



E1.66 billion in Govt coffers to ease cash flow constraints

By Delisa Magagula

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Police destroy 4 hectares of dagga fields as festive season operations intensify



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Domestic tourism boosts Eswatini towards 2 million target



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Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg confirmed on Monday that the funds have cleared all required approvals, including parliamentary endorsement, and are now ready to be deposited into government accounts.

"The loans are expected to relieve pressure on government cash flow and allow for the full settlement of outstanding payments to suppliers. The African Development Bank loan is part of a broader programme aimed at supporting economic resilience, service delivery, and sustainable growth," said the Minister during his popular Finance in Focus segment.

He further said, OPEC Fund facility complements this by providing additional resources at a time when seasonal revenue fluctuations have put strain on government finances.

Minister Rijkenberg emphasised that while the loans provide immediate liquidity, they are denominated in U.S. dollars, meaning future repayments will be made in foreign currency.

He said this exposes the government to exchange rate considerations, a weaker Emalangeni could increase the local cost of servicing the debt, while a stronger Emalangeni may reduce it.

"The arrival of these loans is a key step in stabilising Eswatini's public

finances. With funds now entering government coffers, suppliers and contractors who have experienced payment delays can expect their invoices to be cleared in full in the coming days," assured the Minister.

According to the Ministry of Finance, these loans are part of a strategy to ensure fiscal stability, maintain continuity in government operations, and avoid disruption of essential services.

Access to external financing provides a predictable source of funds that can help manage seasonal shortfalls in revenue collection. Noteworthy, the government plans to manage the loans prudently to balance immediate financial needs with long-term debt sustainability.

Rijkenberg said careful monitoring of exchange rates and repayment schedules will be key to ensuring that obligations in U.S. dollars do not place excessive strain on the national budget.

"The African Development Bank funds expected to land this week and the OPEC Fund facility soon afterwards, we are positioned to restore normal cash flow, pay suppliers, and strengthen the overall financial position of the government," said the Minister.



▲ There is an expected arrival of a US\$47.5 million loan from the African Development Bank, equivalent to approximately E807 million. In addition, a US\$50 million loan from the OPEC Fund, or about E850 million, is expected to follow shortly, bringing total new funding to roughly E1.66 billion.

Police destroy 4 hectares of dagga fields as Festive Season operations intensify

By Ncaba Ntshakala
ncaban@rubiconmedia.group

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has recorded a major breakthrough in its ongoing fight against illicit drugs after officers from the Manzini Region Anti-Drug Unit destroyed four hectares of dagga fields along the Mnjoli Dam.

Police said the operation forms part of a sustained crackdown on the cultivation and distribution of illegal drugs, which continue to fuel criminal activity across the country. According to REPS, statistics show that drugs such as dagga contribute significantly to the rising levels of crime, particularly violent offences.

The police have reiterated that those involved in the cultivation and dealing of illicit drugs will be pursued relentlessly, warning that such activities will be met with firm resistance from law enforcement.



▲ Members of the Police force during the operation.

Meanwhile, as the festive season approaches, REPS has assured the nation that it is fully prepared to maintain law and order and en-

sure the safety of emaSwati. Police officers have been deployed in all strategic areas, with nationwide operations already in full swing.



▲ Police officers preparing to cross to the other side of Mnjoli Dam during the operation.

These operations include road-blocks, intensified patrols, and public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness on crime prevention and road safety. In Mbabane, police intensified night patrols across the station area last night to ensure the capital remains safe for residents and visitors.

REPS said all operations are

guided by its operational mantra: "Umbutfo Wembube umezica ku-hliphita tigungu tebufakatsi neku-vikela tingoti temgwaco kute kund-londlobale kuphepha kwesive," reaffirming the service's commitment to protecting communities and preventing crime during the festive period and beyond.

Stories by Delisa Magagula

Govt investment delivers E305 mln for jobs, enterprise

A wave of employment and enterprise opportunities is unfolding across Eswatini as the Regional Development Fund (RDF) implements 204 projects valued at E305 million.

The projects, spread across the Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni regions, are expected to create 1,442 job opportunities while directly benefiting more than 52,000 Emaswati, according to the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development's Second Quarter Performance Report.

Unlike traditional short-term employment programmes, the RDF model channels funding into income-generating ventures and infrastructure, creating both immediate jobs and longer-term economic participation.

Of the projects underway, 72 are income-generating initiatives, while 172 focus on infrastructure, including roads, water systems, electrification and community facilities.

The Fund, established under Legal Notice No. 03 of 2015, was designed to support decentralised development by allowing communities to identify and implement projects that respond to local needs.

Worth noting that the Government has positioned the RDF as a mechanism to reduce poverty through productive investment rather than relief-based interventions.

As of September 30, 2025, the RDF had recorded a 63 per cent disbursement rate, with E2.7 million committed against E2.2 million received for its administration account.

While operational challenges remain, particularly limited administrative funding, project implementation has continued across all regions.

"Beyond funding, the RDF has invested in capacity building to improve project sustainability. During the review period, 68 project committee members from 21 Eswatini Organised Groups (EOGs) received training in bookkeeping, financial reporting, material management and stock



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III handing over one of the RDF funded projects in this file pic. (Left: The Minister for Tinkhundla Administration and Development Sikhumbuzo Dlamini says in his reports says the government has projects worth E305 million for people to utilize.

control," reads the report.

These skills are aimed at strengthening accountability and ensuring that funded projects remain viable beyond initial disbursement, as mentioned by the report.

Report

The report further states that, regionally, Manzini leads in project volume, with 76 ongoing projects valued at E87.6 million, projected to create 652 jobs.

Shiselweni follows with 92 ongoing projects worth E120.9 million, expected to benefit 16,155 people and generate 397 jobs. Hhohho currently has 53 ongoing projects valued at E71.2 million, while Lubombo has 23 projects worth E25.2 million underway.

To date, 48 RDF projects have been completed nationwide at E71.1 million, directly benefiting 5,999 people and creating 203 jobs.



... MP urges youth access to the unused E5 million RDF

MBABANE East Member of Parliament (MP) Welcome Dlamini has called on young people to take advantage of an unutilised E5 million available through the Regional Development Fund (RDF) to establish businesses and income-generating projects.

Speaking during a constituency engagement, Dlamini said the funding remains accessible to youth groups and cooperatives with viable proposals, yet uptake has remained low despite rising unemployment and food insecurity among young people. He said the RDF was specifically designed to support community-driven development and entrepreneurship, including youth-led initiatives in agriculture, manufacturing, services and small-scale enterprises. "The money is there. What is needed are structured proposals and organised groups willing to take responsibility for running projects," Dlamini said.

The RDF, administered under the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, funds both infrastructure and income-generating projects identified at the community level.

Youth-led ventures qualify for funding under the income-generating category, which includes cooperatives, production groups and small businesses.

According to RDF data, several youth

groups across the country have already benefited from funding for projects such as poultry farming, crop production, equipment purchases and small processing operations. These initiatives have contributed to job creation while providing sustainable income at the community level.

Dlamini said youth unemployment and hunger could be addressed through greater participation in such programmes, noting that funding alone was not sufficient without active engagement from intended beneficiaries.

Project

He encouraged young people to work through recognised community structures and Eswatini Organised Groups to submit applications, adding that technical committees are in place to assist with project appraisal and compliance.

Noteworthy, nationally, the RDF recently received 54 project applications, of which 34 were recommended for funding, with the remaining under appraisal.

A further 12 projects worth E20.4 million were approved by the Regional Development Fund Committees. "Government continues to position the RDF as a vehicle for youth empowerment, community ownership and inclusive economic growth, with a focus on reducing dependency and promoting self-reliance at the local level," said Dlamini.



▲ Mbabane East Member of Parliament Welcome Dlamini.

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) has issued a stern warning to the public about bogus travel agents operating in the Kingdom, urging travellers to confirm credentials before making payments.

Speaking in an interview, Chunkie Dlamini, Head of Marketing at ETA, said recent increases in complaints about fake travel organisers particularly on social media platforms have prompted the authority to educate consumers on how to protect themselves.

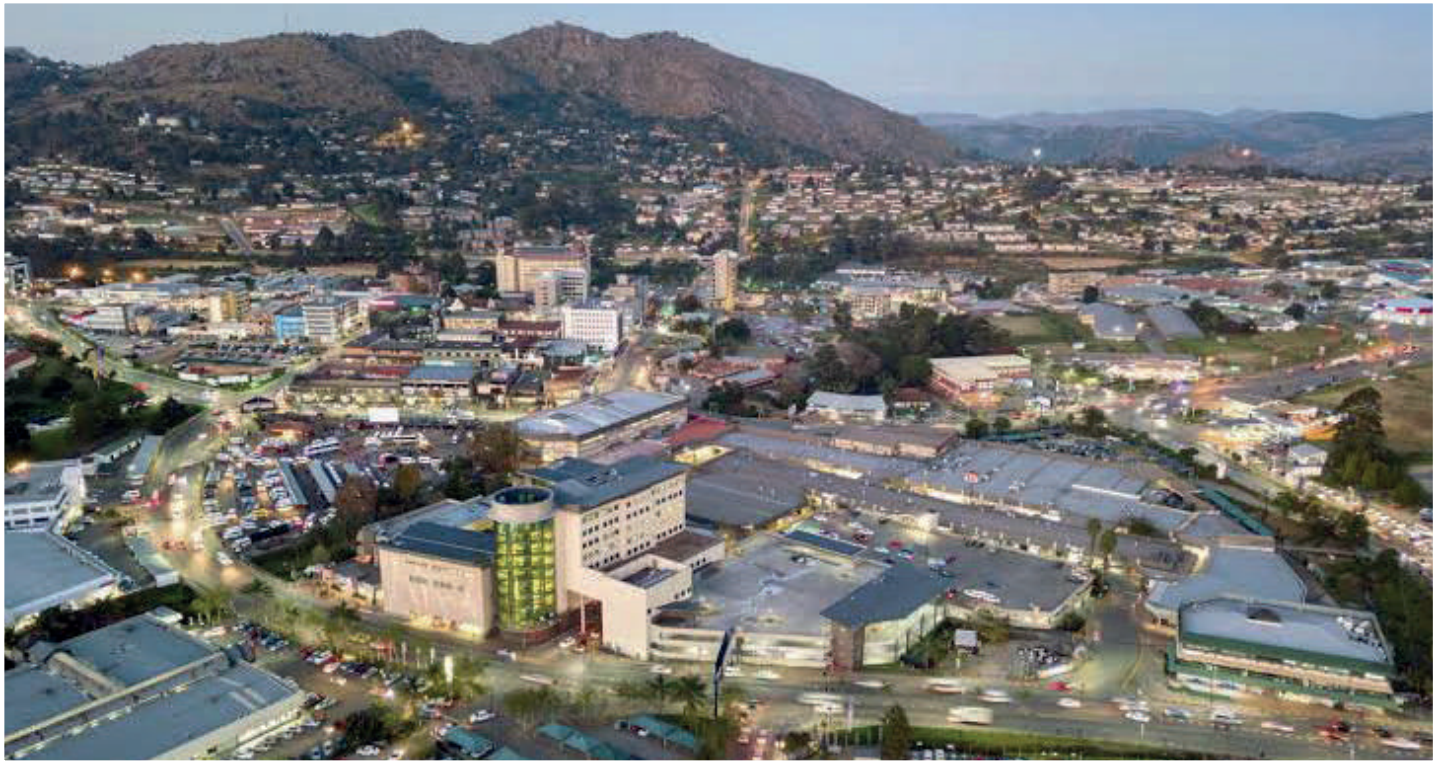
“People get excited and forget to vet because they want to save money,” Dlamini said, noting that some travellers pay deposits or full amounts without confirming whether the business is legitimate.

“We didn’t know about the recently arrested travel agent who robbed Emaswati until after the complaints came in,” she said, referring to the ongoing case involving a travel organiser currently facing fraud allegations.

Worth noting Thandeka Mamba (33), from Mangwaneni, Mbabane is accused of defrauding 17 people, primarily bank employees, of roughly E174 260 by claiming she would organise and pay for a luxury cruise trip to Durban.

The group paid full amounts in advance for the cruise, transport and logistics. Upon arrival in Durban, they discovered the promised cruise and arrangements were never booked. Mamba allegedly disappeared, leaving them stranded and out of pocket.

She appeared in the Manzini Principal Magistrate’s Court and was granted bail set at E87 130, with conditions including surety and regular court appearances. Police are continuing to investigate the matter, and the case is due back in court as the prosecution prepares for trial. Meanwhile, ETA is distinguishing between travel agents, tour operators and tour guides, stressing that each has a specific role in the tourism value chain.



Dlamini said, Travel agents generally sell travel products and must be registered, while tour operators design and package travel experiences. Tour guides, on the other hand, are individuals licensed to conduct guided visits but do not handle bookings or financial transactions.

Dlamini advised the public to confirm registration status with ETA before paying any travel service provider.

“Don’t pay before vetting and finding out if they are registered,” she said. Unregistered operators, she warned, may not provide legitimate services and could disappear with clients’ funds. Despite the warnings, the authority expressed support for young entrepreneurs entering the tourism sector.

“As ETA we encourage it because these are young people and it creates jobs because it brings people,” Dlamini said, while reiterating the need for regulatory compliance.

The Head of Marketing further said that outbound travel agents that organise travel outside Eswatini are becoming more common, especially on TikTok and Facebook and not all adhere to registration and ethical standards.

“Inbound travel services, which facilitate visitor experiences within Eswatini, have not shown similar issues, according to the authority,” said Dlamini.

Worth noting the warning comes amid broader national travel scam alerts, with police and consumer protection bodies encouraging travellers to report suspicious offers and confirm service providers’ licenses before payment.

Domestic tourism boosts Eswatini towards 2 million target

DOMESTIC tourism activity in Eswatini is contributing to the country’s progress toward an ambitious goal of attracting two million visitors by 2027. The target was reaffirmed by the Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Jane Mkhonta-Simalane, who outlined the figures as part of ongoing sector performance reporting.

According to government data and sector plans, Eswatini aims to increase overall tourism revenue significantly through both international arrivals and heightened domestic travel.

Domestic travel to cultural events, festivals, local attractions and holiday destinations has seen notable growth, with travellers choosing to explore within the Kingdom.

Events such as Incwala and Umhlanga Reed Dance continue to draw large numbers of local visitors each year, contributing to hotel occupancy and economic activity across regions.

Eswatini Tourism Authority Head of Marketing when speaking during an interview said the Incwala ceremony, a national cultural celebration centred around first harvest rituals, attracts participants from across Eswatini and has been linked to increased movement within the country’s tourism infrastructure.

Similarly, the Umhlanga Reed Dance, a significant cultural showcase in late August and early September, drives robust local travel and hospitality demand.

“Special domestic tourism initiatives and



▲ Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jane Mkhonta-Simalane says Eswatini is on track to reach 2 million tourist.

seasonal campaigns including local holiday travel during Christmas and other school breaks are expected to sustain tourism spending and bolster revenue performance. These efforts complement inbound tourism strategies and aim to ensure that revenue

growth is balanced across the year,” said Dlamini.

Meanwhile, Minister Jane noted that improved domestic participation supports local businesses, increases occupancy rates at accommodation facilities, and enhances regional tourism offerings.



▲ Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) Head of Marketing Chunkie Dlamini warns of ‘Bogus’ Travel Agents.

“The shift in travel perception within Eswatini is creating new opportunities,” the minister said at a recent tourism forum, pointing to broader participation by Eswatini residents in travel and leisure activities.

She further said, Government and industry leaders continue to encourage residents to choose Eswatini’s destinations for family, cultural and seasonal travel, underlining the economic role that domestic tourism plays in reaching the two million mark in tourism value.



Royal Eswatini Police Services At Work

#Sikhona

#Sikhona

Malindza family home destroyed in suspected arson attack

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
sipheshled@rubiconmedia.group

A DEVASTATING arson attack has left a family in the Malindza area of Siteki reeling after their five-roomed house and valuable property were deliberately set on fire, causing losses estimated at E206,500.

The incident, reported on the night of December 13, 2025, has prompted a thorough investigation by Siteki Police, who are working tirelessly to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The 43-year-old man who reported the crime discovered the horrifying scene after returning home to find his parents' house engulfed in flames.

The house itself was valued at E180,000, while the property inside was worth an additional E26,500. The destruction has not only resulted in significant financial loss but also emotional trauma for the family, who now face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives.

Prior to the arson, troubling signs suggested that the family was being targeted. The reporter, who lives alone nearby, had previ-

ously found that water taps on the property had been ripped off, indicating an act of vandalism or sabotage. More alarmingly, he discovered a threatening note slipped under his door, warning him to vacate the homestead within five days or risk having his car set on fire. Despite these clear threats, the man chose not to involve the police at that stage, instead moving his vehicle to a safer location.

On the evening of the attack, the man was out with friends when he received the distressing news that his parents' home was ablaze. The timing and nature of the threats suggest a premeditated act, possibly linked to a dispute or vendetta, though police have not yet confirmed a motive.

Siteki Police have launched a full-scale investigation into the incident. The investigative team is working around the clock, collecting evidence and following leads to identify and apprehend those responsible. Authorities have called on the public to assist by providing any information that could help solve the case. Witnesses or anyone with knowledge of suspicious activities in the area are urged to contact the police immediately. Confidentiality and protection for informants are assured.



... Father sentenced to 45 years for raping daughter

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has lauded the successful prosecution and sentencing of a 46-year-old man from the Maphalaleni area, who was sentenced to 45 years in prison for the horrific crime of raping his own daughter.

The victim, a young girl, endured years of abuse that began when she was only seven years old and continued until she turned fourteen last year.

The suspect exploited the absence of his wife, who was often away at work, to prey on his daughter during the day. His acts of violence escalated beyond the confines of their home, as he took the girl outside to continue his abuse, inflicting deep psychological trauma that will undoubtedly affect her for the rest of her life.

In a desperate attempt to avoid her father's abuse, the girl began delaying her return home after school, waiting for her mother's return before going back. Her silence and fear persisted until her mother noticed her unusual behavior and questioned her about

why she was coming home late. It was at this moment that the young girl found the courage to disclose the abuse she had suffered. Promptly, her mother reported the matter to the police, who acted swiftly.

The suspect was arrested on the same day the case was reported in November 2024 during Operation Basadi, a dedicated initiative targeting sexual offenses and violence against women and children. The investigation was led by Detective Constable Lungile Nkambule of the Mbabane Police Station, whose professionalism and determination were instrumental in securing justice for the victim.

The Royal Eswatini Police Service commended Detective Nkambule for her relentless commitment to protecting vulnerable members of society and working closely with the prosecution to ensure that perpetrators of such heinous crimes are held accountable. The police service reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding children, emphasizing that they are the nation's future and must be protected at all costs.

Two men arrested for alleged rape of minors

THE Mbabane Police Domestic Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences Unit (DCS) has made significant strides in the fight against sexual violence, recently arresting two men connected to separate rape cases.

In the first case, a 27-year-old man from Mpolonjeni was arrested and charged under the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act (SODV Act) for allegedly raping his eight-year-old niece. The incident reportedly occurred on November 30, 2025, when the child's grandparents were away.

The suspect is said to have entered the family home, gone into the girl's bedroom, and silenced her by covering her mouth to prevent her from crying out. He then committed the assault and threatened to kill her if she disclosed the abuse.

The victim confided in her grandmother

on December 3, 2025, complaining of pain in her private parts. Upon hearing the full account of the assault, the grandmother immediately contacted the police. An investigation was launched, leading to the suspect's arrest on December 6, 2025 during Operation Basadi. He appeared before the Mbabane Magistrates Court on December 8, 2025, and was remanded in custody pending further proceedings.

In a separate case, a 27-year-old man from Lavumisa was arrested and charged with the rape of a 15-year-old girl residing at SOS Children's Village. The Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has praised the Mbabane DCS officers for their unwavering commitment to combating sexual violence.

The REPS further affirmed its dedication to building a safer and stronger society where justice is served and every victim's voice is heard.





Santa spreads festive cheer

... with surprise Christmas hampers from Embiveni



THE spirit of Christmas has come alive across Eswatini as Embiveni Meat Market rolls out a heart-warming festive initiative, surprising its customers with premium Christmas hampers delivered by Santa himself.

In the true spirit of giving back, Embiveni has been rewarding random customers who shop at its stores with Christmas hampers filled with premium meat cuts; a gesture aimed at saying thank you to loyal customers during the most special time of the year. So far, five lucky customers have already received their festive surprises from Embiveni shops in Nhlanguano, Mbabane, Matsapha and Manzini, with more joyful moments still to come.

At the heart of this initiative is Embiveni's mission: Making Meal Times Special for all Emaswati by supplying safe, high-quality meat at an affordable price. By rewarding everyday customers at random, Embiveni reinforces its commitment to inclusivity, appreciation and putting customers first; values that are deeply embedded in the brand's operations.

As part of the Inyatsi Group, Embiveni continues to play its role in contributing positively to society, not only through job creation and quality products, but also through initiatives that uplift communities and bring moments of joy where they matter most.



This initiative forms part of Embiveni's broader festive season campaign, aimed at giving back to the communities that have



consistently supported the brand. Christmas is a time when families come together around the table, sharing meals and creating memories, and Embiveni's Christmas hampers are designed to make those moments even more special by ensuring families have access to premium, high-quality meat.

As the festive season continues, customers are encouraged to shop at their nearest Embiveni Meat Market for trusted, safe and quality meat products. With Santa still on the move, more smiles, surprises and special moments are expected

Embiveni – Making Meal Times Special



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 circumstances arise.

Prize Conditions:
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

BRIEFS

Catastrophe losses set to hit \$107 billion

ANNUAL global insured losses from natural catastrophes are expected to hit \$107 billion in 2025, driven by the Los Angeles wildfires and severe convective storms in parts of the United States, a Swiss Re Institute study showed on Tuesday.

The U.S. stood as the most affected market in 2025, accounting for 83% of the global insured losses. Insured losses from natural catastrophes topped \$100 billion in 2025 for the sixth straight year, according to the report, shifting focus back on tighter underwriting, higher premiums and fresh scrutiny of risk models.

US pauses implementation of \$40 billion technology deal

THE United States is stalling the implementation of a \$40 billion technology agreement with Britain, officials said, following concerns in Washington over London's approach to digital regulation and food standards.

The "Tech Prosperity Deal," covering artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and civil nuclear energy, was agreed during President Donald Trump's state visit to Britain in September, in a celebration of the countries' close ties and ability to work together on trade and technology. (Reuters)

Prices hold steady as goods, services align in November

Stories By Delisa Magagula

THE Central Statistical Office (CSO), through its Price Statistics Unit, released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) monthly report showing a largely stable pricing environment across goods and services.

According to the report, the headline Consumer Price Index recorded an annual rate of 2.4 per cent in November 2025, reflecting a decline from 2.9 per cent in October 2025 and from 3.7 per cent recorded in November 2024.

Prices for goods rose by 2.5 per cent on a year-on-year basis, while services recorded an increase of 2.4 per cent, indicating near parity in price movements across the two broad expenditure categories.

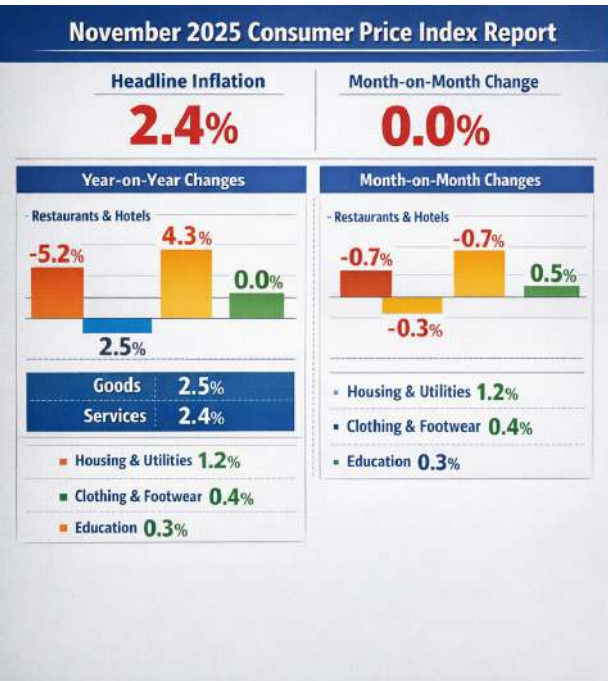
On a month-on-month basis, overall prices remained unchanged, with inflation registering 0.0% in November 2025. This represents a decrease of 0.34 percentage points from the 0.4 per cent recorded in October 2025.

Divisions

The CPI report highlights notable year-on-year changes across selected divisions.

"Prices under the 'Restaurants and Hotels' category declined sharply to -5.2 per cent, compared to a 29.4 per cent increase recorded in November 2024. 'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics' slowed to 4.3 per cent from 12.2 per cent over the same period, while 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' recorded no annual price change, down from 3.6 per cent a year earlier," reads the report in part.

Meanwhile, monthly price movements also reflected subdued activity across several categories. 'Restaurants and Hotels' declined by 0.7 per cent in November, compared to a larger



▲ The November 2025 Consumer Price Index Report.

decrease of -4.1per cent in October. 'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics' recorded a month-on-month decrease of 0.3%, reversing a 3.0 per cent increase in the previous month.

In contrast, 'Furnishing, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance' recorded a 0.5 per cent month-on-month increase, up from a -0.2 per cent decline in October 2025.

Worth noting the CPI is a key economic indicator used to measure changes over time in the general level of prices for consumer goods and services acquired, used, or paid for by households.

The index supports the calculation of nation-

al inflation rates and Harmonised Consumer Price Indices (HCPI) for the COMESA and SADC regions.

Beyond regional reporting, the CPI plays a critical role in monitoring overall economic performance, deflating National Accounts, supporting inflation targeting and forecasting, and serving as a reference point for wage and salary adjustments.

According to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, responsible for the breakdown, the November 2025 data reflects a pricing structure characterised by minimal short-term movement and moderated annual changes across major consumption groups.

... Housing, clothing drive CPI movements despite flat monthly prices

THE Consumer Price Index (CPI) Report for November 2025 released by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) identifies housing-related costs, clothing, and education as the main contributors to overall price movements during the month.

Although the headline CPI recorded no change on a month-on-month basis, several expenditure divisions continued to exert a measurable influence on the index.

According to the report, housing and utilities emerged as the largest contributor to the overall CPI, accounting for 1.2 percentage points of the headline rate.

"Clothing and Footwear followed with a contribution of 0.4 percentage points, while Education contributed 0.3 percentage points to the overall index," reads the report partly.

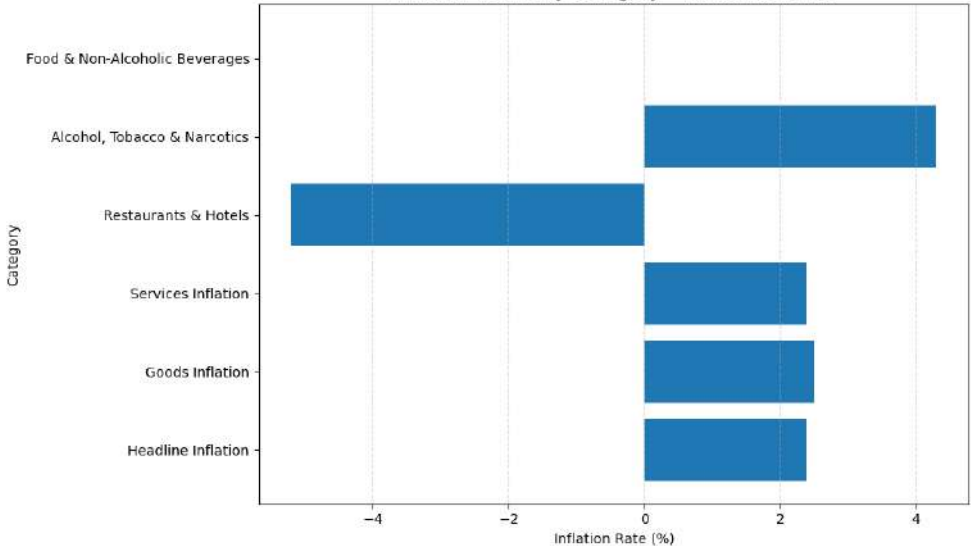
These contributions occurred within a broader context of subdued price changes across the economy. The month-on-month inflation rate for November stood at 0.0 per cent down from 0.4 per cent recorded in October 2025, indicating limited short-term price adjustments.

The report also details contrasting movements across expenditure divisions monthly. 'Furnishing, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance' recorded a 0.5 per cent increase in November, reversing a -0.2 per cent decline recorded

ed in the previous month.

According to the report, on an annual basis, selected divisions showed substantial deceleration. The 'Restaurants and Hotels' category recorded a year-on-year decline of -5.2 per cent, compared to a significant increase of 29.4 per cent in November 2024. Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics slowed to 4.3 per cent from 12.2 per cent, while 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' recorded a zero per cent annual change.

Inflation Trends by Category - November 2025



The CPI remains a central statistical tool for economic measurement. It is used to calculate national inflation figures and Harmonised Consumer Price Indices (HCPI) for regional blocs including COMESA and SADC.

Additionally, the index supports economic analysis by deflating National Accounts, informing inflation targeting frameworks, guiding forecasting models, and serving as a reference for wage and salary negotiations.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.3841	16.8741
G.B. Pound	21.9475	22.6544
EURO	19.3003	19.9077
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	



Stories By Delisa Magagula

Eswatini strengthens investment framework under AfCFTA

ESWATINI is taking important steps to align its investment framework with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Investment.

A validation workshop held at the Hilton Hotel on Tuesday presented a gap analysis report prepared with technical assistance from the AfCFTA Secretariat.

The report compared Eswatini’s existing investment laws and practices with best practices outlined in the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, adopted by state parties in 2023.

AfCFTA consultant Dirk Willem te Velde noted that the protocol shifts focus from traditional investment treaties, which emphasised investor protection, to a more comprehensive framework prioritising investment promotion, facilitation, and sustainable development.

The analysis showed that Eswatini has already implemented several elements of the protocol and is well-positioned to adopt further measures, particularly in investment facilitation, aftercare services, and informal dispute management.

Te Velde emphasised that strong aftercare systems help investors build linkages locally, supporting job creation, skills development, and broader economic benefits.

“The protocol highlights ways to not just attract investors, but support them while they operate in the country, creating positive

spillovers for the economy,” te Velde said.

Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) representative Maqhawe Tfwala said the review included an assessment of the 1998 Eswatini Investment Promotion Act to ensure policies reflect current investment realities.

He added that the findings will guide ongoing reforms to strengthen the country’s investment environment.

“The findings from the AfCFTA investment protocol review give us a clear roadmap to strengthen Eswatini’s investment environment. By aligning our legislation and policies with continental best practices, we can attract sustainable investment, support investors while they operate locally, and create meaningful economic opportunities for our people,” said Tfwala.

The workshop brought together government officials, private sector representatives, and development partners to discuss findings and next steps.

Stakeholders which include the business community emphasised that aligning with the AfCFTA Protocol will enhance Eswatini’s competitiveness, provide clarity for investors, and position the country as a destination of choice for sustainable investments across Africa.



▲ EIPA Representative Maqhawe Tfwala.



▲ Consultant Dirk Willem te Velde.

BE champions AfCFTA investment protocol alignment

... urges the Govt to leverage AfCTA

BUSINESS Eswatini (BE) has urged the government to fully leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Investment, highlighting the opportunities it presents for promoting trade and investment across Africa.

Speaking at a validation workshop held at the Hilton Hotel on Tuesday, BE President Mvuselelo Fakudze said the protocol provides a clear framework for aligning Eswatini’s investment policies with continental best practices.

Trade

“The protocol helps Eswatini understand the rules of trade and engagement across Africa, while also guiding the government in conducting business in line with continental standards,” Fakudze said.

In addition, Fakudze said BE hopes the government will use the report to implement practical reforms, reinforcing Eswatini’s position as an attractive destination for investors.

“Alignment with the AfCFTA Protocol is not just about compliance but about creating opportunities for trade, investment and sustainable economic growth,” he added.

Meanwhile, the workshop presented a gap analysis report



▲ The stakeholders during the AfCFTA workshop

comparing Eswatini’s current investment framework with the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, which was adopted by state parties in 2023. The analysis focused on investment promotion, facilitation, aftercare services and dispute prevention mechanisms.

AfCFTA consultant Dirk Willem te Velde explained that the protocol

represents a shift from traditional investment treaties, emphasising not just investor protection but also sustainable development, promotion and facilitation.

“The protocol highlights the importance of not just attracting investors, but supporting them once they are in the country. Better aftercare helps investors build

linkages locally, creating spillovers that benefit the economy,” te Velde said.

The report found that Eswatini has already implemented some elements of the protocol but identified areas for improvement, particularly in investor aftercare and informal grievance procedures. Strengthening these areas, te Velde

noted, would enhance investor confidence and prevent costly disputes.

The validation workshop brought together government officials, private sector representatives and development partners to discuss the findings and next steps toward implementation.



By Lwazi Dlamini
lwazid@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise (EWADE) strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will help Eswatini achieve six of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. (UN SDGs).

This was an observation made by EWADE CEO Dr. Samson Sithole during the signing of the latest MoU with the National Maize Corporation (NMC), Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA) and the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (MTAD) on Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at Hilton Garden.

"Today's MoUs represent more than general agreements; they are national development instruments. They are a declaration of our shared intent to empower smallholder farmers, strengthen value chains, and unlock the full potential of our rural economies. It is firmly aligned with the Eswatini Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (2024 -2028), our National Development Strategy, and Vision 2050. It also advances several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," Sithole said.

He named some of the UN Sustainable Development Goals as follows:

SDG 1: No Poverty: Uplifting rural communities through increased incomes.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger:

Enhancing food security and nutrition.

SDG 5:

Gender Equality: Empowering women as key actors in agribusiness.

SDG 8: Decent

Work and Economic

Growth: Fostering jobs,

especially for youth, through agribusiness ventures.

SDG 13: Climate Action: Embedding climate-smart agriculture in all aspects of production.

SDG 17: Partnerships for Goals: Strengthening collaboration among government, private sector, development partners, and farmers.

Sithole said the MoU also formalizes the strategic partnership and the shared commitment towards collaboration, coordination, and impact.

"It moves our cooperation from 'good intentions to structured action'. On 16th September 2025, EWADE signed the first batch of MoUs with key strategic partners, namely, Ministry of Agriculture, Deputy Prime Minister's Office and NAMBoard. This partnership responds directly to the needs of smallholder farmers by ensuring alignment with institutional mandates, resources, and expertise. Today we are excited to sign the second batch of MoUs which speaks to our commitment to transparency, accountability, and results through collaboration and coordinated implementation," Sithole said.

He added: "The Memorandum of Understanding that we sign today are not in isolation, they align directly to the Smallholder Agriculture

EWADE's partnership help advance six UN Development Goals for Eswatini



▲ EWADE CEO Dr. Samson Sithole making his remarks.



▲ The stakeholders, who include, the National Maize Corporation (NMC), Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA) and the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (MTAD) displaying the MoU documents.

Productivity Enhancement and Marketing Project (SAPEMP), officially unveiled by the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Mandla Tshawuka, on March 27, 2025,"

Sithole said the MoUs are therefore, a practical expression of SAPEMP's vision, providing the framework through which we will translate policy into coordinated action, and ensure that the promise of this national programme is realized in tangible benefits for our farmers, communities, and the economy at large.

"The challenges facing smallholder farmers productivity, market access, climate resilience and knowledge gaps cannot be addressed in isolation. SAPEMP was designed to also promote and integrate multi-stakeholder solutions.

These partnerships respond directly to that need by aligning mandates, resources and expertise. The MoU represent a framework for collaboration, innovation, and coordinated implementation," Sithole noted.

He stated that the objectives of the project are to increase smallholder farmers' production, nutrition, and incomes, and to build their resilience to climate change through 3 components, which include:

Component 1: Production and Productivity Improvement of the Target Value Chains

Subcomp 1.1: Cluster-based support for market-led production and behavioral change and nutrition.

Subcomp 1.2: Infrastructure Investments for agricultural commercialization.

Component 2: Improving Market Linkages and Access to Finance

Subcomp 2.1: Capacity building of clusters and entrepreneurship businesses.

Subcomp 2.2: Market linkages through demand-driven long-term offtake arrangements with AEs.

Component 3: Improved enabling environment for promotion of production and marketing of local produce



▲ The stakeholders signing the MoU documents.



▲ Some of the attendees during the event.



▲ EWADE CEO Dr. Samson Sithole shaking hands with NMC CEO Mavela Vilane after the MoU signing.

Subcomp 3.1: Country level policy advocacy

Subcomp 3.2: Project Management

Sithole said SAPEMP aligns with Eswatini's National Development Strategy, the Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Plan, and global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas related to poverty reduction, food security and climate action.

"By leveraging public-private partnerships, SAPEMP is set to transform smallholder farming into a competitive, resilient, and market-driven sector, contributing to national food sovereignty, rural employment, and climate resilience," he said.

Sithole said EWADE is proud to be the implementing agency of the Smallholder Agriculture Productivity Enhancement and Marketing Project (SAPEMP) as the project, supported by the Government of Eswatini, IFAD, and the Green Climate Fund, is designed to transform the lives of over 19,600 smallholder households - reaching nearly 117,700 people across all four regions of the Kingdom.

"As EWADE, we fully recognise a fundamental truth: no institution can achieve transformation alone. The future of agriculture lies in shared re-

sources, coordinated action, and collective accountability. By joining forces with the National Maize Corporation, Eswatini Environment Authority, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, and our valued partners, we are creating a holistic ecosystem that supports farmers from production to market," he stated.

Sithole further stated that these partnerships reflect the best of collaborative governance, anchored in complementarity (not competition) where every institution contributes its unique strength towards a shared national vision.

"Let today be remembered not just for the signing of important documents, but rather the start of meaningful action. The signing of these MoUs must not end as a symbolic gesture. It must mark the beginning of transformative action for the farmers that we represent today. Together, let us deliver tangible results at farmer level, where our impact matters most and strengthen coordination across institutions. Work together to commercialize smallholder agriculture and build resilient, market-driven farming systems," he concluded.

Business leaders agree AI is future, but not working yet

LAST spring, CellarTracker, a wine-collection app, built an AI-powered sommelier to make unvarnished wine recommendations based on a person's palate. The problem was the chatbot was too nice.

"It's just very polite, instead of just saying, 'It's really unlikely you'll like the wine,'" CellarTracker CEO Eric LeVine said. It took six weeks of trial and error to coax the chatbot into offering an honest appraisal before the feature was launched.

Since ChatGPT exploded three years ago, companies big and small have leapt at the chance to adopt generative artificial intelligence and stuff it into as many products as possible. But so far, the vast majority of businesses are struggling to realize a meaningful return on their AI investments, according to company executives, advisors and

the results of seven recent executive and worker surveys.

One survey of 1,576 executives conducted during the second quarter by research and advisory firm Forrester Research showed just 15% of respondents saw profit margins improve due to AI over the last year. Consulting firm BCG found that only 5% of 1,250 executives surveyed between May and mid-July saw widespread value from AI.

Executives say they still believe generative AI will eventually transform their businesses, but they are reconsidering how quickly that will happen within their organizations. Forrester predicts that in 2026 companies will delay about 25% of their planned AI spending by a year.

"The tech companies who have built this technology have spun this tale that this is all going to change quickly," Forrester analyst Brian Hopkins said. "But we humans don't

change that fast."

AI companies including OpenAI, Anthropic and Google are all doubling down on courting business customers in the next year. During a recent lunch with media editors in New York, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said developing AI systems for companies could be a \$100 billion market.

All this is happening against the backdrop of unprecedented tech investment in everything from chips, to data centers, to energy sources.

Whether these investments can be justified will be determined by companies' ability to figure out how to use AI to boost revenue, fatten margins or speed innovation.

Failing that, the infrastructure build-out could trigger the kind of crash reminiscent of the dot-com bust in the early 2000s, some experts say.

(Reuters)

App developers urge EU action on Apple fee practices

A coalition of 20 app developers and consumer groups on Tuesday called upon European regulators to enforce EU laws against Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab, saying the company's fee structure unfairly disadvantages European developers compared to their U.S. rivals after a recent court decision in the United States.

The European Union's Digital Markets Act (DMA), implemented in 2023, mandates that large tech platforms labelled "gatekeepers", such as Apple, facilitate in-app transactions outside their ecosystem at no charge.

The coalition's appeal reflects concerns over a disparity following a U.S. court ruling that restricts Apple's ability to impose fees on external transactions. The European Commission earlier this year fined Apple 500 million euros (\$588 million) for breaching the DMA by obstructing developers from guiding users to alternative payment methods.

In response to the EU rul-

ing, Apple revised its terms to impose fees ranging from 13% for smaller businesses to up to 20% for App Store purchases, alongside penalties of 5% to 15% on external transactions.

The Coalition for Apps Fairness (CAF), representing firms such as Deezer (DEEZR.PA), opens new tab and Proton, argues these revised fees still violate DMA stipulations and says that U.S. developers benefit from more favourable terms after the court decision.

"This situation is untenable and damaging to the app economy," CAF said in a statement, accusing Apple of undermining transparency and stifling innovation.

Global Policy Counsel for CAF, Gene Burrus, said that developers in the EU have to either bear the cost of those fees or pass them down to customers.

"It is bad for European companies, and it is bad for European consumers," he said.

According to CAF, European developers remain disadvantaged six months after the Commission declared Apple's policies illegal under the DMA

(Reuters)



▲ OpenAI CEO Sam Altman speaks to media following a Q&A at the OpenAI data center in Abilene, Texas, U.S



Russia says damaged launch pad vital to space program fixed February



▲ OpenAI CEO Sam Altman speaks to media following a Q&A at the OpenAI data center in Abilene, Texas, U.S.

RUSSIA'S space agency said on Tuesday that work was underway to repair a damaged launch pad at the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan that underpins its space programme and that the facility should be back in use by February of next year.

The pad was badly damaged in November when a Russian Soyuz MS-28 spacecraft with two Russian cosmonauts and one NASA astronaut on board blasted off.

Although the launch was successful, Roscosmos, Russia's space agency, later said a post-launch inspection had uncovered damage to the pad and that it would have to undergo repairs, notably to its "service cabin" - a platform located beneath the upper level - before it could be used again. While Russia has other cosmodromes on its own territory and Baikonur has other launch sites, the damaged launch pad - number 31 - is the only one able to handle launches of the Soyuz rocket and crew capsule as well as the cargo-only Progress vehicle, which are crucial for the International Space Station.

Roscosmos said on Tuesday that more than 130 people were racing to fix the pad, operating in two shifts from 8 a.m. to midnight.

All necessary spare parts were on site and being prepared for assembly, and testing would be conducted once the new service cabin was in place, it said.

Work on restoring the service cabin and launch pad is being carried out at full speed," said Dmitry Baranov, deputy general director of Roscosmos. (Reuters)



TWO alleged gunmen who attacked a Hanukkah event at Sydney's Bondi Beach had travelled to the Philippines before the assault which killed 15 people and appeared to be inspired by Islamic State, police said on Tuesday.

The attack on Sunday was Australia's worst mass shooting in nearly 30 years, and is being investigated as an act of terrorism targeting the Jewish community.

The death toll stands at 16 including one of the alleged gunmen, identified by police as Sajid Akram, 50, who was shot by police. The man's 24-year-old son and alleged accomplice, identified by local media as Naveed Akram, was in critical condition in hospital after also being shot.

Australian police said on Tuesday both men had travelled to the Philippines last month and the purpose of the trip is under investigation. Philippines immigration officials said both men travelled to Manila and onward to Davao on November 1 and left on November 28, just weeks before the Bondi shooting.

The father travelled on an Indian passport, while the son was on an Australian passport, officials said.

Islamic state-linked networks are known to operate in the Philippines and have

Bondi gunmen inspired by Islamic State, travelled to Philippines

wielded some influence in the south of the country. They have been reduced to weakened cells operating in the southern Mindanao island in recent years, far from the scale of influence they wielded during the 2017 Marawi siege.

"Early indications point to a terrorist attack inspired by Islamic State, allegedly committed by a father and son," Australian Federal Police Commissioner Krissy Barrett said at a news conference.

"These are the alleged actions of those who have aligned themselves with a terrorist organisation, not a religion."

Police also said the vehicle which is registered to the younger male contained improvised explosive devices and two homemade flags associated with ISIS, or Islamic State, a militant group designated by Australia and many other countries as a terrorist organisation.

The father and son allegedly fired upon hundreds of people at the festival during a roughly 10-minute killing spree at one of



▲ A woman grieves at a floral memorial in honour of the victims of the mass shooting targeting a Hanukkah celebration on Sunday, at Bondi Beach, in Sydney, Australia.

Australia's top tourist destinations, forcing people to flee and take shelter before both were shot by police.

Videos have emerged of the younger

shooter preaching Islam outside train stations in suburban Sydney. Authorities are still trying to piece together how he went down the path of violence. (Reuters)



Sudan again tops International Rescue Committee crisis watchlist globally

SUDAN has once again topped a watchlist of global humanitarian crises released by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) aid organization, as warring sides press on with a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people.

It is the third time in a row Sudan has headed the list, which was published on Tuesday. It highlights the 20 countries most at risk of new or worsened humanitarian emergencies.

"What the IRC is seeing on the ground is not a tragic accident. The world is not simply failing to respond to crisis; actions and words are producing, prolonging, and rewarding it," IRC CEO David Miliband said in a statement.

"The scale of the crisis in Sudan, ranking first on this year's Watchlist for the third year in a row and now the largest humanitarian crisis ever recorded, is a signature of this disorder."

War erupted in April 2023 from a power struggle between the Sudanese army

and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule, and triggered the world's largest displacement crisis.

More than 12 million people have already been displaced by the ongoing war in Sudan, where humanitarian workers lack resources to help those fleeing, many of whom have been raped, robbed or bereaved by the violence.

Sudan is followed by the Palestinian territories, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Haiti, according to the list.

The IRC said although these countries are home to just 12% of the global population, they account for 89% of those in humanitarian need. It added that the countries are projected to host more than half of the world's extreme poor by 2029.

The remaining countries on the list are Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Burkina Faso, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.

(Reuters)

Human-wave attacks and drones: How Myanmar junta fights back

FOR seven days, rebel fighter Khant and his comrades held the line as Myanmar's military pounded their positions with artillery and drone strikes.

Khant is a veteran of numerous battles against Myanmar's junta since it seized power in a 2021 coup, but he had seen nothing like the intensity of the fighting in central Myanmar in October.

The strikes were followed by wave after wave of infantry, according to Khant and Htike, a fellow rebel who was also present at the battle for Pazun Myaung, a village roughly halfway between Myanmar's largest city and its political capital. "It was essentially an offensive using all the power they could muster," Htike said of one particularly tough five-hour period of fighting.

After a week, the rebels' losses became too painful to bear and they retreated to a nearby base.

Two years after a major rebel offensive left much of Myanmar's borderlands in resistance hands, the junta has found its footing on the battlefield, according to Reuters' interviews with six rebel fighters and three security analysts, including some who interact regularly with the military.

The junta has reshaped its tactics by introducing conscription and expanding its drone fleet, enabling it to reclaim some territory after defeats or stalemates on the battlefield. The generals have also been boosted by the backing of China, which has applied diplomatic and financial pressure on resistance groups to stop fighting.

Three rebel fighters, including Htike and Khant, said they had witnessed the military using "human wave" manoeuvres to overwhelm rebel defences, reflecting new battlefield tactics that have not previously been reported.

"After one soldier died, another one came up to take his place," said Khant of the October battle, adding that some appeared to be threatened at gunpoint by their commanders. Junta troops had previously been quick to flee once losses started to mount, two rebel fighters told Reuters.

A spokesperson for Myanmar's military did not respond to questions about changes in its strategy. The National Unity Government, a parallel anti-junta administration that includes members of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's ousted government, also did not return requests for comment.

(Reuters)



▲ Myanmar soldiers from the 77th light infantry division walk along a street during a protest against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar.

Sancheziey unites legends in 'Siyabonga Gogo' remix

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI'S music scene is set to be electrified with the upcoming release of the 'Siyabonga Gogo' remix by Sancheziey, featuring celebrated artists Lodanda, Young Zesh, and the Limkokwing Choir.

The remix and its accompanying visualizer are scheduled for release on Saturday, December 20, 2025. Sancheziey shared insights into the creative process behind the remix, revealing the inspiration and collaborative spirit that fueled the project. Reflecting on the journey, he said, "Before the sit-down and coding of the remix, I had a question: can a beautiful thing be made even more beautiful? After the recording session of the remix, my answer is yes."

The idea for the remix was sparked during the Limkokwing University graduation event, where the choir's performance left a lasting impression on Sancheziey. "The choir gave me a taste that I couldn't rest. They made the song sound different in a wonderful way," he explained. This experience opened the door to incorporating the Limkokwing Choir, adding a powerful cultural layer to the track.

Sancheziey's vision extended further with the inclusion of Lodanda, a legendary figure whose voice adds emotional gravitas to the remix. "Having the idea that I can access the choir, I thought of the Legendary Lodanda, with no idea how I even get to her, because I only knew her music, not her. A collaboration with her has always been a pending dream," he revealed. Thanks to Lindelwa Mafa's efforts in facilitating the connection, the collaboration became a reality. Lodanda's participation is especially significant as it marks her return to the recording booth since 2015, bringing a nostalgic and heartfelt dimension to the



▲ Some of the artists Sancheziey worked with on 'Siyabonga Gogo' remix.

song. Sancheziey noted, "Lodanda in the song brings this emotional touch that will take every listener to moments with her grandmother."

Adding a modern flair to the remix is Young Zesh, whose dynamic hip hop style complements the traditional elements seamlessly. Sancheziey described Young Zesh's contribution as "the fashioned hip hop flows while in line with the beauty of Lisiko lekucelwa," elevating the remix to new heights.

Gratitude

Sancheziey expressed gratitude to Mabhodweni for ensuring the cultural authenticity of the session. He also highlighted the simultaneous filming of the visualizer during the recording, emphasising the importance of capturing every moment of what he called "one of the biggest highlights in my music life." The production of the remix was a collaborative effort involving two producers: Tus Mvuleni from Emadlhelweni Music and SeanCast

HQ. The visualizer is being produced by MegaSounds Records, with photography by Ejal'dini Studios. Key contributors during the session included Mabhodweni, who also performed on the track; Ceceboy, who expertly guided the choir's vocals; Cy Ndukwenyama, who played a crucial role in working with Lodanda, and Ulaka Lehubezi, whose ad-libs infused the remix with a distinct Bujaha vibe. The entire recording took place at the Arts and Culture studios in Manzini on a memorable Tuesday night.

Sancheziey expressed heartfelt appreciation for the support of emaSwati, the nation's music lovers, acknowledging their role in driving the project forward. "We got this far because of them," he said, promising to continue delivering beautiful music into 2026. As the year draws to a close, he urged fans to anticipate what he described as "the best collaboration the country has ever seen," setting a high bar for the future of Eswatini's music industry.



▲ Rosetta D33p.

Rosetta D33p, Sabz to headline Oryx Lounge's 1st anniversary

THE Deep house music scene is preparing for a major celebration as two of its most influential DJs, Rosetta D33p and Sabz, take the spotlight for the Oryx Lounge's first anniversary event.

Scheduled for December 24, 2025, at the Oryx Lounge in Ezulwini, this milestone event promises an unforgettable night of music, culture, and community from 5 pm until late. With free entry and a strong supporting lineup featuring The Bishop, Selby, Katz, Cup, 1D, and Obsession, the anniversary is set to attract a diverse crowd of music lovers eager to celebrate the vibrant sounds of deep house.

Nompumelelo Rosetta Hlatshwayo, professionally known as DJ Rosetta D33p, has rapidly become a prominent figure in South Africa's music landscape. Her journey into the industry was shaped by mentorship from the Godfathers of Deep House in South Africa, a group of pioneering artists who helped her refine her skills in DJing, music production, and vocal performance. This solid foundation has enabled Rosetta to evolve into a multifaceted artist whose talents extend far beyond the turntables.

Innovative

As a producer, vocalist, songwriter, model, and influencer, she represents the innovative spirit and creative energy that define the deep house genre today. Rosetta's ability to blend soulful vocals with intricate beats has earned her acclaim and a dedicated following, making her a powerful force in both the local and international music scenes.

Joining her at the Oryx anniversary celebration is Johannesburg-based DJ Sabelo Kunene, known to fans as DJ Sabz. Sabz's passion for music ignited during his high school years in Pretoria in the early 2000s, where he began experimenting with DJing. His move to Johannesburg in 2006 marked a turning point, as he quickly established himself in the city's vibrant club scene.

Playing at renowned venues such as Capital Music in Rosebank and the Change Room in Soweto, Sabz developed a unique style that blends deep house rhythms with infectious energy. His music continues to resonate with audiences across South Africa and beyond, as he consistently delivers sets that keep dance floors alive and moving. Sabz's career trajectory reflects both dedication and innovation, qualities that have solidified his status as a leading figure in the genre.

Zee Nxumalo's Mamma hit 10 million views

ESWATINI-born singer and songwriter Zee Nxumalo has once again captured the hearts of music lovers worldwide with the release of her latest single, 'Mamma.'

The track, which features South African artists Skillz and Skyes, is already making waves across digital platforms, amassing over 10 million views on YouTube alone within 3 months of its release. The new single marks another milestone in Zee Nxumalo's rapidly ascending career. Known for her soulful voice and infectious rhythms, Nxumalo has become a formidable presence in the South African and global music scenes.

'Mamma' is available on all major streaming services, including Spotify, Apple Music, and Deezer, allowing fans across the globe to experience the vibrant energy and emotional depth that Zee brings to her music.

The collaboration with Skillz and Skyes adds a dynamic edge to the track.

This release follows the phenomenal success of Zee Nxumalo's previous hit,

'Ngisakuthanda,' featuring TBO. The single recently achieved triple platinum certification, having sold over 120,000 units.

In addition to her solo achievements, Zee Nxumalo has also joined forces with fellow Eswatini-born global sensation Uncle Waffles for their first-ever studio collaboration. The partnership between these two powerhouse artists has excited fans and critics alike, promising fresh and innovative sounds that push the boundaries of contemporary African music.

Determination

Zee Nxumalo's journey from her roots in Eswatini to becoming a celebrated "Jozi baby" in Johannesburg is a testament to her talent and determination. At just 21 years old, she has already made significant strides in the South African music industry.

Her 2023 breakout single was 'Pholile,' which featured renowned artists Azana and Mlindo The Vocalist. Following 'Pholile,' Zee Nxumalo continued to build momentum with hit tracks like 'Funk 55,' 'Shayimoto,' and 'Nguwe.'



▲ Zee Nxumalo.

Popular DJ Warras gunned down in Gauteng

SOUTH Africa’s music industry has been rocked following reports that a popular DJ and nightlife personality was shot and killed at the Carlton Centre in Johannesburg’s CBD on Tuesday, December 16.

Businessman Rob Hersov identified the deceased as DJ Warras, real name Warrick Stock, a former 5FM DJ and TV presenter.

In a video circulating on social media, Hersov mourned the loss.

“I’ve just heard the news that my brother, my friend, my fellow supporter of Western civilisation and the Judeo-Christian faith, was murdered today in Johannesburg,” Hersov said.

“I just want to say he was the most loving, compassionate, friendly, honest, open, and decent human being, and it is a tragedy beyond belief. Warras, we love you. We miss you. May you rest in peace.”

While official police details were still emerging at the time of publication, the footage and subsequent reporting confirm that DJ Warras was shot in broad daylight in the vicinity of the Carlton Centre.

He was born in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, where he was raised by grandparents and his mother.

He kicked off his media career at the popular YFM in 2008 and was promoted to daytime radio in 2010, where he could be heard on Prime Mode with Shady Lurker.

DJ Warras’ shooting is part of a troubling trend that has been going on for the past five years, during which time a number of DJs and MCs have been shot—many of them fatally—in what police have frequently referred to as targeted attacks.

One of the most high-profile cases was the murder of DJ Citi Lyts (Sandile Mkhize) in Soweto in February 2022.

Just weeks later, Soweto was again shaken by the killing of DJ Vintos, who was gunned down outside a nightclub.



▲ The late Warrick ‘DJ Warras’ Stock.

Amapiano heavyweight Oupa Johan Sefoka, also known as DJ Sumbody, was assassinated in a brazen attack in Sandton in November 2022, causing shockwaves throughout the entertainment industry.

Investigators later linked his killing to other high-profile murders, making it one of the most notorious cases.

Violence

The violence continued into 2024 when Pretoria-based DJ Skinny Deep (Duduetsang Gift Maluleka) was shot dead in Soshanguve in January of that year, while fellow entertainer DJ Vetty survived a separate shooting after leaving a gig in Tshwane.

A few months later, a veteran MC and DJ, Peter Mashata Mabuse, also met his demise in Soshanguve after a performance.

In several cases, police have suggested

the involvement of organised hitmen, while motives have ranged from alleged business disputes to criminal syndicate activity.

As tributes and speculation continue to flood social media, authorities have urged the public to allow investigations to unfold.

Police are expected to confirm the circumstances of the shooting, including DJ Warras’ condition and whether arrests have been made.

For now, the music community is once again left grappling with uncertainty and grief, as another prominent name is added to a growing list of DJs whose lives have been violently taken away.

This is a developing story that will be updated as soon as police or family representatives release official confirmation.

SundayWorld



▲ Nicki Minaj.

Nicki Minaj a Donald Trump supporter

NICKI Minaj, who was once a staunch critic of President Donald Trump’s immigration policies, called Melania Trump “brainless” and celebrated the LGBTQ+ community through her music, has dramatically changed her tune.

Now, the Trinidadian-born rapper can be found trading compliments and memes on social media with Vice President JD Vance, ranting against transgender kids, and representing the administration at the United Nations.

Sociopolitical commentary has been ingrained in hip-hop from the genre’s beginning. Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, Lizzo and Quavo all supported Kamala Harris’s presidential run in 2024, with prominent rappers overwhelmingly backing Democrats over the years. Contrast that with Trump-loving rappers like Lil Wayne and Kodak Black, who were both granted presidential pardons for criminal convictions.

But Minaj joins a special category of hip-hop performers, including Ye (formerly Kanye West), whose sudden flattery of one of the most polarizing politicians in modern history has played out for all the world - and fans - to see.

Support

The White House has welcomed the support from Minaj, with Vance posting late Wednesday that the entertainer sometimes described as the “Queen of Rap” is better than Cardi B (decidedly not a Trump fan). An official Trump account later replied to one of her posts with a fuzzy, probably artificial-intelligence-generated video of a caricatured, dancing Vance. But the increased spotlight on Minaj’s politically charged posts has splintered the Barbz, Minaj’s passionate fan base for her music, which includes more than 80 songs that have surpassed 100 million streams on Spotify. Midway through Trump’s first term, as the Department of Homeland Security separated thousands of migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border, Minaj joined much of the entertainment industry in openly condemning the Trump administration.

“I came to this country as an illegal immigrant at 5 years old,” she wrote on her now-deactivated Instagram account in 2018. “I can’t imagine the horror of being in a strange place and having my parents stripped away from me at the age of 5. This is so scary to me. Please stop this. Can you try to imagine the terror & panic these kids feel right now?” **IOL**

Zakes Bantwini calls for urgent overhaul of SAMAs

GRAMMY Award-winning musician and producer Zakhele Madida, popularly known as Zakes Bantwini, has issued a strong call for reform at the South African Music Awards (SAMAs).

Zakes warns that if the country does not urgently restore credibility and trust, it risks losing one of its most important cultural institutions. In a detailed open letter following this year’s awards, Zakes said the SAMAs have declined so severely that many in the industry barely noticed they were taking place. “Yesterday [Sunday], the South African Music Awards happened. I’m a musician, and I barely knew about it. That’s not me being careless; that’s where we are now,” he wrote.

He stated that the SAMAs, once a national event that brought the country to a standstill, have since lost relevance among artists, fans, and the broader public. “There was a time when the SAMAs meant the whole country stopped,” he said. “Now, yesterday came and passed.” Barely a mention on social media. Artists weren’t there. Fans didn’t care.” Zakes pointed to the contrast between the global success of South African artists and the waning influence of local awards, citing the international rise of stars such as Tyla as evidence that the country’s talent is not the problem. “Our artists are doing big things internationally. Tyla’s success shows the world is paying attention to what we’re

creating here,” he said. “But we get more excited about global recognition than we do about our awards.” While acknowledging the importance of international validation, he warned that neglecting local institutions sends a damaging message to emerging artists.

“When we neglect the SAMAs, we’re neglecting ourselves,” he said. “We’re teaching the next generation that you only matter if you’re recognized overseas first.”

He also directed criticism at the SAMA judging process, saying years of questionable decisions have eroded public trust.

Apathy

“Year after year, artists and fans complained about winners who didn’t make sense. Albums of the Year that nobody heard, Songs of the Year that weren’t playing anywhere. That’s not okay.”

He said the disconnect between winners and audiences had led to widespread apathy.

“Fans stopped trusting that the SAMAs reflected reality. Artists stopped believing the awards were fair. And slowly, we all stopped caring.” The musician stressed that responsibility does not lie with judges alone, calling on artists to also take accountability for failing to support the awards.

“When we don’t show up, we’re part of the problem. When the stage is empty because someone couldn’t be bothered to attend, what message does that send to fans?”

Zakes said artists prioritising international



▲ Zakes Bantwini.

opportunities over local awards further undermines the SAMAs. “These are our awards. They belong to us,” he said. “If we don’t fight for them, who will?”

SundayWorld

REGISTERED dietitian Dalina Soto explains how to create balanced, blood-sugar-friendly meals without sacrificing the foods you love or feeling restricted.

Managing blood sugar does not have to mean giving up your favorite foods or memorizing strict formulas.

Registered dietitian and health influencer Dalina Soto (@your.latina.nutritionist) is known for her culturally inclusive, anti-diet approach that helps people with diabetes or prediabetes find confidence, balance, and satisfaction in their meals.

In this guide, she breaks down simple ways to build plates that support steady energy and blood sugar stability without restriction.

Start with four key components

When it comes to building diabetes-friendly meals, Dalina keeps the fundamentals straightforward. "I like to keep it simple: protein, carbs, fiber, and fat," she says.

Instead of relying on apps or tracking tools, she encourages using balance and basic MyPlate principles to guide choices.

Carbohydrates offer quick energy and help fuel your brain and muscles throughout the day. Protein and healthy fats help slow digestion, which helps prevent sharp blood sugar spikes. And fiber supports gut health, heart health, and satiety (feeling full).

"When all four are present, you feel full and satisfied," she says. This combination helps your blood sugar rise more gently and keeps your energy steadier throughout the next few hours.

What this looks like on a plate

Think about pairing:

- ▶ Carbs like rice, tortillas, bread, potatoes, oats, quinoa
- ▶ Protein such as chicken, fish, eggs, tofu, or beans
- ▶ Fiber through veggies, whole grains, legumes, or fruit
- ▶ Healthy fat from avocado, cheese, nuts, seeds, or olive oil

A blood sugar-friendly plate is less about exact grams and more about balance across these categories. Focus on adding, not removing

Strict measurements, perfect ratios, and cutting back on foods you enjoy tend to make eating feel stressful. Dalina takes the opposite approach.

"Start by adding, not taking away," she says.

If you love rice and beans, add veggies on top for extra fiber and flavor. If breakfast tortillas are your favorite, throw in eggs and tomatoes.

The idea is to make meals more satisfying and nourishing, not more complicated.

"Eyeball it. It's not about perfection; it's about feeling steady and satisfied after meals."

Small upgrades to a meal make a big impact

- ▶ A few simple shifts include:
- ▶ Add extra veggies and lean protein to pasta dishes for a more balanced plate.
- ▶ Include avocado or nuts when eating fruit to slow digestion.
- ▶ Mix in beans or lentils with rice for more protein and fiber.
- ▶ Make sandwiches or wraps more filling by adding greens or sliced veg-

How to build a blood-sugar-friendly plate



gies. These additions help stabilize blood sugar without taking away the cultural foods or flavors you love. Build snacks that keep you full

Snacks can be tricky when you are trying to avoid mid-afternoon crashes or late-night hunger. Dalina recommends keeping the same pairing principles in mind: include two or more of the four key components.

"A nourishing snack has two (or more) of the four (carbs, protein, fat, fiber): a carb for energy and a protein or fat to slow digestion," she explains.

Some of her favorites include a banana with peanut butter, string cheese with crackers, or yogurt with fruit. These combinations keep you fuller for longer and reduce the dips that can make you feel shaky or irritable.

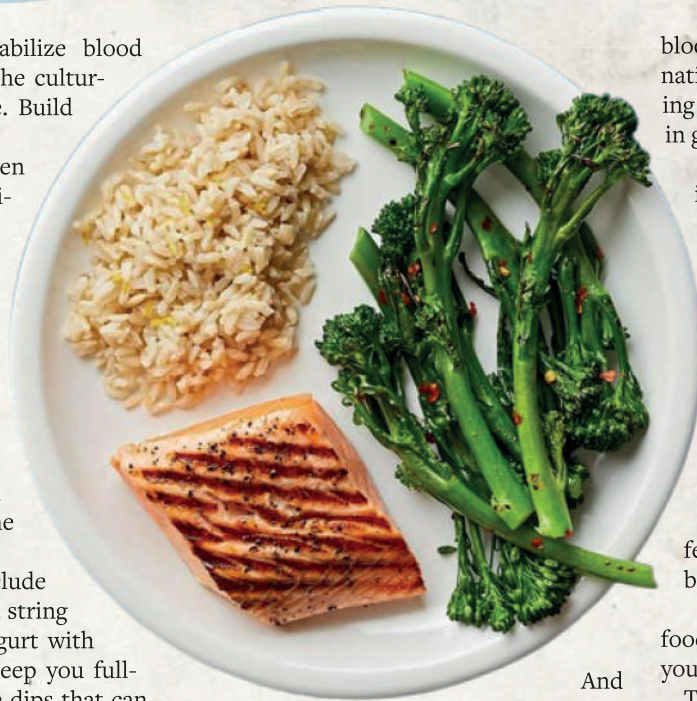
- ▶ Easy grab-and-go combinations
- ▶ apple slices with cheddar cheese
- ▶ unsweetened yogurt topped with berries
- ▶ carrot sticks and hummus
- ▶ crackers with tuna or chicken salad
- ▶ trail mix with nuts, seeds, and a little dried fruit
- ▶ hard boiled eggs and a clementine

Snacking strategically helps maintain more stable blood sugar levels between meals. Practice curiosity instead of judgment

Dalina sees many people fall into all-or-nothing thinking when managing diabetes. One high reading can make them feel like they failed.

She encourages a more compassionate mindset. "If a meal spikes your blood sugar, it's not a failure, it's information," she says.

She helps clients stay curious, not judgmental, by experimenting with additions like fiber-rich foods, adjusting meal timing, or pairing foods differently instead of cutting out favorites.



And she reminds people that fluctuations are expected. "You're not doing anything wrong," she says.

Dalina also explains that stress, sleep, hormones, hydration, illness, and even weather can all influence your blood glucose levels. Her recommendation is simple: "Look at patterns, not single numbers." Take one step if you feel overwhelmed

A new diabetes diagnosis can bring a flood of information, pressure, and fear. Dalina recommends starting with just one move.

"Take a breath and start by adding fiber," she says. Instead of overhauling your meals, try simply adding a serving of vegetables or avocado to your usual dishes.

"You don't have to change everything overnight. Small, consistent changes make the biggest difference for blood sugar and peace of mind." Know the myths to ignore

One belief comes up again and again in her practice. "The biggest myth? That carbs are the enemy. Carbs aren't bad, our bodies need them," she says.

Managing blood sugar is not about eliminating entire food groups. It is about pairing foods in ways that support a steady rise in glucose.

Another misconception is that there is a one-size-fits-all diet for diabetics. "Everyone's body and culture are different, and your meals should reflect that."

Learn to spot harmful advice online

Not all nutrition guidance is helpful. Some messaging can actually harm your relationship with food. According to Dalina, supportive guidance feels empowering rather than shame-based.

"If someone tells you to cut entire food groups, weigh yourself daily, or earn your meals, that's diet culture," she says.

True nutrition education should never make you fear food. This is especially important when it comes to traditional or cultural dishes.

Eat your cultural foods without guilt

Many diet messages create unnecessary shame around traditional or cultural foods. Dalina emphasizes that restriction is not necessary. "Food is part of our culture and joy, it's not something to earn or fear," she says.

You can enjoy beloved dishes while supporting steady blood sugar by pairing them with protein, fiber, or veggies. Eat mindfully, savor the flavors, and remember: "No single meal ruins your blood sugars."

Her work centers on challenging diet culture messages and helping people reconnect with the foods that matter to them.

"I made it my mission to show that our foods belong in blood sugar friendly meals," she says. "Our ingredients are loaded with nutrition that can help."

(Health line)

French court orders PSG to pay Mbappe 60 million euros

A Paris labour court on Tuesday ordered Paris St Germain to pay Kylian Mbappe 60 million euros (\$70.6 million) in unpaid salary and bonuses, bringing a partial end to one of the most acrimonious disputes in French football.

The ruling followed months of legal wrangling after the France striker took PSG to court over earnings he said were withheld for April, May and June 2024, shortly before he left the Ligue 1 club to join Real Madrid on a free transfer.

“We are satisfied with the ruling. This is what you could expect when salaries went unpaid,” Mbappe’s lawyer Frederique Cassereau told reporters.

The court found that PSG had failed to pay three months of Mbappe’s salary, an ethics bonus and a signing bonus due under his employment contract.

Those sums were recognised as due by two decisions of the French Professional Football League (LFP) in September and October 2024, and the judges said PSG had not produced any written agreement showing Mbappe had waived his entitlement.

The judges rejected PSG’s arguments that Mbappe should forfeit his unpaid wages entirely, but also dismissed several of the player’s additional claims, including allegations of concealed work, moral harassment and breach of the employer’s duty of safety.

The court did not view Mbappe’s fixed-term contract as a permanent one, a decision that limited the scale of potential compensation related to dismissal and notice pay.



▲ Kylian Mbappe.

LABOUR LAW APPLIES TO EVERYONE

“This judgment confirms that commitments entered into must be honoured. It restores a simple truth: even in the professional football industry, labour law applies to everyone,” Mbappe’s legal team said in a statement.

“Mr Mbappe, for his part, scrupulously respected his sporting and contractual obligations for seven years, right up to the final

day.”

PSG had argued that Mbappe acted disloyally by concealing for nearly a year his intention not to renew his contract, preventing the club from securing a transfer fee similar to the 180 million euros they paid to sign him from AS Monaco in 2017. Mbappe’s representatives said the dispute concerned the strict application of French labour law and unpaid remuneration, rather than transfer policy. **(Supersport)**

Djokovic to warm up for Australian Open in Adelaide

Serbian great Novak Djokovic will play the Adelaide International as he kicks off his bid for an 11th Australian Open title and an elusive 25th Grand Slam crown, officials said on Tuesday.

The 38-year-old world No 4 has competed at Adelaide twice before, winning both times in 2007 and 2023.

He will be back in the city for the ATP-WTA tournament from January 12-17 ahead of the opening Grand Slam of the year at Melbourne Park, which begins on January 18.

Djokovic won his last major in 2023 and has cut down on tour appearances since, but still lifted titles this year in Geneva and Athens.

Other Adelaide entrants include Jack Draper, Joao Fonseca, Tommy Paul and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Defending Australian Open champion Madison Keys spearheads the women’s field alongside fellow top-10 players Jessica Pegula, Mirra Andrejeva and Ekaterina Alexandrova.

“The 2026 edition of the Adelaide International will showcase the tournament’s continued growth and prestige on the global tennis



▲ Novak Djokovic.

calendar as it attracts world-class calibre from both the WTA and ATP

tours,” said tournament director Alicia Molik. **(Supersport)**

SA Rugby pays tribute to Lusanda Dumke

PRESIDENT of SA Rugby Mark Alexander paid tribute to former Springbok Women captain Lusanda Dumke, who passed away in East London in the early hours of Tuesday morning following a battle with a rare gastric cancer. She was 29.

Dumke, SA Rugby’s Women’s Rugby Player of the Year in 2022, played 33 tests and captained South Africa three times. She also represented the Springbok Women’s Sevens team in her career.

“Lusanda will be remembered not only as a former captain of our Springbok Women’s team, but also as a symbol of courage, leadership, and resilience far beyond her years,” said Alexander.

“She played the game with heart and humility, always giving everything she had for her team.

Her work ethic, toughness, and selfless commitment set the standard, and she led by example every time she stepped onto the field.

“Even in the face of immense personal challenge, she carried herself with dignity and strength, inspiring those around her on and off the field. Her legacy lives on in the lives she touched, the example she set, and the pride with which she represented her team and country.

“On behalf of SA Rugby, we extend our deepest condolences to the Dumke family, loved ones, friends, and teammates on the sad passing of Lusanda.

Losing someone so young to cancer is heartbreaking, and our thoughts are with all who loved and supported her through his journey. May

you find strength, comfort, and peace during this difficult time.”

Born on 11 September 1996, Dumke made her provincial debut for the Border Ladies in 2015 as an 18-year-old. Her test debut followed three years later, in 2018 against Wales in Cardiff.

She became a regular fixture in the Bok team and captained the side for the first time in 2021, against Kenya in a two-test series in Stellenbosch. She also captained the side against Australia in 2024.

In 2022, Dumke was a member of the Springbok Women’s squad that participated in the Women’s Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, where she played in all three pool matches, France, Fiji and England. Her last test was against Italy in WXV 2 in Cape Town in 2024. She scored 10 tries in her test career.

Dumke’s skills and vision made her a natural fit for sevens rugby, and she represented the Springbok Women’s Sevens team in Cape Town in 2019. In 2022, she also played in the Rugby Africa Women’s Sevens Cup in Tunisia, where South Africa defended their continental title, as well as the Cape Town event.

At provincial level, Dumke captained Border as well as the Isuzu Bulls Daisies to provincial titles.

(Supersport)



▲ Former Springbok Women captain Lusanda Dumke

Williams admits to ‘strange and weird’ Bafana AFCON camp

BAFANA Bafana captain Ronwen Williams is confident his side will get their focus back after a “strange and weird camp.”

Bafana will play Ghana on Tuesday afternoon at Dobsonville Stadium (kick off 4pm) in their final match before heading off to the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations finals in Morocco.

Bafana’s Broos fends off allegations

The camp up to now has been disrupted by absences and a fiery press conference last week after which Bafana head coach Hugo Broos had to face up to racism and sexism allegations.

Broos has apologised for comments he made regarding Orlando Pirates centre back Mbekezeli Mbokazi and his female agent Basia Michaels. The Bafana head coach was furious with Mbokazi after he missed his slight from Durban to join up with his international teammates.

Bafana have also camped over the past week and a half without many of their overseas-based players. This follows a Fifa announcement that clubs were only obliged to release their players on Monday, a controversial decision given that the tournament starts in Morocco this Sunday.

Striker Lyle Foster, midfielder Sphephelo Sithole and winger Shandre Campbell will only join up with the squad in Morocco on Wednesday. Bafana’s first Group B match is against Angola in Marrakech on Monday.

“It has been a bit of a strange and weird camp for many reasons,” said Williams.

“We have not had a full squad and



▲ Bafana Bafana captain Ronwen Williams. it is difficult to prepare like that.

“We have also had our own small problems as a team. But we are glad those things have happened. Going into a major tournament it has given us a chance to sit together and sort things out.”

Williams also noted that Bafana haven’t been at their best in training, with work to do to find the kind of form that has seen them qualify for both this AFCON and next year’s 2026 Fifa World Cup finals in the

USA, Canada and Mexico.

“We haven’t been at our best’

“Training has been good, but we haven’t been at our best as well. Once the team settles down this week, things will be better. It has been a strange feeling ... but we will sort it out and keep fighting.

“Obviously last week there was a lot of talk going around and we don’t need that. All we need is support to go out and perform.”

(The Citizen)

Amorim seeks clinical Man Utd after ‘crazy’ Bournemouth clash

MANCHESTER United boss Ruben Amorim said his side had inspired the Old Trafford crowd in a pulsating 4-4 draw against Bournemouth, but must be more ruthless to turn draws into victories.

Three times United led the Cherries on Monday in arguably the best offensive performance of Amorim’s reign in charge.

Matheus Cunha netted just his second goal for the club, Bruno Fernandes curled in a brilliant free-kick, and Amad Diallo signed off for the Africa Cup of Nations with the opening goal.

But United’s defensive frailties without the experienced duo of Harry Maguire and Matthijs de Ligt were exposed as they failed to win for the third consecutive home game.

The Red Devils were beaten 1-0 at Old Trafford by 10-man Everton last month and also blew the lead in a 1-1 draw against struggling West Ham.

Amorim, though, turned his frustration on the wasted chances during a dominant first half.

“We are really disappointed. Crazy game. It might look like we lost the two points in the second half, but I think we lost them in the first half,” said the Portuguese coach.

“We dominated and created

so many chances. We had to go to halftime with a different result.

“In the end we deserved more. It was a fun game for everyone at home.

“People especially at Old Trafford want to win but they want to be inspired to see a team play good football. We did that well in certain moments.

“It was a good performance but we need to be more clinical because we created so many chances.”

(Supersport)



▲ Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim.

Schaper chasing back-to-back wins in AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open

JAYDEN Schaper arrived for this week’s AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open still revelling in his first DP World Tour victory and looking to achieve something only Louis Oosthuizen has managed to do in this event and on the La Réserve Golf Links that will host it.

A win for Schaper this week will give him the same back-to-back triumph that Oosthuizen achieved in 2023, when he followed up his own Alfred Dunhill Championship victory with the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open trophy on a La Réserve Golf Links course he co-designed with Peter Matkovich.

It’s an even greater possibility given Schaper’s record in Mauritius. In the three AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Opens he’s played, Schaper hasn’t finished worse than 13th. And he finished sixth the last time the tournament was played here at La Réserve Golf Links in 2023.

It would be another remarkable triumph for the young star, who tees off in Thursday’s first round as the leader in the Race to Dubai rankings, the leader of the DP World Tour’s Opening Swing standings, the leader on the Sunshine Tour’s Courier Guy Order of Merit, and having climbed into the top 100 on the Official World Golf Ranking.

Most importantly, though, he’s back on the island he loves and has been coming to for family holidays and golf since he was a boy.

“The last two weeks have been incredible, and being here after that is pretty cool,” Schaper said on Tuesday. “I just love Mauritius. I love the resorts, the ocean, the golf courses. What I like about this design is that it’s familiar. My home course is also a Peter Matkovich design, and his designs are focused on being smart and not just bombing it. They’re fun to play. There are always a couple of drivable par fours in his designs, which are also fun.”

Another golfer hunting his own bit of tournament history is defending champion John Parry.

The Englishman is looking to become the first golfer to successfully defend this title.

“I’m really excited. Defending a title is not something I’ve had the opportunity to do before so it’s a new experience which I’m really looking forward to.

“I absolutely love it in Mauritius. I have my wife with me as well. The golf course looks fantastic. I can see the rough is heavy and I’m guessing it blows a lot here. It looks like a very second-shot golf course and it’s all about hitting it in the right areas and the right levels on the greens.

“There’s a feeling that if you’re playing well and it’s a windy course like this, it might play into your hands a little bit. And being from England, I’m fairly used to a bit of wind as well. So I’m excited,” he said.

(Supersport)



▲ Jayden Schaper.

It's Y'ello 'Xmas' Sunday

Stories by Chris Dlamini

IT'S the last weekend before Christmas, and the MTN Premier League action continues with yet-again mouth-watering fixtures.

Its exciting and very tight at the top with the gap between the top two and their top five rivals so thin.

Its currently Nsingizini Hotspurs at the summit with 22 points, but they are level with second-placed Manzini Sea Birds and only two points ahead of third-placed Ezulwini United, fourth-placed Green Mamba and Rangers on fifth. The top two fixtures, including Mbabane Highlanders and Moneni Pirates at Mavuso Sports Centre, make our;

PICK OF THE WEEK

Here's out tit bits of these clashes.
A possible upset or condemnation!
Manzini Wanderers vs Nsingizini Hotspurs

Date: Sunday, December 21, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 1.30pm

It's the top versus the bottom, and in the end, what comes out is an explosive game of football - at least, we expect it to be. Insingizi Yezulu, as the current leaders and reigning champions Nsingizini Hotspurs are affectionately known, are several worlds apart from their host rivals.

If anything, Nsingizini has 22 points, and that is 16 points away from LiWeseli, as Manzini Wanderers are also fondly called. They both lost last Sunday and have each other to tear apart. It is a game that matters most for both - Insingizi is chasing the E120 000 first round leaders' incentive for now with four games to go, while Wanderers need to start winning as they have the big task of getting off the bottom and relegation cesspit to safety.

The hub outfit has gone 11 games with just a win and three draws. Coming from a late 2-0 setback at the hands of bitter rivals Mbabane Swallows, Wanderers will be hoping they hold their own against tougher opposition in Nsingizini who bring with them a former Wanderers star in their captain, Neliswa 'Tiger' Dlamini.

He is in good form and will be out to collect all

... As E120k 'carrot' race leaders Nsingizini Hotspurs face Manzini Wanderers, while Manzini Sea Birds in hub derby with Young Buffaloes

three points. His mission is to steer his ship to retaining the pole position - anything else compromises his team. Insingizi has Manzini Sea Birds and Ezulwini United to immediately worry about. As for Wanderers, they need to cook an upset here, or it will not look good at all.

Things are just as bad already as it appears like everything is for free with the faltering hub giants - players are resigning due to unfulfilled promises, and unpaid salaries continue to haunt them. As is, the situation is chaotic, but Wanderers have been there before.

For this match, the management needs to come up with a plan to motivate the players as they got to start getting maximum points as of yesterday. A tough job for Wanderers coach Gcina Dlamini! The last meeting between Wanderers and Nsingizini did not end well for the hub outfit - a 3-0 defeat.

LOG STANDINGS:

M. Wanderers - 16 (6 points)

N. Hotspurs - 1 (22 points)

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

13/04/25

M. Wanderers 0-3 N. Hotspurs

16/09/23

N. Hotspurs 1-1 M. Wanderers

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

M. Wanderers

L D L L L

N. Hotspurs

L W D W W

Revenge, catch-up, summit at stake

Young Buffaloes vs. Manzini Sea Birds

Date: Saturday, December 20, 2025

Venue: Mayaluka Stadium, Big Bend

Kick-off: 3pm

A thriller in the making. Izinyoni Zolwandle, as Manzini Sea Birds fondly trade, are in devastating form, their best in their elite history after their fifth spot finish a few seasons ago.

Never have Sea Birds held the top spot for longer than any other team as they

have this season, and they have all it takes to reclaim it from Nsingizini Hotspurs who are only in their third week since dislodging the resilient hub minnows. Interestingly, the last time they played Young Buffaloes, Sea Birds won 3-0 and currently looking even stronger than back then.

This makes up for a great game, especially with the top spot beckoning for them in the race for the E120 000 first round 'carrot'. Buffaloes, on the one hand are playing catch-up and want back in the top four and to be part of the incentive race.

The army side is only seventh in the standings with 17 points, so winning here does them good in their catch-up mission as it lessens the gap.

Sea Birds and leaders Nsingizini Hotspurs have 22 points apiece with four games to go before the E120 000 is won. On top of this, revenge is also part of the mission for the army side after Sea Birds thrashed them 3-0 in the second-round last season. Buffaloes are the same side that just edged Nsingizini Hotspurs, depriving them a three-point point advantage at the summit last weekend, and that should be crucial to build up momentum towards their next tough rivals.

On paper, Buffaloes have more quality to win the match but Sea Birds are more dangerous on the field of play with stars like high-scoring Philani Mkhonto and Muzi Tsabedze in the mix. Sea Birds will give it all to win this battle and then hope for an unlikely slip-up from Nsingizini Hotspurs on Sunday.

They are coming from a taxing match against third-placed Ezulwini United which they won 3-2, and must brace for yet another big fight.

LOG STANDINGS:

Y. Buffaloes - 7 (17 points)

M. Sea Birds - 2 (22 points)

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

08/02/25

M. Sea Birds 3-0 Y. Buffaloes

21/09/24

Y. Buffaloes 1-0 M. Sea Birds

PERFORMANCE GUIDE:

Y. Buffaloes

W D

L L W



M. Sea Birds
W L W L W

A football fest it is!

Mbabane Highlanders vs. Moneni Pirates

Date: Sunday, December 21, 2025

Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini

Kick-off: 3.45pm

Every single fixture between these two has often counted among the top five games of the season and the reason is simple - they can entertain with their style of play. The fans have always had a spectacle when these two sides, BoMagebhula, as tag they both have in their praise names.

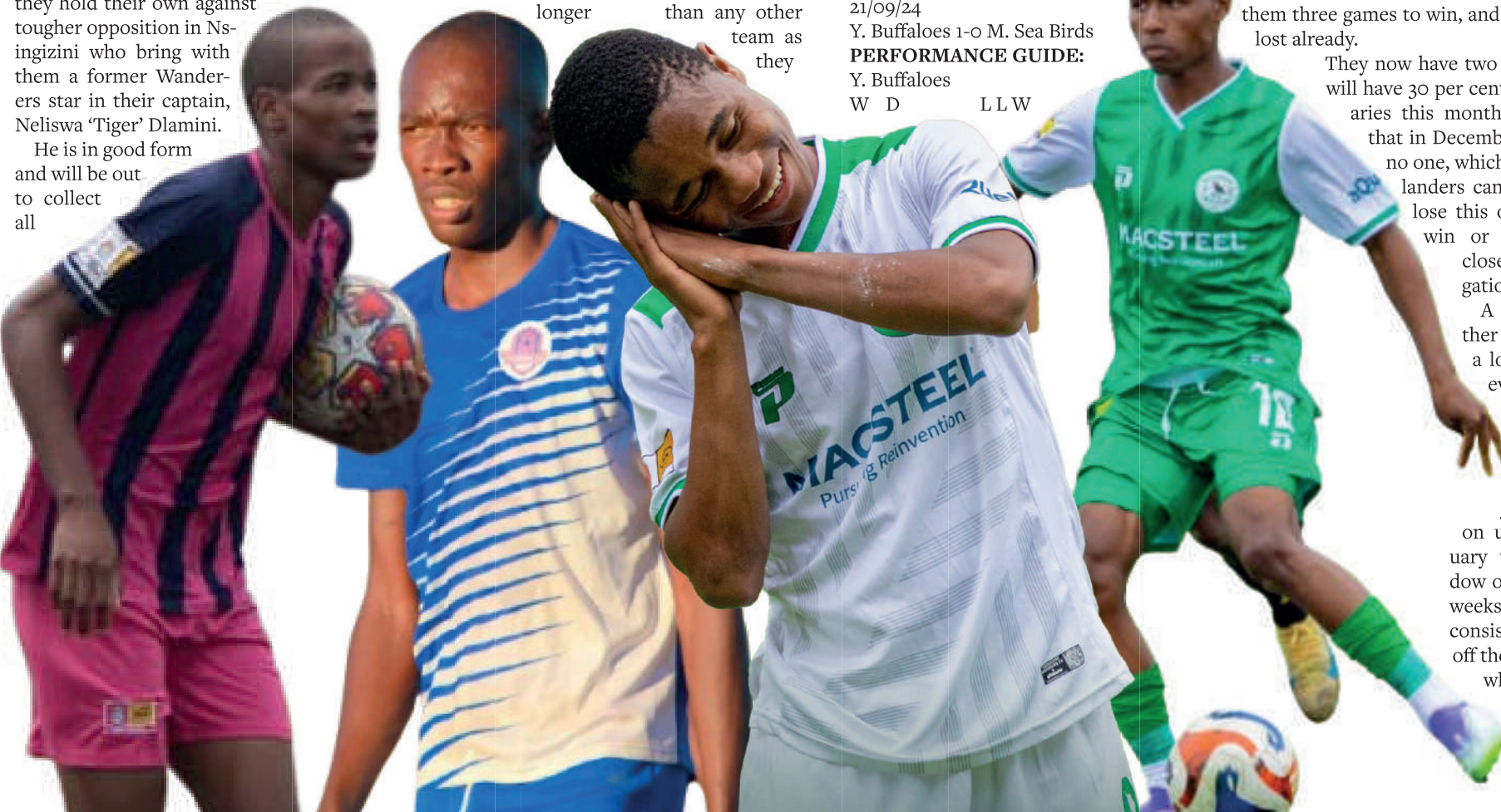
It is going down once again and both are struggling for consistency. Moneni Pirates are coming into this one with a new but familiar coach in Matthews 'Chaka Chaka' Mandlazi.

He played his football in Eswatini for Manzini Wanderers and Denver Sundowns before coaching locally as well. He will be up against a heavily wounded Mbabane Highlanders led by coach Ernest Mavuso.

The latter has not won his last two games, just like Moneni, and after the 3-1 defeat to Royal Leopard last Sunday, he and his troops need to get a win. After all, the team's President Shauwn 'MaMkhize' Mkhize has given them three games to win, and one has been lost already.

They now have two to go or they will have 30 per cent off their salaries this month. Who needs that in December? Definitely no one, which is why Highlanders cannot afford to lose this one but must win or plunge even closer to the relegation quagmire.

A win for either side will do a lot of positive, even for their loyal and demanding supporters who are just holding on until the January transfer window opens in a few weeks. Take the inconsistent results off these two rivals, what you get is a football thriller in your hands.



▲ It's the last weekend before Christmas, and the MTN Premier League action continues with yet-again mouthwatering fixtures.



▲ Team Eswatini in Angola for the ANOCA games.



▲ Male swimmer Luca Fraser.

Brave display for swimming duo

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE swimming duo Luca Fraser and Keandra Macnamara have both made gallant displays in the 2025 ANOCA games held in Angola

Luca qualified for three finals and closed his programme with the 200m Individual Medley, where he once again showcased his versatility and fighting spirit.

He reached the finals of the 50m backstroke, 200m breaststroke, and 50m freestyle during the biennial international youth games.

The two youngsters further clocked

personal bests in the 50m breaststroke of 27.27 for Luca from 31.35s, while Keandra clocked 31.85s from 31.85s.

Kendra continued her strong showing by recording personal best times, underlining her steady progress at these Games.

Team Eswatini Media Officer Mkhulisi Dlamini commended the two swimmers' performance.

"We commend the brave performance of the swimming team marked by resilience, growth, and encouraging performances for the future," he said.

Luca is earmarked to represent the country in the 2028 Olympic Games as he is part of the E7 million Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) scholarship programme.



▲ Youngsters during the Nobuhle Dlamini annual development tournament.

Nobuhle Foundation introduces annual development tourneys

THE Nobuhle Dlamini Foundation has introduced development tournaments in the country.

The tournament will be held annually from February 2026, following the staging of the annually golf event initiated by Dlamini at Ezulwini Golf Club.

Outstanding golfers from the 10 monthly tournaments will qualify for the main tournament usually staged in December.

The tournament coordinator, Meshack Zwane, confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

"We are happy to announce the monthly tournaments, and golfers will accumulate points, which will be added for the order of merit awarding/prize giving during the main tournament in December. Let's all work together and appreciate the wonderful initiative the Foundation has presented," he said.

Zwane also thanked the pioneer Nobuhle Dlamini for coming up with the initiative.

"We are grateful to the foundation founder, Nobuhle Dlamini, for being selfless by coming up with the initiative. This plays a major role in the development of the sport in the country," he said.

Nobuhle Dlamini (born 6 November 1991) is an Eswatini professional golfer playing on the Ladies European Tour (LET).

She reached number 2 on the World Amateur Golf Rankings in 2013 and is the first female professional golfer from her country.

Dlamini won six titles and broke into the top ten on the World Amateur Golf Ranking in 2012. She reached world No. 2 in early 2013 and continued her winning ways with victories in the Eastern Cape Amateur Championship, Zwazulu Natal Championship, Northwest Championships, South African Stroke Play, Gauteng Amateur Championship and took the individual prize in the WGSA 72-hole team championships.

Quarterfinal exit for 7s national team

THE Eswatini Rugby 7s national team had a tough outing in the Khaniscala Rugby tournament held over the weekend.

The national team suffered a 34-0 loss to Lesotho in the quarterfinals of the annual international invitation tournament played in Mpumalanga.

Eswatini Rugby Union president Bandile Vilakati commended the team's performance when reached for comments.

"As Eswatini Rugby Union, we acknowledged the outcome while emphasising the importance of continued development and learning. The result in the quarterfinals was disappointing, but the experience gained from competing at this level is critical for the growth of our players

and the squad. The tournament highlighted both our strengths and areas that require improvement as we continue our long-term development programme," he said.

Vilakati also thanked the Eswatini and Commonwealth Games Association and the Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) for continued support.

"We would like to thank the two national sports bodies and all stakeholders for supporting the team in the Khan'sicala 7s Festival. Special thanks are also extended to Ikleri Store for supporting the squad," he said.

The 7s Squad will now turn its focus to reviewing performances, addressing identified gaps, and preparing for upcoming competitions and training camps in line with the Union's strategic objectives.



▲ Eswatini 7s national team in action against Lesotho during the Khaniscala tournament.

'Management has been Wanderers' downfall'

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

FORMER Manzini Wanderers head coach Kinnah Phiri believes the management committee has been the major downfall for the hub giants.

Phiri said this during his interview with Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services (EBIS 1) weekend review show hosted by Donatus Zwane.

The 'Weslians' are having a bad spell this season, which has seen them occupy the bottom of the table in the MTN Premier

League log standings with five points after 11 matches.

"The team has been let down by the management committee over the years by failing to come up with a strategy to sustain the team. It's time for the Wanderers family to rescue the team," he said.

Luck

Phiri urged the team stakeholders to consider some of the team legends for Managerial positions.

"The team is blessed with capable individuals such as Michael 'Scara' Gama, William 'Cool Cat' Shongwe, who can run the team. I wish the team the best of luck

in the campaign due to its rich history and heritage," he said.

The team recently roped in legendary defender Jerry 'Mbazo' Gamedze as Operations director following the exit of former Managing Director Mlamuli Mabuza.

The Gcina Dlamini-led charges will take on defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs in their next MTN Premier League encounter scheduled for Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday.

Phiri had a stint with the crowd pullers in the 80's and later assumed the hot coach position.



▲ Hleliso Gamedze.

Three Premier League teams chasing Hleliso

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THREE Premier League players are chasing Rangers FC top striker Hleliso Gamedze.

The current MTN Premier League top goalscorer is on the wish list of defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs, Young Buffaloes and Royal Leopard.

The Evelyn Baring High School Pupil has taken the current MTN Premier League campaign by storm, netting eight goals.

A source close to the matter revealed that the three clubs have already enquired about the services of the lanky striker.

"Three Premier League teams have shown keen interest in Hleliso, and Rangers are yet to listen to the best offer. The future of the player will be known at the end of the month, whether the player will leave the club or not," the source said.

Rangers Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thembinkosi Hlandze said they were yet to receive an offer for the player.

"I have received any formal request from any team concerning the services of the player," he said. Gamedze has the Mthunzi Ginindza led side occupy the third position with 19 points after 11 matches.



▲ Manzini Wanderers players.

Over E100 000 for 2026 Ubombo marathon

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

LOCAL companies have pledged over E100 000 towards the 2026 Lubombo marathon.

The sponsors include Ubombo Sugar, who pledged E60 000, Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation (E40 000), Oracle (E30 000) and KEV distributors (E15 000) during the launch held on Tuesday at Simunye club.

The current purse is at E145 000.

Betting company MulaSport promised to announce its contribution in due course.

Other partners include Good Shepherd hospital, Tambankulu Estate and Dixies international, among others.

The fifth edition of the annual marathon will take place on 11 April 2026 at Siteki Sports Ground, organised by the TZD athletics club.

The race will have three categories: 42 km, 21km and 10km under the auspices of Athletics Eswatini.

The host club founder and Athletics Eswatini president, Zakhele Dlamini, thanked the various partners for supporting the race.

"We are grateful for the support of the sponsors and partners in keeping the race afloat over the years. The event will no doubt continue to breath some air of prestige towards our region, given that Lubombo has always been capable of breeding passion and



▲ TZD Athletics Club and Athletics Eswatini President Zakhele Dlamini announcing the Lubombo Marathon Comiteee members Mbali Dlamini, Nozipho Shabangu and Comfort Jeje.

fun with a great social impact. We are proud to announce that the fifth edition will be action packed in the true sense of the word, as we plan to spice it with entertainment to make it a real day of fitness, health and fun. Our route remains unchanged," he said.

He also revealed that they are expecting

international runners to attend the race.

Runners

"As we strive to grow and aspire for Lubombo Marathon to be one of the World Athletics-recognised races and attract international runners, registration for the 2026 race will be done online and through

Entry Ninja, a platform that does registration for all the well-known international races. This is a positive step in the right direction, as this platform will enable every runner to register and pay anywhere in the world. Local runners are therefore urged to embrace this change," he said.



**Amorim seeks
clinical
Man Utd after
Bournemouth clash**

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for 2026
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Sport

KINAH PHIRI ON MANZINI WANDERERS:

‘Management has been Wanderers’ downfall’

... Former Manzini Wanderers player/coach Kinah ‘Electric Man’ Phiri says the Management Committee has failed over the years to come up with a strategy to sustain the team. *Page 19*