Actress - TV Soap award.

Her work on "Scandal!" also resulted in multiple nominations: she was nominated for Best Actress at the SAFTAs in both 2017 and 2014.

Prominent

She has collaborated with international stars, including Chris Evans and Gerard Butler, as well as local soap opera icons such as Connie Ferguson, Hlomla Dandala, and Hlubi Mboya.

She has appeared in several prominent television shows, showcasing her talent and versatility.

She has made notable TV appearances in Devil's Peak (2023) as Mbali Kaleni, The River (2019-2021) as Akhona Mayisela, and Housekeepers as Nomahlubi. Her talent has also been recognised on streaming platforms, where she has made notable appearances in Netflix productions, including Heart of the Hunter as Malime Mambi and Blood & Water Season 4 (2024) as Mrs Makeba.

She recently made a memorable, albeit brief, appearance in the Mzansi original Netflix series 'Bad Influencer'. Playing a "mean girl" for a few seconds, she left a significant impression, with many viewers wanting to see more of her. This suggests a deep understanding of acting, a field in which she reportedly holds a degree.

Despite this, her desire to learn remains strong, as she even expressed her intention to pursue her Master's and PhD at the same university. She proudly holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dramatic Arts (BADA) Honours degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. **TshisaLive**



THIS article explains how diet may affect vestibular migraine and provides a guide for dietary changes to help reduce symptoms.

Vestibular migraine is a type of migraine condition with vertigo as a main symptom.

People who experience vertigo feel that they're moving when they aren't, or that their surroundings are moving around them when they aren't. Vertigo can feel similar to motion sickness.

A vestibular migraine episode lasts anywhere from a few seconds to several hours. Its symptoms may include a loss of balance, motion sickness, dizziness, lightheadedness, disorientation or confusion, nausea and vomiting, and a severe headache.

While migraine attacks often involve recurrent, throbbing headaches, vestibular migraine episodes don't always include headache symptoms — making this condition difficult to diagnose.

Notably, some research suggests that lifestyle and dietary changes may help reduce the frequency and severity of vestibular migraine attacks.

If you have migraines, then you can experience episodes due to your migraine triggers, such as certain foods, scents, or stress.

Your migraine triggers would induce your typical migraine symptoms, not a different type of migraine. So, if you tend to have vestibular migraines, your triggers would lead to a vestibular migraine episode.

How does your diet affect vestibular migraine attacks?

The exact cause of vestibular migraine remains unknown. However, this condition seems more common among women. Genetics, diet, lifestyle, and environmental factors may also play a role.

Research suggests that avoiding dietary triggers may reduce the occurrence and intensity of migraine attacks, including vestibular migraine.

Common dietary triggers for migraine attacks include chocolate, alcohol, coffee, aged cheeses, and processed meats. These foods contain chemicals like tyramine, nitrates, histamine, and phenylethylamine, all of which have been linked to migraine symptoms.

Some people report that their migraine symptoms worsen if they don't eat, which suggests that fasting and skipping meals may trigger an attack. And even mild dehydration, which can happen if you forget to drink water, can trigger a migraine episode.

Keep in mind that trigger foods may vary from person to person. In fact, some people may find that their diet doesn't affect migraine episodes.

What does a vestibular migraine diet entail?

Currently, there are no official dietary guidelines for vestibular migraines.

Consider whether certain foods, such as the foods that are known to be migraine triggers, have been associated with your migraines. You can start by eliminating that specific food to see whether that affects your migraine frequency. If you can't identify a dietary trigger, an elimination diet might be an approach you can take.

With this approach, you remove foods you suspect may worsen your symptoms. Because people respond differently to foods, elimination diets are personalized for each individual.

You then reintroduce these foods at a later date, group by group, to determine whether any food or food group triggers your symptoms.

An elimination diet typically lasts 5–6 weeks. It should only be done under the supervision of a health professional like

How to follow a vestibular migraine diet



a dietitian or doctor, as it increases your risk of a nutritional deficiency if followed incorrectly or for too long.

Bear in mind that vestibular migraine is a complex condition, and you may find that dietary changes don't affect your symptoms.

An elimination diet is divided into two main phases — elimination and reintroduction.

The elimination phase

During this phase, you avoid foods that may trigger vestibular migraine symptoms.

You can then tell whether diet plays a role in your symptoms because you've eliminated nearly all possible trigger foods.

This phase typically lasts 2–3 weeks.

The reintroduction phase

During this phase, you slowly reintroduce the eliminated foods or food groups.

Each food group should be introduced individually over 2–3 days while you record how it affects your vestibular migraine symptoms.

If you find that reintroducing a food or food group doesn't worsen your attacks, it's likely safe to eat. Yet, a food that triggers symptoms may need to be cut from your diet indefinitely.

The reintroduction phase takes another 2–3 weeks depending on how many food groups you eliminated initially, though it may last longer if your health care professional

recommends it.

Foods to avoid

An elimination diet for vestibular migraine should remove foods linked to migraine symptoms, such as:

- ▶ aged cheeses
- ▶ alcohol (particularly red wine and beer)
- ▶ aspartame, an artificial sweetener
- ▶ chocolate
- ▶ processed meats like bacon, sausages, salami, and cured meats
- ▶ monosodium glutamate (MSG)

Caffeine intake has a major impact on migraines. If you regularly drink caffeinated beverages, you might get a migraine just by reducing or increasing the amount. So you should not make changes in your caffeine intake while you are trying an elimination diet.

Other foods that may worsen symptoms but have less supporting evidence include:

- ▶ citrus fruits
- ▶ tomatoes
- ▶ onions
- ▶ beans and lentils
- ▶ nuts and seeds
- ▶ pickled and fermented foods
- ▶ organ meats, such as beef and chicken livers
- ▶ salted, smoked, and dried fish
- ▶ dairy products like milk, cheese, cream, ice cream, and yogurt
- ▶ canned soups, soup cubes, and bouillon cubes with MSG

- ▶ fruit juices and carbonated sodas
- ▶ bottled salad dressings and packaged dips
- ▶ vitamins and herbal supplements, especially those containing caffeine

If you suspect that other foods not listed above may trigger your vestibular migraine symptoms, you should consult a health care professional and consider removing them as well.

Discuss which foods you should eliminate with your doctor, as well as the duration of each phase, before you start any elimination diet.

Keep in mind that these food groups should only be avoided during the elimination phase, as they're reintroduced later on.

Foods to eat

During the elimination phase, you're still able to enjoy plenty of healthy, delicious foods, such as:

- ▶ Fruits: most fruits, excluding citrus and tomatoes
- ▶ Vegetables: most vegetables, excluding onions, beans, and lentils
- ▶ Grains: all grains, such as rice, quinoa, couscous, and oats
- ▶ Meat, eggs, and fish: all fresh meats, such as chicken, beef, turkey, lamb, eggs, and fish — though not processed or boxed meats and fish
- ▶ Dairy substitutes: nondairy milk, such as coconut and oat milk
- ▶ Fats: healthy fats like olive, flaxseed, and coconut oils
- ▶ Beverages: water and decaffeinated herbal teas
- ▶ Spices and condiments: all fresh herbs and spices, plus most homemade condiments (no store-bought dressings or dips)

If you're struggling to stay motivated during this phase, try experimenting with a variety of herbs and spices to flavor your dishes.

Potential downsides

While an elimination diet may help reduce vestibular migraine symptoms, it has several potential downsides.

It can be tricky to adjust to an elimination diet. You shouldn't follow it for an extended period without the supervision of a health professional, such as a doctor or dietitian.

Restricting multiple food groups for too long increases your risk of nutrient deficiencies. Furthermore, it's important to note that eliminating trigger foods may not work for everyone, as diet may not play a role in everyone's vestibular migraine attacks. What triggers one person's symptoms may not trigger another's.

Healthline



Striker Amoura has key role as Algeria seek AFCON redemption

STRIKER Mohamed Amoura is set to be a key figure as Algeria seek redemption at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco after disastrous campaigns in the past two editions.

The Desert Foxes won the premier African football competition a second time in 2019, edging Senegal 1-0 in the final in Cairo.

But in two AFCON appearances since they failed to win a match in six attempts and twice made humbling first-round exits, leading to the sacking of coach Djamel Belmadi.

His place was taken by Vladimir Petkovic, who took Switzerland to two Euro Championship tournaments and one World Cup during a seven-year reign.

The 62-year-old born in Bosnia & Herzegovina rang the changes when he took charge of Algeria last year, including giving more opportunities to Amoura.

His faith in the 25-year-old, now with Bundesliga outfit Wolfsburg, has been richly rewarded with Amoura becoming the leading scorer in 2026 World Cup African qualifying with 10 goals.

Amoura tormented a variety of rivals as Algeria secured a fifth appearance at the global showpiece, scoring a hat-trick against Mozambique and two each against Botswana, Somalia and Uganda. His place was taken by Vladimir Petkovic, who took Switzerland to two Euro Championship tournaments and one World Cup during a seven-year reign.

The 62-year-old born in Bosnia & Herzegovina rang the changes when he took charge of Algeria last year, including giving more opportunities to Amoura.

His faith in the 25-year-old, now with Bundesliga outfit Wolfsburg, has been richly rewarded with Amoura becoming the leading scorer in 2026 World Cup African qualifying with 10 goals.

Amoura tormented a variety of rivals as Algeria secured a fifth appearance at the global showpiece, scoring a hat-trick against Mozambique and two each against Botswana, Somalia and Uganda.

Since then he also found the net in an AFCON warm-up victory over Zimbabwe as Algeria prepare for Group E showdowns with Sudan, Burkina Faso and Equatorial Guinea.

It is a mini-league Algeria are expected to win, and Petkovic acknowledges that the Foxes are considered the strongest of the four contenders.

“The main objective is to get past the first round, (then) go as far as possible in the tournament,” he said after announcing his squad.

‘HUGE HONOUR’

Amoura told the Algerian media he is optimistic Algeria will win Group E and qualify for the round of 16.

“It is a strong group. We respect every team, but fear no team. Algeria have a balanced squad that includes some outstanding players.

“Our goal is to go deep into the tournament and represent our country in the best possible way. We want to make our supporters happy and

fight for the title.

“There is no secret to my scoring 10 goals in World Cup qualifiers. My achievements are due to hard work and the confidence given to me by my teammates and coaches.

“It is a huge honour to wear the Algerian jersey. I want to help my team as much as possible, whether it is scoring, creating goals or dropping back to defend.”

Amoura hailed Petkovic for creating an atmosphere during training camps that is conducive to success for a country that also won the AFCON in 1990.

“The atmosphere is excellent, It is serious, focused and there is a desire to give our best. It has to be that way because the 2025 AFCON is packed with strong teams.”

Amoura left Wolfsburg for Algeria at the weekend after scoring in a 3-1 league win at fellow bottom-half club Borussia Moenchengladbach.

He and Ivorian teenager Yan Dione are the leading African scorers in the Bundesliga this season with six goals each.

Amoura made his professional debut just five years ago with Entente Setif. He made an immediate impact leading to transfers to Lugano and Union Saint-Gilloise before joining Wolfsburg last year.

He initially left Union on loan, but the German club, releasing the potential of the Algerian, made the move permanent this year.

(Supersport)

LeBron James makes clutch plays as Lakers edge Suns

LEBRON James gave Los Angeles the lead on two free throws with three seconds left, then blocked Grayson Allen’s potential game-winning 3-pointer at the other end, and the Lakers survived a wild finish to defeat the host Phoenix Suns 116-114 on Sunday night.

Luka Doncic finished with 29 points, James 26 and Deandre Ayton 20 as part of a double-double with a game-high 13 rebounds for the Lakers, who trailed 77-71 before holding Phoenix scoreless for 8:05 bridging the third and fourth periods, using a 24-0 flurry to vault into a 95-77 lead.

The Suns were able to retake the lead at 114-113 when Dillon Brooks buried the third of his fourth-quarter 3-pointers with 12.2 seconds left. But Brooks, who had drawn an earlier technical foul for jawing

with James, got nailed with a second “T” while celebrating his success and was ejected.

James missed the subsequent free throw, but then pulled up from beyond the arc with three seconds left and drew a three-shot foul on Devin Booker. He made the last two of the attempts to retake the lead.

Down one, the Suns got one final shot, but James blocked Allen’s potential game-winning 3-point attempt and Marcus Smart, fouled after snatching the rebound, added a free throw to make it a two-point margin of victory.

The Suns led 77-71 after two free throws by Booker with 5:28 remaining in the third period before not scoring again until the third minute of the final period, falling behind 95-77 in the process. Phoenix missed 14 straight shots and mixed in seven turnovers during its scoreless spell.

(Reuters)



▲ LeBron James.

Uganda draw in warm-up game in Morocco

UGANDA drew 2-2 in a scrimmage with Morocco’s Royal Armed Forces in Rabat over the weekend in one of two preparatory matches they have scheduled ahead of the Africa Cup of Nations final.

They are also playing a friendly on Wednesday against fellow finalists Gabon as they fine-tune their preparations for their Group C campaign.

The Cranes, who have recalled veteran goalkeeper Denis Onyango from Mamelodi Sundowns, have been in Casablan-

ca for a week already as they get ready for their opening Group C game against Tunisia in Rabat on December 23.

Coach Paul Put Put said he was hoping the Ugandans deliver a tournament performance that matches their hard work.

“They can show themselves to the whole world and maybe change their lives. It would be nice to perform very well because they deserve it,” said the Belgian coach, who took Burkina Faso to the final in the 2012 tournament in South Africa.

(Supersport)



▲ Paul Put Put.

MOHAMED Salah heads for Morocco this week to captain Egypt in the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) amid uncertainty over his future at Liverpool. Salah came off the bench midway through the first half and set up the second goal in a 2-0 Premier League win over Brighton at the weekend.

After the match, manager Arne Slot said there was “no issue to resolve” with his star forward, but speculation continues to rumble over the Egyptian’s future after his outburst last weekend.

AFP Sport highlights African headline-makers in the major European leagues:

Salah’s last Liverpool appearance?

The 33 year old came on as a substitute and seized his chance by setting up Liverpool’s second goal for Hugo Ekitike. Salah had been left out of Liverpool’s squad for Tuesday’s Champions League victory at Inter Milan after his explosive rant about Slot following the recent draw at Leeds. That was the third successive game that Salah had been left on the bench and his furious claim that he had been “thrown under the bus” hinted at a potential departure from the troubled Premier League champions during the January transfer window.

CALVIN BASSEY (Fulham)

The Nigeria defender scored in his side’s 3-2 win at Burnley. Bassey grabbed Fulham’s second goal to put them 2-1 up in the 31st minute en route to their first victory at Turf Moor since 1951. The 25 year old’s close-range header from Harry Wilson’s cross was his first goal since an FA Cup tie against Manchester United in March.

IBRAHIM SANGARE (Nottingham Forest)

The Ivory Coast midfielder capped his side’s 3-0 victory over Tottenham with the final goal. Sangare netted in the 79th minute at the City Ground, bending a superb strike in off the post with the outside of his foot. The 28 year old’s second goal this season

Salah off to Afcon amid uncertainty



▲ Mohamed Salah.

— and his first in seven matches — helped boost Forest’s bid to avoid relegation.

SPAIN

AKOR ADAMS, CHIDERA EJUKE (Sevilla)

Nigerians Adams and Ejuke celebrated Afcon call-ups with a goal each as Sevilla ham-

mered Real Oviedo 4-0 in La Liga. Adams opened the scoring in the fourth minute and Ejuke completed the rout with one minute of regular time remaining.

MOHAMED AMOURA (Wolfsburg)

Amoura scored for the second straight match in Wolfsburg’s 3-1 Bundesliga win

at Borussia Moenchengladbach. With the teams level after 34 minutes, Amoura was on the spot to blast in a deflected Christian Eriksen cross, putting the visitors back in front. The 25 year old has six goals and two assists for Wolfsburg in the league this season.

RAMY BENSEBAINI (Borussia Dortmund)

Borussia defender Bensebaini scored his side’s only goal in a disappointing 1-1 draw at Freiburg. With Dortmund teammate and Guinea international Serhou Guirassy struggling in front of goal and missing chances, Bensebaini took matters into his own hands with 31 minutes gone. The Algerian latched onto a Yan Couto free-kick and blasted home from close range.

HIMAD ABDELLI, HAROUNA DJIBIRIN (Angers)

Algerian Abdelli converted an early penalty and Cameroonian Djibirin restored a two-goal lead on 85 minutes as mid-table Angers trounced lowly Nantes 4-1 in Ligue 1. Both Africans were scoring their second goals of the league campaign.

(The Citizen)

Frank angry as Tottenham take a step back in defeat at Forest

TOTTENHAM Hotspur manager Thomas Frank could not hide his irritation after his hopes of a third successive win for the first time since he took charge were blown apart in a dismal 3-0 Premier League defeat at Nottingham Forest.

Callum Hudson-Odoi scored twice, after mistakes by Tottenham’s Archie Gray and goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario, and Ibrahim Sangare completed the rout at the City Ground.

Tottenham had gone into the game buoyant after home wins against Brentford and Slavia Prague that had silenced some of Frank’s critics, but he was again left trying to explain a return to the bad habits that have dogged his side.

“It was hugely disappointing. It’s burning, annoying. That was a bad performance. Especially first half, overall we looked disjointed. We didn’t win enough duels,” Frank, whose side are mid-table with 22 points, said.

“It seems like we gave the ball away every time we won it back. We need to work to be more consistent. It’s two steps forward and a step back today.”

Forest’s first goal arrived when Vicario played a short ball out to Gray who was dispossessed by Sangare who unselfishly squared for



▲ Tottenham Hotspur manager Thomas Frank.

Hudson-Odoi to score.

Five minutes after the break, Vicario was caught out by a Hudson-Odoi cross that sailed over his head and in.

“That’s down to individuals. We are in it together, we win together and lose together. It’s hugely irritating that we perform like this today. Simple passing, I think we lose the ball 20 times, simple passes,” Frank added.

“The better team won today. When things are going against us we need to keep doing the right thing and keep our cool heads.”

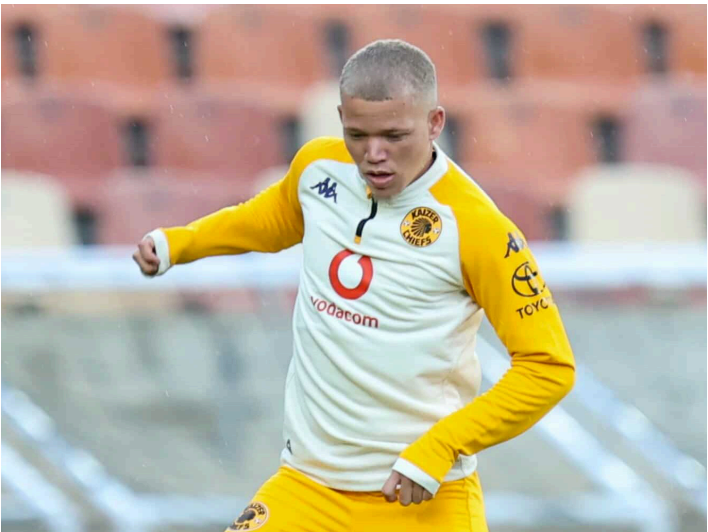
Victory continued Forest’s upward turn since Sean Dyche came in to replace Ange Postecoglou in October after the Australian had himself replaced Nuno Espirito Santo.

They are now five points clear of the relegation zone after winning four of their last six league games.

“Massive credit to the players the way they’re absorbing what we’re trying to do and activating it,” Dyche said.

“There’s still work to do but it’s a much better league table. But it’s got to continue, of course.”

(Supersport)



▲ Luke Baartman.

Luke Baartman reflects on Kaizer Chiefs debut

LUKE Baartman has reflected on his Kaizer Chiefs debut after coming off the bench on their goalless draw with TS Galaxy last Sunday.

The 19-year-old, who joined Chiefs as a free agent after leaving Cape Town Spurs at the beginning of the season, came on for George Matlou in the 80th minute.

“It felt good to be back on the field and it was a proud moment for me to wear the Chiefs jersey,” Baartman told Chiefs media.

“After training hard for the

past few months, it was rewarding to finally play for this great institution.

“Though it wasn’t easy, since I haven’t played for a while, I feel I contributed to the attack as we tried to unlock Galaxy’s defence.”

Baartman will be hoping to get more game time when Amakhosi return to action after the AFCON break. They will face Golden Arrows on 20 January.

The Chiefs youngster has also sent a message to the club supporters.

(The Citizen)



MTN PREMIER LEAGUE 2025/26 REVIEW

The E120 000 'carrot' rundown

... Nsingizini, Sea Birds lead 9-team first round leaders' incentive race

By Chris Dlamini

WILL it come down to a two-horse race with four games to go? Most unlikely, instead, it could go all the way to last first round match week before the winners of the E120 000 first round leaders' incentive are crowned.

As it is, after match week 10, it is defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs and Manzini Sea Birds leading an eight-team race for one prize - the E120 000 'carrot' as dubbed by local media. The current top 9 teams are realistic candidates with 12 points to fight for. Let's briefly go through the past weekend match week 10 games.

AT THE SUMMIT:

Nsingizini Hotspurs - 1st (22 points)

► After a goalless draw with Royal Leopard in the previous weekend, they could not get anything at all against Young Buffaloes, another security forces side. Buffaloes edged them 1-0 but they remain on top, only level with Manzini Sea Birds who sit on second in the standings.

CLOSER TO SUMMIT:

Manzini Sea Birds - 2nd (22 points)

► In what is so far their best start in their history, Sea Birds are now level with Nsingizini Hotspurs as they look to reclaim pole position - just where they have been longer than any other team this season. Sea Birds had a narrow 3-2 escape against third-placed Ezulwini United.

Ezulwini United - 3rd (19 points)

► They lost 2-3 to Manzini Sea Birds but still occupy the third spot as close rivals dropped points too. Still going in hard for the E120 000 - four more games will tell the full story.

BIGGEST SETBACK:

Manzini Wanderers - 16 (6 points)

► Again, are they going to survive relegation this time? This is the million dollar question I asked last week. By the look of things, it will be a long and tough season for LiWeseli. After losing 2-0 to Swallows in the 20 minutes of added time, they are three points behind second bottom Sisonkhe at the basement of the table.

Mbabane Highlanders - 11th (13 points)

► They have in two games dropped five points. A goalless draw with struggling minnows Ubombo Sugar and then a 3-1 defeat to Royal Leopard has taken them off the carrot chase when a win against the latter kept them closer to the chasing pack, and in the race.

AT ROCK BOTTOM:

Manzini Wanderers - 16th (6 points)

► We won't waste time here. We all see the challenges and Wanderers need to sort



things out quickly or they are going down. That heavy substitute goalkeeper does not give hope to surviving the axe.

COACH(ES) OF THE WEEK:

Dominic Kunene (Young Buffaloes)

► The Young Buffaloea gaffer had a tough one to deal with away to Nsingizini Hotspurs but got the job done at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium, the latter's slaughterhouse.

THE FANS CORNER:

King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium, Mavuso Sports Centre and Mkhuzweni Technical Centre all recorded good and vibrant crowds which also honoured deceased Mbabane Swallows and Mbabane Highlanders supporters Muzi 'Bondas' Simelane and one known as 16.

MATCHWEEK 10 RESULTS:

M. Chiefs	2-0	T. Celtios
N. Hotspurs	0-1	Y. Buffaloes
R. Leopard	3-1	M. Highlanders
Sisonkhe	1-0	Amawele
U. Sugar	1-1	Rangers

M. Pirates	0-0	G. Mamba
M. Swallows	2-0	M. Wanderers
M. Sea Birds	3-2	E. United

MATCHWEEK 11 UPCOMING FIXTURES:

T. Celtios	vs.	U. Sugar
Y. Buffaloes	vs.	M. Sea Birds
Rangers	vs.	R. Leopard
Amawele	vs.	M. Swallows
G. Mamba	vs.	M. Chiefs
E. United	vs.	Sisonkhe
M. Wanderers	vs.	N. Hotspurs
M. Highlanders	vs.	M. Pirates

16-Men Challenge: E1k top-up prize

By Chris Dlamini

The returning 16-Men Challenge will be worth its players' time as a top-up prize of E1 000 has been added. Set to resume in January 2026 at the Manzini Sports Lounge, the new home to Manzini Pool Club (MPC) at Ngwane Park, Manzini, competing stars will win cash prizes that will include the top-up every month.

"This is not just for the seniors but extends to the juniors as well who will be engaged during school holidays," confirmed tournament coordinator Sithembiso 'Dodge' Matsebula after partnering the Lounge on this one.

Matsebula said as much players would come with their own challenge prizes, the E1 000 would always be there to add to what they play for each month.

The first competition to mark the return

to action of the 16-Men Challenge will feature juniors since schools are closed until January 27, 2026.

On top of the juniors, Masters and Seniors will also be involved.

Matsebula released the full master schedule to run throughout the year 2026.

Other details will be released in due course when the first event nears in the New Year.

16-MEN CHALLENGE CALENDAR 2026:
January: Juniors & Masters/Seniors
February: Open
March: Size to Size
April: Juniors & Masters/Seniors
May: Open
June: Size to Size
July: Open
August: Juniors/Masters/Seniors
September: Size to Size
October: Open
November: Masters/Seniors
December: Open



▲ National ladies champion Ncobile 'Sncobesh' Dlamini is expected to attend the 16 men challenge.



▲ Pool male star Eddie 'Bharuka' Mondlane also played the 16 men challenge.



▲ Samkelo Dlamini and Nathie Hleta were crowned champions of the Scottish Billiards doubles tournament held in Mbabane.

Nathi, Samkelo win Doubles Tourney

THE Scottish Billiards Doubles Tournament has come and gone. With a grand prize of E2 400, a trophy and gold medals at stake, the past weekend had some of seasoned players team up to battle it out.

This was at the Billiards and Games Arena in Mbabane on Saturday and Sunday.

At least 17 pairs competed in tournament dubbed Scottish Doubles with a Twist. As it turned out, the best pair was veteran star Nathi Hleta and his play partner Samkelo Dlamini.

They took home the the title.

It was only the players in the Billiards Singles Super League and B division. A draw was done a week prior to the tournament.

Meanwhile, Hleta and Dlamini defeated the pair of Linda Dlamini and Shreem Mukasa with a narrow 7-6 margin to win the E3 000 sponsored Doubles Tournament. The runners-up took home E1 400 while semi-finalists received E900 apiece.

- The winners and prizes:**
1. Samkelo Dlamini/Nathi Hleta - E2 400+Trophy+Gold medals
 2. Linda Dlamini/Shreem Mukasa - E1 400
 3. Jairus/Antony - E900
 4. Malungisa/Rasta - E900
- The competing pairs:**
1. Samkelo/Nathi
 2. Mlandvo/Ngula
 3. Luyanda/Tinyawo
 4. Tiger/Nkosingiphile
 5. Jozane/Squared
 6. Gcina/Qhawe
 7. Vuyo/Theo
 8. Antony/Dodge
 9. Malibongwe/Mike
 10. Cocu/Mweli
 11. Malungisa/Welcome
 12. Mshobi/Mandla
 13. Brandon/Sandile
 14. Bongani/Owen
 15. Linda/Shreem
 16. Bandzile/Mohammed

START YOUR DAY IN THE KNOW WITH CURRENT NEWS!

Keep yourself updated with recent going-ons by subscribing to **Eswatini Financial Times** and **Eswatini Sunday**. They are conveniently delivered to your doorstep.

REQUIRE OUR PRODUCT DELIVERED AT YOUR OFFICE? NO WORRIES, WE CAN ARRANGE THAT!

Reach out to our Subscriptions Team today and begin your subscription journey!
Contact us @ (+268) 7912 8965

You have read the rest, now read the best

'Sea Robbers' for greater heights – 'Chaka Chaka'

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

A new breed of 'Sea Robbers' is underway at Moneni Pirates.

That is what new head coach Matheus 'Chaka Chaka' Mandlazi is here for.

The Mozambique-born coach, a legend of Manzini Wanderers and Manzini Sundowns, said

Moneni Pirates head coach Matheus 'Chaka Chaka' he wanted to take the team to another level following his move to the black and white ensemble on a short-term deal.

"I am happy to be part of the team and will work with the entire 'Buccaneers' in taking the team back to the top where it belongs. I am lucky to work with my two former colleagues, such as Thulani and Sibusiso Hlandze, with whom I played during my playing career. I now respect them as my Bosses, and I am honoured to work with them at one of the biggest teams in Eswatini," he said.

Mandlazi is the third foreign coach to lead Pirates within two years after Christopher Ennin (Ghana) and Meck Mwase (Malawi) under the stewardship of president Thulani Xaba.

He played for Manzini Sundowns and Manzini Wanderers during his playing career. Mwase recently walked out of the 'Buccaneers' ship after resigning due to a string of poor results.

Mandlazi previously had coaching stints with Malanti Chiefs and the defunct Matsapha United in the country.

Mandlazi's first assignment for Pirates will be against Mbabane Highlanders on December 20, 2025, at Mavuso Sports Centre.

Pirates are sitting at position 12 after 11 matches following the recent goalless draw against Green Mamba on Sunday.



▲ Manzini Wanderers coach Gcina Dlamini.

Coach Gcina laments Janine's injury

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MANZINI Wanderers head coach Gcina Dlamini has lamented the injury of their first-choice goalkeeper Mario Janine.

Dlamini said the forced substitution of the Mozambican shot stopper contributed to their 2-0 loss to Mbabane Swallows on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

"The turning point of the match was the forced substitution of our goalkeeper, who collided with one of the opposition strikers. We were containing the opponents until that moment when we lost our shot stopper. I am happy with the performance of my players despite being blunt upfront, and we will work on it moving forward," he said. Meanwhile, the winning coach, Caleb Ngwenya, congratulated his players for the win. "I am happy with the win, which boosted the morale of my players who have been working hard throughout the season. We will continue working hard in the next fixtures and avoid complacency," he said. Late second-half goals from Lizwe Dlamini and Wandile 'Shaka' Simelane helped the red and white side beat the struggling hub giants in front of over 15 00 fans.



▲ Moneni Pirates FC players.

2026 Epilepsy Half Marathon launched

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE date has been set.

The 10th edition of the Epilepsy Half Marathon will take place on February 7, 2026, at the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) offices in Lobamba.

The date was revealed by the Eswatini Epilepsy organisation's national director, Abraham Ntshalinshali, during the launch held on Monday in Mbabane.

The race will see runners compete in three categories: 5km, 10km, and 21km under the auspices of Athletics Eswatini.

Registration for E200(21km), E170(10km), and E140(5km). Ntshalinshali said they are happy with the return of the race.

"We are pleased with the return of the race, which has helped us to spread the gospel of epilepsy over the past 10 years. We invite corporate companies to support us in this initiative. We appreciate the support of the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council and Athletics Eswatini," he said.

Athletics Eswatini Gender Equity Chairperson Ncobile Dlamini commended the race organisers for sustaining the race over the years.

Dlamini represented the association president, Zakhele Dlamini.

"I would like to thank Epilepsy Eswatini for their consistency and commitment in hosting this race since its inception. Year after year, you have demonstrated resilience, vision, and dedication to both sport and social impact. Athletics Eswatini truly appreciates this longstanding partnership



▲ Dignitaries during the launch of the 2026 Epilepsy marathon held in Mbabane.

and your unwavering efforts to use athletics as a tool for advocacy and positive change," she said. She further revealed that the race is complying with their standards.

Emphasis

"As the national federation mandated to govern athletics in the Kingdom of Eswatini, Athletics Eswatini places strong emphasis on race licensing and compliance. We are pleased that the Epilepsy Half Marathon continues to work closely with us to ensure that this event is properly licensed, aligned

with national regulations, and conducted under recognized athletics standards. Race licensing is not a formality," Dlamini said.

She further revealed that the race encourages unity among members of the society.

"The Epilepsy Half Marathon also reminds us that athletics is for everyone. It creates space for awareness about epilepsy, fights stigma, and promotes understanding through sport. This aligns perfectly with Athletics Eswatini's vision of inclusive,

accessible, and well-governed athletics across the country," she said.

Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC) Business Development Manager Zamsa Tsabedze commended the partnership between Athletics Eswatini and the Epilepsy Organisation.

Tsabedze said the collaboration contributes to the development of athletics in the country on behalf of the national sports body Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Darius Dlomo.



**Salah off to
AFCON amid
uncertainty**

Page 16



**2026 Epilepsy
Half Marathon
launched**

Page 19

Eswatini Tuesday 16
Daily News December, 2025

Sport



The main image features a soccer match scene. In the foreground, a player in a purple jersey with 'SMVAF' and the number '1' is seen from behind, high-fiving teammates. Another player in a dark grey jersey with 'SMVAF' and the number '12' is also visible. A coach in a grey cap and jacket is in the foreground on the right. The background shows a large crowd in a stadium.

**‘Sea Robbers for
greater heights’**

**... Newly appointed Moneni Pirates coach has declared the
hub outfit will be a better side under his guidance. *Page 19***