

Ministers can't be corrupt since they don't handle cash - Prof Luo
By Mukosha Funga
Minister of Higher Education Professor Nkandu Luo says it is illogical to label ministers corrupt because they are not controlling officers who handle money. Debating the budgetary allocation to the Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday, Prof Luo said ministers, often times, did not even know whether or not money had been received from the Treasury. "I hope honorable Chishimba Kambwili is listening to me because he is a former minister of government we all know. For me, I have served three Presidents; I am on my sixth ministry now, I don't know of any minister in any government who sits and receives finances from the Ministry of Finance," Prof Luo said. *To page 3*

K2.6M SPENT ON MINISTER'S CAR
...Higher Education PS says part of the money was spent on office furniture
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ZNBC demands hike of TV levy from K5 to K10
By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Over 100 unionised employees at the Zambia National Broadcasting corporation (ZNBC) together with some management members have signed a petition against the decision to shift the responsibility of collecting TV levy from the corporation to IBA. And the employees have submitted a petition to the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly proposing a further adjustment of TV levy from the recently revised K5 to K10. Zambia Union of Broadcasters and other Information Disseminators (ZUBID) Secretary General Andrew Mpandamwike told News Diggers! in an interview that the employees, in the petition demanded to know how the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was going to combine the role of regulating as well as that of being a fund manager for the corporation. The union also demanded to know how IBA would be giving the money collected from TV levy to ZNBC. *To page 5*



Ministry of Higher Education Permanent Secretary Mavvuto Sakala (r) when he appeared before PAC - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Prisons are over 200% overcrowded - Percy Chato
By Tenson Mkhala
Zambia Correctional Service Commissioner General Percy Chato says the prison facilities are currently holding over 21,000 inmates against a holding capacity of 8,550. *To page 5*

10 headmen in Chavuma have defected from UPND to PF - Sunday Chanda
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Govt dissolves COBUSU, pays lecturers
Sipilisiwe Ncube and William Chileshe
Copperbelt University Vice Chancellor Naison Ngoma has dissolved the university's students union, COBUSU, following numerous protests over delayed meal allowances. Meanwhile, government has paid lecturers their November salaries. On Tuesday, CBU students rioted over delayed term-two meal allowances whilst their lecturers downed tools for delayed November salaries. Students who sought anonymity told News Diggers! today that government had also suspended the crediting of meal allowances to students. "Yes, it is true. The VC just decided to dissolve the union and appointed another one to act before the elections take place. But all of us are even doubting if that will happen because we have seen that our friends at UNZA have no union as we speak because Professor Luo wants to get rid of unions," the students said. *To page 4*

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We won't allow dubious constitutional amendments - UPND

Sipilisiwe Ncube
UPND National Chairperson Mutale Nalumango says her party will not allow any dubious Constitutional amendments which will only favor the PF.

And Nalumango says the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) is a complete let down. Reacting to Justice Minister Given Lubinda's recent statement that there were so

many lacunas in the current Constitution which needed amendments, Nalumango said the current Constitution was hurriedly assented to in order to confuse people.

"Indeed there are many lacunas but if they want to do it dubiously to create something for themselves, we won't allow that...That was a political gimmick because

people wanted a Constitution, they spend five years without passing it and they bring it in the last year just to confuse people with many lacunas. Indeed the Constitution needs

to be looked at but they can't sit alone and take it to parliament which is a skilled towards end, they have to consult," Nalumango said.
She said amending the current Constitution must be done through wide consultations.
"If they have to be any amendments, there has to be many consultations. It is not a PF amendment. Because if Zambians allow that, that means again we will have to work on it. So any serious lacunas that need amendments or clarification within the law, there must be wide consultation. Not what they did, they first hide the Constitution, play games for five years and in the last years that is when they come up with [a constitution], they think they can do it hurriedly, that should not be allowed," Nalumango said.
And on President Lungu's statement that it would be better for presidents to get a 10-year term, Nalumango said five years was too long.
"In fact, five years is too long. We need even to reduce to four years because we want to see that the government works. If you are going to work, change is seen in the first one year. The second year people must say 'yes we have moved'. So he doesn't need 10 years or seven years for him to perform. That kind of amendment they should stop dreaming about, we will oppose it strongly," she said.
And Nalumango said the ACC had been a complete let down.
"In as much as one would want to be happy, one would wonder for example on the fire tenders. Surely did they have to wait for public outcry? Isn't it their duty to comfort the public because they would have done proper investigations? We hope that they will be genuine this time, they will be sincere, they will truly investigate and a reasonable explanation will come out. Because to me, it was an embarrassment to throw out cases and yet we seem to be seeing those opposition leaders with cases. Surely they are removing confidence from institutions of governance because of the way that they have been acting," said Nalumango.
"Who could have been really be happy with the fire tenders which are failing to operate at such a enormous cost? When the very maximum they could have spent was 200 000 plus or 300 000 but we will wait and see. If they want again to dupe people , Zambians are not dull. Now all you need is to click to know the supplier and to know the cost. So you can't hide information today. For them they said the procedure was followed, even the procedure, I don't think they investigated the procedure fully to see who did the bid? How open was the bid before the tender was given? We need all those details. How many did bid, how open was the selection and indeed where the specifications followed according to what was finally supplied? That is just one thing but they have picked 20 [cases] I don't know exactly which those 20 are. But if they can truly do a good job, they may just gain or earn a little credibility. For now, under this government to me, the ACC has been a letdown, a complete let down."

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Ministers can't be corrupt because they don't handle cash - Nkandu Luo

From front page

“This is why the permanent secretary is called a controlling officer. It is a permanent secretary who in fact knows the amount of money that is coming into the ministry. My role regarding the budget of my ministry ends today or tomorrow when I defend the budget of the Ministry of Higher Education.” She said minister never know when the ministry has received funding. “Many times as a minister you don't even know when money comes into the ministry, when it finishes, you are only told by the PS that ‘minister, this activity cannot be done because we do not have money’. It is not my role as minister to be interested in the monies that are coming into the ministry. Secondly, no minister that I know of ever seats on a procurement committee. Even you as a minister when you want to ask why things are delayed, we are told that ‘we shall remain here, you will go, so don't touch things



which are not your preserve,” Prof Luo said. She accused opposition members of parliament of trying to use the House to settle old scores. “People who have the desire to settle old

scores come to this House and abuse this House to settle old scores and I think that is not right. Just because you are sitting on that other side of the House, it doesn't make you clean. In fact, I can tell

you that if you are a member of parliament or a minister, does not mean that because you hold that position you are corrupt. In fact, the people that are corrupt are not even known. And what we should be

telling Anti Corruption Commission is that can they step up their job and be able to follow up on issues that are being raised. Even some of you who are saying uhhh, some of your leaders are on record to have been

doing things which have made them wealthy and if we really had to follow up corruption, is corruption. So don't come to this House and be champions and start demeaning your colleagues,” said Prof Luo. “You are not going to usurp power by maligning people. You should wait for the elections in 2021 and let the best man or woman win. This House is not going to make you win elections because even as you say Zambians are watching, Zambians are also listening to you...I don't know of anybody on this side of the House who has put money offshore and is evading tax and again this is a document that is in public domain. If that is not corruption then I don't know what we are talking about. If we start abusing the privileges that we have to come to this House and start settling scores, I am afraid you are just putting yourselves in the doldrums because when elections come, you all have to account for what you do.” She encouraged the ACC not to be swayed by “some disgruntled political leaders”. “I would like to encourage the Anti Corruption Commission to do their job diligently. They should never follow perceptions that have been created by disgruntled political leaders who have not won elections and they use this platform through their members of parliament to start maligning others. Leave us alone and leave us to be able to serve this country diligently,” said Prof Luo.

PF hired intercity thugs to attack me at Diamond TV - CK

By Mirriam Chabala

Diamond TV proprietor Costa Mwansa was yesterday forced to interview Roan PF member of parliament Chishimba Kambwili via telephone as the later failed to show up at the studio saying he had gotten information that the ruling party had sponsored cadres to attack him. And Kambwili has insisted that he no longer wants to be a member of parliament or minister in 2021 because he has gained enough experience for the top job. When the show dubbed COSTA begun at 20:00 hours, Kambwili was not in the studio but was readily available to conduct the interview via telephone. “In politics we got what we call intelligence and I was reliably informed by our intelligence team and of course in consultation with State agencies that the Patriotic Front has organised cadres from intercity to come and disrupt the programme and cause some confusion. But because some of us are not interested in politics of confrontation and violence, we avoided coming to Diamond TV studios,” Kambwili told Mwansa. “So I really feel so disappointed that in this era and age people can be thinking of going to cause confusion at a Television station where interview would be going on. So I apologise to the viewers that we are not able

to be in studio today because we were pre-warned and so we regret that we couldn't make it on TV. We don't want to be involved in confrontation with anybody.” He narrated that some PF cadres alerted him whilst he was still at Parliament about the planned attack. “We have got youths within the PF who get information for us and today they just called my driver around 17:00 hours and because I was in Parliament they told him to say ‘we want to speak to the honourable very urgently’ and the driver came and asked for me from Parliament and he told me what the boys had told him and so we called them

back and then they explained to say ‘we've been told to be on standby and as soon as the programme starts, we will jump on buses to come and cause some problems’. We also asked our internal intelligence to quickly rush there and sniff and they came and told us that yes it is actually planned. So you can see that my intelligence is up to date,” Kambwili said. And Kambwili said he had no intentions of contesting as member of parliament in 2021. “I have already made a statement that in 2021 I am no longer interested in either being a member of parliament or a minister, I think I have garnered enough experience

and I have seen that there so many mistakes that are being made by those in authority which are making the lives of our people unbearable. But on which ticket I am standing in 2021, we shall cross the bridge when we get there but as for now I am still PF and I am consultant for NDC just like [Felix] Mutati is MMD but he is a Finance minister in PF. So if Mutati can be a minister and then leader of a political party, why shouldn't I consult with NDC? I am PF in brackets and NDC consultant off brackets, that's food for thought for you,” he said. Meanwhile, Kambwili said he would not waste his time reporting corruption involving

PF officials to the ACC because nothing could be done as President Edgar Lungu was also involved. “I would not want to waste my time to go to the Anti-Corruption Commission because in most of these deals, the President is involved, so no action can be taken even if you report. But I have given so much evidence and if ACC was free they could have investigated some people. If ACC was serious, the Economist Intelligence Unit has written a report mentioning some ministers as having a lot of stolen money, they could have followed them. So what more evidence do they want?” asked Kambwili

FQM hails govt's decision to lift ban on night driving for goods vehicles

By Mukosha Funga

First Quantum Minerals Limited (FQM) manager general Kingsley Chinkuli has welcomed government's decision to lift the ban on freight and goods vehicles driving at night. In a statement today, Chinkuli stated that the amendment to Statutory Instrument (SI) 76 of 2016 would improve the operations of the mining companies. “The Government's decision to revise this SI by giving mining industry freight vehicles the exemption they require to move around the clock is hugely welcome,” Chinkuli stated. He explained the ban on the night-time movement of

freight and goods vehicles had severely hampered the mining company's operations. “As a company, we have noted that when transport systems are safe and efficient, they provide economic and social opportunities and benefits that result in positive multiplier effects, such as better accessibility to markets, employment and additional investments. And what is good for First Quantum, is good for Zambia.” He stated that the move would maintain the company's contribution to the national treasury. “We commend the government for revising SI 76 of 2016 following their extensive consultation with the industry last year. Given the mining industry

dependency on robust and reliable logistics, this move will ensure the company's contribution to the nation's treasury is maintained,” stated Chinkuli. FQM produces around half of the country's copper and between its Kansanshi and Sentinel mines; some 40-50 truckloads of copper concentrate and at least 30 truckloads of finished copper travel on the Solwezi-Chingola road every day. First Quantum Minerals have invested US\$5.7 billion in its Sentinel mine and the Kansanshi mine and smelter, and has paid more than US\$3 billion in taxes in the last twelve years, transforming the economy of North-Western Province and creating direct employment for more than 8,500 people.

PAC hears how K2.6 million was spent on minister’s vehicle, office furniture

By Zondiwe Mbewe

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees (PAC) today expressed shock to hear Higher Education Permanent Secretary Mabvuto Sakala apologise for spending over K2.6 million to purchase a vehicle for the minister, instead of the intended purpose. Explaining the expenditure to the committee, Sakala said K2,668,119 was spent to procure one motor vehicle for the office of the minister, furniture for the office of the Chief Accountant and the Chief planner. Sakala then tendered an apology, saying although he was new at the ministry, there was no excuse for the misapplication. PAC deputy chairperson Brenda Tambatamba however rebuked the Permanent Secretary, adding that controlling officers needed to show responsibility. **Tambatamba:** Chief accountant, some one will ask you to say, are you in charge to be able to provide the right guidance to the controlling officer in the sense that you ignored the law, the regulations, the requirements of prior authority of the Secretary to the Treasury before you spent unless you will be telling this committee that it was impossible to reach out to the ST. What could have been the reasons for such and where are they provided for in any documentation that has been supplied to us here?

Senga Hill PF member of parliament Kapembwa Simbao: On page 13, there is an issue which is a misapplication of K2,668,119. I fail to understand how you apply this money as if you were starting a ministry completely new. I would like a very clear answer because I also was appointed as a minister very late at the ministry and there was no new car bought for me. I went and used a car I found there, very old car. So how did you end up misapplying this money to buy a brand new car as if the ministry never existed before, as if there was no car that a minister can use at the ministry? How? Because I have heard of other cases where a minister has gone and said ‘I’m getting your car PS, you

find another car to use. I’m using your car’. Now you don’t have money for a car, you go and take money for something else to buy a new car for the minister? How?

Chief Accountant at the Ministry of Higher Education Lawrence Mulama: At the time we didn’t have a chief accountant because I had to be transferred from Ministry of Home Affairs to Ministry of Higher Education. These are some of the issues we found on the ground and admittedly, there were all these matters. I mean where you don’t have the head of accounting unit for a long period, it affected the operations of the ministry. Otherwise the controlling officer would have been guided. There was a Mr Ngosa, chief accountant, he died. Then long before that the ministry was merged with Ministry of Education, the chief accountant was running two offices. We lost it there and with the late Ngosa dying, there was a lot of lapse. And this is what led to all this confusion.

PS: Thank you Chair, obviously we want to admit that this was an error. But just to bring to the attention of the House that when a ministry, for example, is split, previously you may wish to note that we also had positions of deputy ministers, if you split a ministry it means that you are going to have a duplication of the ministers; not only the ministers but the deputy ministers. And these are constitutional positions that come with specified entitlements, so in as much as honourable Simbao maybe humble to request the permanent secretary to surrender a 4/4 Hilux, some ministers may demand that they be given their entitlements which is beyond what the permanent secretary may be having at that time. So I want to assume that there must have been a bit of pressure on the ministry but that’s not an excuse for this misapplication, we wish to apologise.

Tambatamba: PS if you were in that position at that time and the minister, the deputy minister insists that

they need a car and you have money for a different program, for service delivery, what would you do? Would you proceed because of the urgency and the want of the minister or would you follow the public finance regulation?

PS: Honourable Chair I would definitely follow the law and probably ask the minister of finance to provide maybe supplementary funding, but I may not be able to answer on the part of the controlling officer at that time. Like I said Chair, it was an error on the part of the ministry.

Chavuma UPND member of parliament Victor Lumayi: Five hundred and twenty three students, 502 from CBU and 21 from UNZA were paid accommodation refund while these students were already accommodated at the institution amounting to K1,426,539. In your response you are saying ‘the auditors’ observation is very correct’ and you are saying ‘verification exercise has not been undertaken by management’. Bwana PS, how did this anomaly come when we have got so many students out there who need these services? And you pay these students who are already accommodated by the institution such kind of monies while others are languishing in the streets.

PS: I would request my director, loans and scholarships board to supplement my submission. When I was presenting, I did note that there was an error in the report. It should have read ‘a verification exercise is being undertaken’ not ‘has not been undertaken’.

Acting director for Loans and Scholarship Board Ireen Chirwa: The submission by the PS is that the allowances to the students are paid based on the details that we receive from the



university. And the invoices for accommodation are also submitted by the universities. So in this case, the universities submitted the invoices to the ministry of finance that paid the accommodation fees whilst the details for accommodation refunds were submitted to our office and we paid. And we are acknowledging that what the auditors discovered was that the same students that have been mentioned were appearing on the payment schedules that we provided as well as the details that the universities provided to the auditors. That’s why we are verifying this and we are saying since we have future payments to the universities, to correct, we are going to deduct from the universities in terms of the accommodation fees that will be charged and from the students because this information was provided to us. We didn’t generate the details for the students to be paid.

Milenge PF member

of parliament Mwansa Mbulakulima: What measures are you taking to correct that anomaly? Are we trying to correct that situation for the good of both the universities and your ministry?

Chirwa: What we have done is that we have requested both universities to now give us all the details before Ministry of Finance can pay them so that when we are paying their allowances we compare with the information that they have submitted in terms of invoices for accommodation fees, so that we only pay those that would not appear on the invoice. That’s a correction that we are doing.

Brenda Tambatamba: Quite a few things have come through. We know you are new at the ministry, but you, as controlling officer should be very worried and should be thinking very seriously about how you will move this

very important institution forward. Very important in the sense that this is the bedrock of our institutions of higher learning. You are the custodians on behalf of the Zambian people taking care of tertiary learning institutions. And if there is any such mismanagement as we would have seen, misapplications and all, it would worry the Zambian people a lot. So the committee is expressing its concern PS, with the numerous irregularities at the Ministry of Higher Education. The committee regrets that the poor management of the ministry has a ripple effect on the quality of, not only the human resource coming from the institutions of learning, but also the poor management of the colleges and all other institutions that you are taking care of. While noting that the PS is new at the ministry, it is the expectation of this committee that the issues which have been highlighted will not recur going forward.

Bailiffs seize 6 cars from Zesco over K3.6m debt

By William Chileshe

The Kalulushi Municipal Council, through the bailiffs, has seized six vehicles from

ZESCO Limited over K 3,696,000 debt. In a statement today, KMC public relations manager

Dorothy Sampa revealed that the debt is from July 2016. “The bailiffs have since seized six vehicles from ZESCO LTD

who are owing the huge sum of K3,696,000.00. The debt is from July 2016. Efforts to have ZESCO settle this debt through a cash plan fell on deaf ears hence the action by the council,” Sampa stated. “This must serve as a warning to all those that are owing the Council. The Kalulushi Municipal Council has sent warrants of distress to all those that are owing the council huge sums of money in terms of crates and other services.” She stated that due to the debts, the council had failed to pay workers’ November salaries. “These monies have been outstanding for a long period of time making the council fail to pay its workers the November salaries. In its quest to pay salaries as well as collect garbage especially now that we are in the rain season the Council has engaged bailiffs to pounce on all those that have defaulted,” stated Sampa.

Government dissolves COBUSU, pays lecturers

By Sipilisiwe Ncube and William Chileshe

Copperbelt University vice Chancellor Naison Ngoma has dissolved the university’s students union, COBUSU, following numerous protests over delayed meal allowances. Meanwhile, government has paid lecturers their November salaries. On Tuesday, CBU students rioted over delayed term-two meal allowances whilst their lecturers downed tools for delayed November salaries. Students who sought anonymity told News Diggers!

today that government had also suspended the crediting of meal allowances to students. “Yes, it is true. The VC just decided to dissolve the union and appointed another one to act before the elections take place but all of us are even doubting if that will happen because we have seen that our friends at UNZA have no union as we speak because Professor Luo wants to get rid of unions,” the students said. “Even the issue of meal allowances has been suspended as we speak, we don’t know what we will

do.” Meanwhile, lecturers have resumed work after getting their November salaries yesterday afternoon. Copperbelt University Academics Union General Secretary Willie Ngosa confirmed to News Diggers! “We are back to work. Salaries came in yesterday after that protest. So we have returned to work,” Ngosa said in a brief text message. And a check at CBU found that business was normal despite anxiety among students over unpaid meal allowances.

ZNBC demands hike of TV levy to K10, objects to IBA involvement in collections

From front page

“As a union we have a few reservations with that proposal. So on Monday we did present our position as a union to the parliamentary committee. We are not sure, because the Act does not provide for how the IBA is going to be giving the money to ZNBC, that is one. Second, we feel IBA is a regulator, so how are they going to combine the role of regulating as well as being a fund manager? Because what IBA is proposing is that they will get that money and start distributing it to ZNBC, parliament TV, and TBN. So meaning they will be a fund

manager and we want to understand how they will be operating as a fund manager as well as a regulator,” said Mpandamwike. He further said that the union was also concerned with the proposed modality of using subscriber base in collecting TV levy since paying subscription fees was not mandatory. “We are also concerned on the proposed modality of using subscriber base. Because subscription is a larger recess, its not mandatory. So we want to know if more people will go through subscription than the current mode that ZNBC is using. So those are

the questions that we are raising and we want them to be taken on so that members of parliament as they are debating can look into those issues,” Mpandamwike said. He said employees felt that their Director General misrepresented their views when he appeared before the parliamentary committee on media Information and Communication Technologies on Wednesday. On Wednesday this week, ZNBC Director General Richard Mwanza told the above named committee that the proposal to amend the ZNBC and IBA Acts and to move the television levy

to the IBA was progressive adding that the mandate of ZNBC was to broadcast and not to collect television levy. And IBA Director General Josphine Mapoma also told the same committee that the current model of collecting tv levy had failed hence the Authority was better placed with the task of collecting levies. But Mpandamwike said what the DG said before the committee was contrary to the views of the other staff. “The members have signed the petition, just to reinforce those points because as you have rightly put it, you have seen how our director

changed his mind there and said something that is contrary to what the other staff think. So they are just trying to reinforce those points that we need those things to be cleared out before it can be rolled out. So the workers have signed a petition which we have already delivered to the Clerk of the National Assembly. So far more than 100 members have signed the petition and its not only the unionised workers that have signed, its all the members at ZNBC, even those in management they have all signed,” Mpandamwike said. And in the petition signed

by ZNBC staff from Lusaka, Kitwe, and Livingstone, the employees feared that amending the ZNBC bill would cause huge loss as the corporation was already struggling to meet its monthly wage bill. “We would be grateful if this Honourable committee could take judicial notice of the high operational costs of carrying out a free public broadcast service. Costs include and are not limited to the following: acquisition of content; production costs of content and remuneration of talent outside the employment of ZNBC; electricity, water and sanitation bills; fuel costs; management of infrastructure country wide; appropriate taxes under the law; staff pension contributions; staff emoluments are just a few mentioned. It is our submission that these obligations are in huge arrears as the current situation is that the corporation is struggling to even meet its monthly wage bill,” ready the submitted petition in parts. The unionised employees further proposed a further adjustment of the TV levy from K5 to K10. “Honourable Chairman sir, ZNBC has an operation cost of around K133 million per annum. From that amount, the Corporation is generates around K86 million per year in revenue, of which K29 million is from TV levy and K57 million is from commercial advertising. Members should take cognisance that this figure collected from TV levy is at the K3 per household that was introduced at inception in 2002 and there has never been a review of the same regardless of yearly inflation. We are grateful to this house for the review that has moved it from K3 to K5 effective January [2018]. Our proposal to enable ZNBC meet its barest operational cost would be to adjust the levy to K10 per month per household. This leaves a funding gap of K47 million. Of importance to note is that this deficit is even before ZNBC takes up the mandate of taking over the running and management of provincial broadcasting stations that will be broadcasting local content in each province,” further read the petition.

10 headmen have defected from UPND to PF, says media director Sunday Chanda



By Mukosha Funga
Patriotic Front media director Sunday Chanda says 10 traditional leaders have defected from the UPND to the ruling party in Chavuma District of Northwestern Province. Patriotic Front Secretary General Davies Mwila says the UPND should start preparing for another humiliating defeat in 2021. In a statement today, Chanda revealed that the 10 headmen were among 320 defectors today. “The PF Chief Executive Officer said this when he received over 320 defectors from the opposition UPND in Chavuma District of North Western Province among them ten Head men. Mr Mwila said the ruling party will not abandon its developmental agenda including in areas where the ruling party received low votes,” Chanda stated. “He also said the PF was

still popular because of its developmental agenda of transforming the nation. He further said the Party was the only democratic political organization as evidenced by the space it accords its membership to express views and opinions. He said as witnessed by

Chavuma residents being connected to national grid as well as upgrading some schools into secondary schools.” Speaking at the same event, North Western Province Chairman Jackson Kungo assured Mwila that party structures in the province

were behind him because he had done so much in terms of uniting and mobilizing the party. “Mr Kungo said it was because of the current Party leadership under His Excellency President Edgar Lungu that the party was able to win off members

from the UPND. And UPND Chavuma District Chairman Nelson Kainga, who led the defectors, said he had been in the UPND for over 15 years and he has seen that the UPND lacks vision and that was why they have decided to join the ruling PF,” stated Chanda.

Prisons are over 200% overcrowded - Chato

From front page

Speaking during the commemoration of the Human Rights Day under the theme; ‘Our rights our freedom always’, Chato lamented that overcrowding remained one of the greatest challenges of the prisons service. “Overcrowding still remains our greatest challenge which needs agent interventions. Our facilities are currently holding over 21, 000 inmates against an official holding of 8550 representing that we are over 200 per cent overcrowded,” Chato said. “It is not a hidden fact that in a situation where overcrowding is persistent, violation of human rights and the spread of communicable diseases may exist.” Chato said other challenges included inadequate

staffing levels to undertake rehabilitation activities, less health posts and inadequate transport for effective operations. “As a service we need to take a practical steps , however, we still have challenges which includes inadequate staffing levels to undertake rehabilitation activities, less health posts and inadequate transport for effective operations and lack of starter packs for inmates that have undergone rehabilitation and have been released from correctional prison,” he said. Meanwhile, Chato says Zambia Correctional Service is committed to ensuring that the rights of inmates are upheld. “Indeed, without human rights there can be no freedom. That is the reason why the Zambia

Correctional Service in its transformation process is committed to ensuring that the rights of inmates are upheld,” said Chato. “As a service, we do recognize and acknowledge the inherent dignity of a human being including inmates as provided for in rule number one of the Mandela Rules which states ‘All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. No prisoner shall be subjected to, and all prisoners shall be protected from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The safety and security of prisoners, staff, service providers and visitors shall be ensured at times. I wish to call upon my staff to take the respect of human rights for inmates as part of their daily duties or routines.”



Correctional service officials during the commemoration of human rights in Lusaka - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Our boss told us the cannabis lab was a prayer room - Witness

By Diggers Reporter
An electrician has told the Lusaka Magistrates’ Court that the South African national of Indian who was nabbed for running an indoor cannabis lab made his workers think that it was a prayer room. In this matter, Kibir Magan, is alleged to have trafficked in 16.4 grams of marijuana, a herbal product of cannabis sativa on November 1, 2017. Between September 1 and November 1, the accused allegedly cultivated 1.1kgs of cannabis. Magan is also alleged to have had in possession two grinders used to prepare marijuana, and used his premises at plot number 35 Buluwe Road Woodlands for use of psychotropic purposes. When the matter came up yesterday, Peter Njobvu, told the court that he installed the lighting in the lab but that he was told it was a prayer room. Testifying before principal

resident magistrate David Simusamba, Njobvu recalled that six DEC officers approached Magan at his home on November 1. The 28-year-old said he thought they were his boss’ usual clients until the DEC officers ordered everyone on the premises not to leave. “I thought they were our usual clients, not until one of the officers among the six, took my work mates and myself in the

board room and told us to put our phones aside and not to leave the premises,” Njobvu said. Njobvu said being the senior most employee, a DEC officer asked him to sign a search warrant. The electrician testified that the DEC officers, his boss and himself proceeded to Magan’s bedroom where a search was conducted in the latter’s closet. He said a plastic bowl and a glass bottle were

discovered in Magan’s wardrobe with each containing a whit plastic bag and green leaves concealed in it. Njobvu said the officers insisted that Magan leads them to another room that contained such substances to which he led them to his “prayer room”. When asked what he meant about the prayer room, the witness said workers were told that it was a sacred room and

were barred from having access to it. When asked if he had evidence to show that the accused ordered them not to enter because it was a prayer room, Njobvu said the other workmates and himself were told by word of mouth that it is a prayer room. Njobvu told the court that the cannabis lab was a store room in the past. “I entered the room between June last year when I started working

there up to this year in August. It used to be a store room, that’s where we kept stock not until in August when I installed Heyday lighting in the room,” said Njobvu. Njobvu also denied being an informant of the DEC. He said he only had access to the room after DEC officers asked him for assistance, being an expert who did the fittings. Trial continues on December 18.

Police gun down one of the criminals who killed Chinese national in Ndola

By William Chileshe
Police in Ndola have shot dead a dangerous criminal who is one of the three behind the death of a Chinese national a few weeks ago. On November 20,

criminals shot dead a Chinese national identified as Pangfei Zhu aged, 32, a director at Amaya Investment Limited in the Light Industrial Area of Masala. The criminals raided

the premise around 08:30 hours and stole undisclosed sums of money before leaving in a stolen Toyota Noah. But Katanga told News Diggers! in an interview today that police had

gunned down one of the criminals and recovered an AK47 raffle, a mask and a vehicle which was used in the robbery. “Yes there was a shooting incident in the early hours of today here in Ndola. Our officers were on the ground. We pursued them in the Ndola Industrial area. In the process our officers managed to gun down one criminal,” Katanga said. “This criminal we gunned down is one of the three criminals behind the shooting of a Chinese national in the Industrial area some weeks ago. He has been identified as

Philip. One AK 47 raffle has been recovered and also the Toyota vehicle that was used in the robbery has also been recovered, a mask which was used to hide their faces is also discovered.” Katanga said the police will not rest to stop any criminal activities on the Copperbelt. “The police want to warn that we won’t rest. We will follow the criminals until we stop any criminal acts on the Copperbelt. For further details, I will get back, as we continue to investigate and look for other criminals,”said Katanga.

Doctor in court for failing to pay for 7 suits

By Diggers Reporter
A 27-year-old doctor of Lusaka’s Chawama compound has been dragged to court for obtaining seven suits from a businessman at Comesa market by falsely pretending that he would buy them when in fact not. This is in a matter Brian Musonda is facing two of obtaining goods by false

pretenses. In the first count, it is alleged that between July 1 and October 15, 2017 with intent to defraud, Musonda did obtain seven suits, a shirt and a short altogether valued at K3,000 the property of Victor Siatembo by falsely pretending that he would buy them when in fact not.

In the second count, allegations are that Musonda, between August 26 and October 14, 2017, with intent to defraud, got K12,900 cash the property of Siatembo by falsely pretending that he had a car for sale when in fact not. The doctor is yet to take plea before Lusaka magistrate Mwaka Mikalile.

Consent order between judge Nkonde and the State is criminal – Changala

By Joseph Mwenda and Sipilisiwe Ncube

Lusaka businessman and civil rights activist Brebner Changala says the consent order entered into between High Court judge Sunday Nkonde and Attorney General Likando Kalaluka is criminal.

Early this year, shareholders of The Post Newspapers wrote to the Judicial Complaints Commission (JCC), complaining about the conduct of judge Nkonde over the manner in which he handled the liquidation of the newspaper company.

After reviewing the charges raised by the shareholders, the JCC found judge Nkonde with a case to answer, but he refused to exculpate himself on ground that some of the complaints raised were still awaiting his ruling in his court.

The JCC then wrote to President Lungu, recommending that the Head of State suspends the accused judge who had been found with a prima facie case to answer.

Judge Nkonde however, went to Kitwe and obtained a stay in form of judicial review, restraining the President from suspending him.

On Wednesday this week, the Daily Nation reported that judge Nkonde’s lawyers Makebi Zulu Advocates entered into a consent order with the Attorney General (acting on behalf of the JCC), thereby quashing the JCC’s recommendation to suspend the High Court judge.

“The decision and ruling of the Commission dated November 10, 2017 is hereby removed into the High Court and accordingly quashed,” reported the Nation

without further details of the grounds upon which the decision was made.

Commenting on the matter, Changala who has been in good books with the Patriotic Front government, said the move was criminal.

“The JCC wrote to the President to suspend judge Sunday Nkonde, but he made a move from Lusaka, jump Kabwe, jump Ndola and go to Kitwe get a judicial review which acted as a stay. Now in that judicial review, the respondent is the Attorney General acting on behalf of the JCC as a government institution. There was suppose to be a second respondent in that matter and the second respondent is the complainant, the one who made the JCC move. Now, they deliberately saved the Attorney General and the president the notice, they leave out the mover of the JCC, the aggrieved party in this case Fred M’membe or indeed The Post shareholder who were not attached to the documents and that is where the catch comes in,” Changala said.

“Now the lawyers for Sunday Nkonde and the Attorney General have entered into what they are calling a consent order, in other words killing the whole case. Now how will the complainant get the cure? Because the complaint still stands, how are they going to cure the complaints of Mr Fred M’membe and indeed the post newspaper itself? Now because this thing has been done in a hurry and there is collusion, they are leaving a lot of unanswered questions. This is criminal now because they have not followed



the right procedure.”

He observed that the closure of The Post was not done in accordance with the law.

“I speak to you as a concerned citizen because The Post was now an institution, it was not a personal property for Fred M’membe. It could have been at PACRA personal property but it became a wing or an institution that was helping us to nature our young democracy. And I speak as a concerned citizen that the liquidation of the post has not been handled properly. There is a hand of criminality in it and I want to make a warning to whoever is behind this that a lot of people will go to jail over the post. This is a timely warning, a lot of people will go to jail if they don’t handle this matter in the most transparent manner. There is no way they can enter into a consent order without the participation of the complainant,” said Changala.

Eight Mporokoso PF officials defect to NDC

By Mirriam Chabala

Eight Patriotic Front members in Mporokoso District in Northern Province have defected to newly formed National Democratic Congress (NDC) on grounds that the ruling party is divided.

The eight, led by Mporokoso Constituency Chairman Peter Chikonde stormed Mporokoso Radio station this morning to announce their defections.

Chikonde was accompanied by former Mporoko PF publicity secretary Stanslous Mulenga and Emmanuel Mulenga who was district secretary, among others.

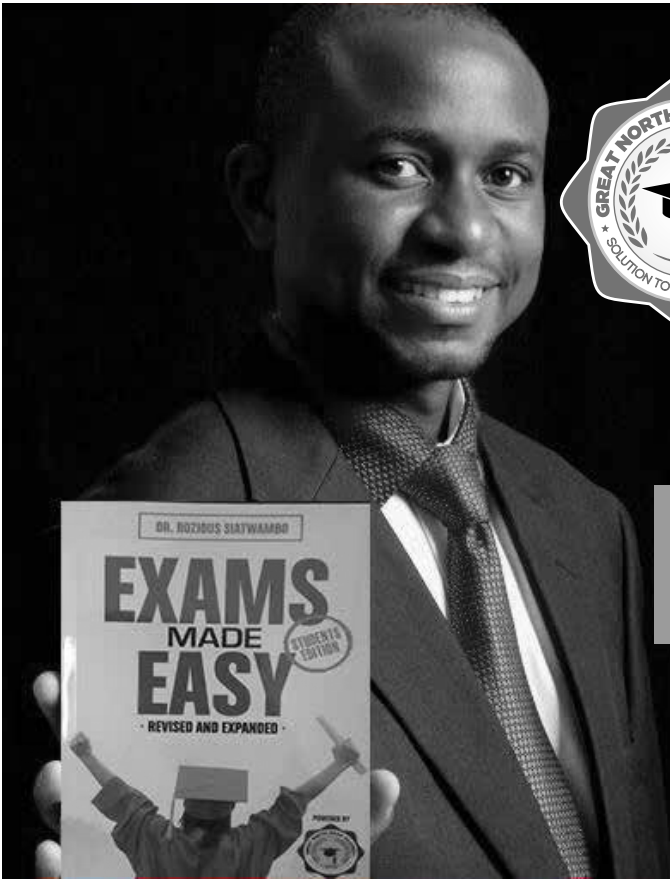
Chikonde explained that they had decided to leave PF because it had become divided and that people no longer coordinated in their actions.


“I Peter Chikonde has resigned from my position and from the PF party and my reasons for resigning are that ever since the President took over the party there have been a lot of confusions in the Province because most of the people whom we voted against for working for the people have brought back and given positions and then we don’t even coordinate well. As Constituency Chairman, what I have observed is that each time there are programmes of going into wards, the district Chairman and his people don’t inform me, they just identify other people who are not even active and they go with them. And recently even our friend in a certain ward resigned as Chairman because people have been frustrating him. So us we have resigned and joined the NDC we have even submitted our letters to the party structures,” Chikonde said.

And in welcoming the defectors, NDC secretary general Mwenya Musenge assured the defectors that they had made the right decision by leaving PF.

He encouraged them to take up positions and help grow the party in the province.

“I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our colleagues from the PF in Mporokoso district who have decided and taken a wise decision to join the NDC. We have quite a huge number from the district, constituency and wards that have come to join the NDC. Indeed this is a sign to show that the National Democratic Congress has touched many hearts of our people in the country. There is no single area across the country where the NDC is not manifested. Meanwhile, as a political party our desire is to shift the way we are doing politics in the country into a new era of doing politics where our people will be free to play their politics, we want an environment where those who shall ascend to leadership will go to do nothing else but provide a service to their people. Therefore to our brothers and sisters who have joined the party from Mporokoso you are welcome and feel free and please take up positions and help to build the party,” said Musenge.





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News

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It has been a year since we were licensed as a newspaper publication and made the commitment above, yet it feels like just a few months ago. As we came on to the scene, we hustled to find our own unique identity; a unique way

of reporting news that could isolate us from the rest.

With only a small team on board, we embarked on this ambitious project of gathering news and disseminating it to the masses for free! It was our intention to reach as many people as we could and gain their trust as much as possible. But it was not a flawless road.

Along the way, we made mistakes and some bad decisions, but we opened ourselves to criticism and it is that criticism from our readers

that has brought us this far. On the other hand, we did not hesitate to throw our criticism at those whom we are obliged to keep in check.

In fact, it will be folly for us not to acknowledge the tolerance shown to our organisation by those who hold political power. We therefore wish to thank President Edgar Lungu, his advisors, ministers, members of parliament and the PF secretariat for (so far) accepting our criticism.

We also wish to extend

our gratitude to all opposition political parties that use our platform to air their views. The value you placed on us has inspired us to move a step forward.

Civil Society Organisations, corporate institutions and individuals, too numerous to mention, have given us various forms of support with one strong caution “stay balanced and objective”. That is the support and encouragement that kept us going.

Dear readers, today we announce our decision to take our publication to print. Starting Monday December 18, 2017, News Diggers! will be sold on the streets at K10 on all working days (Monday to Friday).

We would like to take our commitment to stand out as the most trusted source of news to the street. Our digital platforms shall remain intact, as some of the facts published in our newspaper will be verified online.

We have practically worked as ‘jobless’ volunteers for the past year, and we now seek employment from you, the Zambian people who find value in our work. Every copy you buy and every advert you place in our newspaper will go a long way in sustaining our survival and making our platform stronger. With a stronger platform comes a stronger voice for the citizens.

In this final week before our first print edition on December 18, we will abstain from publishing the ePaper in order to allow us to adjust to the new working timetable, as well as to wind up investigations into some of the interesting stories that we intend to feature in our debut print edition.

To the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Madam Kampamba Mulenga, we are sorry to disappoint you because, by and large, we are disobeying you by ‘switching’ from Digital to Analogue!

How Davies Mwila sacrificed for PF and Lungu

**BY GIFT KASARO
PF FUNDAMENTALIST**

How Davies Mwila sacrificed for PF and Lungu

In today’s world, we as a people are fond of looking on only one side of the coin and base our judgment on it without flipping the other side of it to make a comparison before we reach a conclusion.

In this article, I look at both sides of the coin in the case of Hon. Davies Mwila who serves as Secretary General of the Patriotic Front on H.E President Edgar Chagwa Lungu’s appointment.

Born on 12th December 1963, a happily Married family man who is a Trade Unionist by profession and also a seasoned politician whose passionate Hobbies are Boxing and Football.

Hon. Davies Mwila served as Treasurer for the Mine Workers Union of Zambia and was first elected as Chipili constituency member of Parliament on the PF ticket in 2006 and was reelected in 2011 in the historic tripartite elections that ushered the patriotic front under the leadership of H.E President Michael Chilufya Sata (M.H.S.R.I.P) into Government ending the 20year rule of the MMD.

Under President Michael Sata’s administration, he served as provincial minister for the Copperbelt province and Luapula province respectively (I stand to be corrected) before being appointed Deputy Minister of Defence in July 2012 a

prestigious position he later unceremoniously resigned from on principle in 2013 a development which is unprecedented in our political culture/dispensation.

Despite his resignation from government, he remained a dedicated and loyal member of the party unconditionally and never attempted to wash any dirty linen in public.

Fast forward to October 2014 when the cold hand of death robbed us of a rare great statesman in Michael Chilufya Sata. Only three years into his historic rule, the patriotic front was under siege from the cartel. It is important to note that I (author of this article) respect the said cartel when it comes to matters of using tactical thinking on the political chess board because they really think through before acting.

The cartel identified Hon. Davies Mwila as the man who had the political potential, tact and muscle to deliver the PF presidency to them, hence their directive to their pawn (puppet) the then acting PF and Republican president Dr. Guy Scott to fire the then PF secretary general now Republican president H.E Edgar Chagwa Lungu and have him replaced with Hon. Davies Mwila who immediately rejected the appointment on principle and said in the tradition of where he comes from (Luapula) it was an abomination to engage in the game of thrones whilst you are still mourning the deceased much to the

delight of PF members and the general citizenry who further immediately went on rampage protesting against the cartel’s manoeuvres.

To this date, I respect and admire Hon. Davies Mwila for making such a bold decision to reject the cartels offer an attribute that is not common in most of our politicians today.

Fast forward, President Edgar Chagwa Lungu became PF President and eventually the Republican President and Hon. Davies Mwila supported him unconditionally. President Lungu then appointed him to his cabinet as Minister of Home Affairs (Jan 2015).

After being an MP for Chipili constituency for 10 years (2006 - 2016), Hon. Davies Mwila unfortunately did not succeed in his bid to retain the seat, as an independent candidate grabbed the seat away from PF. (under circumstances I can not disclose in public) This has to this day brought controversy on Hon. Mwila as most political analysts have only looked at this side of the coin to judge his political capability ignoring the fact that he served as MP for Chipili constituency for ten years which is no mean achievement on top of the critical role he played in mobilisation PF in Bemba land when the party was in the opposition.

In a practical example of a boxer, we can say Hon. Davies Mwila has fought three(3) title matches with a record of

two wins and one loss.

Based on this principle, it is highly unreasonable to suggest or conclude that he is not a good boxer because a record 2 -1 is not a bad one and any boxer in this situation aims at getting back to the drawing board in order to redeem their glory in a more aggressive and tactical pursuit. All said and done, it was not wrong for President Edgar Chagwa Lungu to appoint Hon. Davies Mwila as the party C.E.O contrary to misguided political pundits who want to crucify the PF SG on that basis deliberately ignoring his positives. In a democracy and especially a shining example like ours, it must be understood that in

any election you can either win or lose and in an event that you lose, that does not in any way mean you are not a good politician because it’s only the name and rule of the game of politics. When doomsayers thought that Hon. Davies Mwila’s political career came to an end following his unsuccessful third time Chipili constituency bid, they got a shock of their lives when President Edgar Chagwa Lungu wisely appointed him as Secretary General of the PF therefore making him the third most senior and powerful figure in both the party rank and file and the entire Republic of Zambia a development that has kept them choking with envy and

jealous to this day.

Moral lesson, do not be in a hurry in life instead, believe in God’s time because it’s the best. Davies Mwila denied Dr. Scott’s appointment and got appointed to the same position one year later by a more legitimate President. Had Hon. Davies Mwila been power hungry and accepted the appointment by Dr. Guy Scott, he most likely would have never been Home affairs Minister and most importantly the Chief Executive Officer of the Patriotic Front a position in which he is diligently discharging his duties to the satisfaction of the appointment authority as revealed by the president himself.

A judge in Argentina says he is seeking the arrest of former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner over accusations she took part in a political cover-up. Ms Fernández, who governed for eight years from December 2007, was recently elected a senator and as such enjoys parliamentary immunity. For her to be arrested, the Senate would have to lift that immunity with a two-thirds majority vote. She called the move a “nonsense... [which] violates the rule of law”. Senators said they would consider the judge’s request once they received it. ‘Criminal plan’ Federal judge Claudio Bonadio, who is seeking the arrest, alleges Ms Fernández was took part in “an orchestrated criminal plan” to cover up the alleged involvement of senior Iranian officials in a 1994 bomb attack against a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires. Judge Bonadio also ordered that Héctor Timerman, who was foreign minister under Ms Fernández, be placed under house arrest in connection with the same case. Two more close allies of Ms Fernández were arrested on Thursday morning. They are Carlos Zannadi, a senior legal official in the Fernández administration, and political activist Luis D’Elía. On Thursday, Ms Fernández called a news conference to once again deny the allegations against her and to denounce the judge’s investigation. “It is a case fabricated on facts that never existed. What is happening is a nonsense, a true excess,” she said. “It not only violates the rule of law, but seeks to inflict personal and political harm on opponents.” She said Judge Bonadio acted on the orders of President Mauricio Macri to intimidate her and other left-wing opposition leaders. “Mauricio Macri is the

Argentina judge seeks arrest of ex-leader Cristina Fernández

director of the orchestra,” she said. “He wants to divert attention from the fact that his economic measures have failed. This is a smoke curtain aimed at scaring the people and the unions,” added Ms Fernandez. Argentina’s deadliest terror attack Judge Bonadio presides over a commission which is investigating the 1994 bombing of the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Association (known as Amia for its initials in Spanish), a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires. Eighty-five people died in the bombing, which was Argentina’s deadliest terror attack. Judge Bonadio re-opened the case against Ms Fernández after it had been dismissed by another federal judge in February 2015. The allegations of a cover-up in the highest echelons of government were originally made by special prosecutor Alberto Nisman, whose sudden death in January 2015 is still being investigated. What lies behind Alberto Nisman’s death?



Argentine president’s case dismissed What did Mr Nisman uncover? Alberto NismanImage copyrightREUTERS In 2006, Mr Nisman formally charged Iranian officials with directing the 1994 Amia attack He alleged the attack was carried out by Hezbollah militants In his 2015 report, he accused Ms Fernández and Mr Timerman of subsequently covering up Iran’s purported role in the bombing He alleged that her government wanted to whitewash Iran in order to secure lucrative trade deals - exchanging Argentine grain for Iranian oil Ms Fernández dismissed the allegations as “absurd” Mr Nisman was found dead in his apartment on 18 January 2015 with a bullet wound to the head and a pistol lying by his side. He had been only hours away from testifying in Congress against Ms Fernandez and Mr Timerman. No one has been convicted of the Amia bombing. *BBC*

Same-sex marriage officially signed into law in Australia

Same-sex marriage has been officially signed into law in Australia, a day after MPs overwhelmingly approved a historic bill. Australia’s Governor-General Peter Cosgrove signed off on the law on Friday - a formality required to enact the legislation. The vote on Thursday set off rarely matched celebrations in parliament, including cheers, hugs and a song. Supporters celebrated across Australia, many donning rainbow colours. “So it is all done. It is part of the law of the land,” Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said after a brief ceremony on Friday. He said the law would take effect immediately after midnight. The first marriage ceremonies will happen from 9 January, given couples must give a month’s notice of their intention to wed. Australia approves same-sex marriage The moment Australians said yes ‘We’re too old for all the fuss’ Same-sex weddings conducted overseas will be immediately recognised in Australia. The legislation sailed through parliament without amendments after Australians overwhelmingly supported the reform in a voluntary national poll. “Australians had their say and overwhelmingly voted yes to marriage equality, to love, respect and commitment,” Mr Turnbull said. “They told us politicians to get on with it and we did.” Mr Turnbull called the marriage reform one of the most significant achievements of his government to date. However, the government has also faced criticism from political opponents who say it delayed the legislation due to internal division. *BBC*

Mnangagwa hands back land to evicted white farmer

The Zimbabwe government is overseeing the return of a white farmer to land that was seized from him at gunpoint, in what it hailed as a sign of the new president’s “inclusiveness”. Rob Smart, 71, whooped with joy this week when he was told that he can return to his farm in eastern Zimbabwe - the only home he has ever known. He and his family, including his young grandchildren and many of their workers, were evicted at gunpoint from their farm in the east of the country nearly six months ago by several gangs loyal to former first lady Grace Mugabe. Former president Robert Mugabe, 93. was forced to resign last month after 37 years in power after a coup d’etat, in which he was succeeded by his former ally Emmerson Mnangagwa. Mr Mugabe supported land invasions from 2000 which saw about 4,000 white farmers evicted, sometimes violently. Mr Smart told Reuters that Mr Mnangagwa, personally oversaw his return after he heard about the case. “Apparently Mnangagwa saw that and flipped his lid,” Mr Smart said. One of those who engineered the invasion was Bishop Trevor Manhanga, who leads a church known as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe. *Yahoo*

Chinese boy, 13 years, ‘decapitates mother

A 13-year-old Chinese boy has been arrested for allegedly killing his mother and chopping off her head. The boy reportedly filmed the murder and sent the clip to friends via popular messaging app WeChat. He was arrested several days later after a friend showed the clip to his mother. The incident took place in the town of Wenxing in Sichuan province. Local police confirmed the case with the BBC but gave no further details, saying it was still being investigated. The boy killed his mother after a quarrel on Sunday night, reported Radio Free Asia, citing local sources. He then decapitated her and stored her head in a bucket, before disposing of it in a drain outside their home, according to the news outlet. It also said the murder was not discovered until Wednesday, when one of the boy’s classmates showed the video clip to a parent who immediately reported it to the police. The boy was said to have been arrested at school. *BBC*



George Adesola Oguntade, the High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and his wife Mrs Oguntade are warmly received at the Buckingham palace in spectacular traditional dress. Queen Elizabeth II welcomes several dignitaries to her home during a private audience at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday.

Study links breast cancer to birth control: here’s what you need to know

A new study from Denmark published in the New England Journal of Medicine is making news because of its conclusion that the risk of breast cancer was higher among women who currently or recently used hormonal contraception (namely, birth control pills and hormonal intrauterine devices, or IUDs) than among those who had never used hormonal contraception. Per the study, risk was also found to increase with longer periods of use. It’s the kind of news that might make some women want to toss their birth control pills in the trash — but before you do that, it’s important to understand the parameters and results of this new research. First, it’s important to note that the study — which looked at 1.8 million Danish women over a decade — found that the absolute increases in breast cancer risk detected in this research were still incredibly small, translating to 13 additional cases of breast cancer a year for every 100,000 women using hormonal contraception. In other words, for every 100,000 women using hormonal contraception, 68 could expect to be diagnosed with breast cancer, as opposed to 55 of every 100,000 women not using hormonal contraception. Secondly, the study was also limited by the fact that the study did not control for factors like level of physical activity, breastfeeding, and alcohol consumption, all of which have been found to influence breast cancer rates in varying ways. In other words, though more cases of breast cancer were identified among

the group of women taking hormonal contraceptives, it is unclear what other factors might have also been at play in the cases in which diagnoses were made. Women’s health experts say that this study does not invalidate the fact that quality contraception is a medical necessity for women. Tracey Wilkinson MD, is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Indiana University School of Medicine and a fellow of Physicians for Reproductive Health. She explains that this new study should not prompt women to abandon hormonal birth control. “I never look at a large database study and apply it to just one patient,” Wilkinson tells Yahoo Lifestyle. “Every patient is unique and has different unique factors that impact their breast cancer risk rate — smoking, whether they choose to breastfeed, family history, race, ethnicity.” She points out that not only does hormonal birth control protect against a lot of cancers — uterine, ovarian, and colon cancer, for example — but that this study also detected very few breast cancer events related to use of progestin-only forms of hormonal birth control, like the Depo-Provera shot, implants, and IUDs, the forms of hormonal contraception that are proven to be most effective. Wilkinson also makes clear that there are major risks to women who are forced to deal with an unintended pregnancy — something that hormonal birth control does an excellent job of protecting against. So in evaluating the risks, a patient

and provider need to work together for a holistic view. “I always counsel young women to use contraception so that all pregnancies are planned ones and that you and your partner are ready for that pregnancy,” she says. “I don’t look at this study and get scared. I look at this study and think about how important birth control is, and how important it is that my patients, and all patients, have access to all forms of birth control.” The question of birth control access is something now at risk for many American women in light of the Trump administration’s rollback of the contraception mandate of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which guaranteed that all forms of FDA-approved birth control be covered with no co-pay for all insured Americans. “Now the conversations I’m having with my patients are no longer about what method is most effective for them, but what method they can afford, that their insurance will cover,” Wilkinson says. That, she adds, is a real — and well-documented — threat to women’s health. Dr. Chris Zahn, vice president of practice for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), makes clear that he would caution women to reject certain methods of contraception solely based on these new Danish findings. In a statement, Zahn notes, “For many women, hormonal contraception the pill, the patch, the ring, IUDs, and the implant — is among the most safe, effective, and accessible options available.”

Zahn notes that these methods not only offer women, “critical control over their health, including if and when to become pregnant,” but have also been documented to reduce the risk of cervical cancer and are effective treatment options for chronic conditions ranging from acne to endometriosis. Furthermore, Zahn emphasizes that the “safety of contraception is of critical concern” to ACOG, which takes this new research “very seriously.” The group also believes that “a robust evaluation of the study, including the study design,

is necessary to accurately interpret the findings and reach conclusions. This should include consideration of other factors that have significant impact on the findings, including family history of breast cancer for both pre- and postmenopausal women, stage of disease, and morbidity or mortality from the breast cancer diagnosis.” He continues, “Likewise, as the primary purpose of contraception is to prevent pregnancy, it’s vital that the study compare outcomes for women using hormonal contraception to outcomes for pregnant women,” in

order to create a complete picture of the risks attendant on both eventualities. He says this is particularly useful in recognizing that in some instances, “hormonal contraception, risks and all, may be essential to preventing pregnancy in women with high-risk co-morbidities.” Ultimately, Zahn says that the best thing for patients feeling concerned about these new findings is to speak with their own provider to “help them make informed decisions that weigh both the risks of pregnancy and the risks associated with hormonal contraception.” **Yahoo**

JK Rowling defends Depp casting after fan backlash

British author J. K. Rowling has said she is “genuinely happy” with Johnny Depp’s casting in the upcoming “Fantastic Beasts” film after fans called for his replacement over domestic abuse allegations. The US actor, who plays villain Gellert Grindelwald in the Harry Potter spin-off, had been accused of physical abuse by his former wife Amber Heard during divorce proceedings. But actress Heard withdrew the allegations last year when the pair reached an out-of-court settlement to end their marriage. Angry fans had demanded Depp’s lead role be recast in the Warner Bros film “Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald”, to be released in November 2018. “Harry Potter fans had legitimate questions and concerns about our choice to continue with Johnny Depp in the role,” Rowling said late Thursday in a statement on her website. The author said she and director David Yates had considered finding another actor for the role after the backlash on social media, but had decided to respect the

circumstances of Depp and Heard’s divorce. “The agreements that have been put in place to protect the privacy of two people, both of whom have expressed a desire to get on with their lives, must be respected,” she said. “Based on our understanding of the circumstances, the filmmakers and I are not only comfortable sticking with our original casting, but genuinely happy to have Johnny playing a major character in the movies.” However, not all of Rowling’s fans accepted the decision, with many expressing their frustration on Twitter, where the writer has 13.6 million followers and often interacts with her fans. One fan branded the decision “massively disappointing”, while another called it “unacceptable”. The film is a sequel to “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them”, also directed by Yates, which was released last year. Both are part of a five-part series set in the same world as the Harry Potter books and films, but decades earlier. **AFP**

Ballon d’Or: The candidates to follow Ronaldo and Messi



Kevin De Bruyne

It may seem unfair, but De Bruyne’s bid for glory is hampered by his lack of goals. The dominance of the current top two has raised the bar in terms of attacking output - setting up chances for others helps, but scoring yourself for a successful side clinches the deal. At least the Belgian is at a club with lofty ambitions, as Manchester City look capable of becoming a European superpower with Pep Guardiola at the helm.



Eden Hazard

Hazard has dazzled in the Premier League with Chelsea, helping his club secure the title twice while being named in the PFA Team of the Year in four of his five seasons in England. However, for all his brilliance in a blue shirt in recent years, the Belgian is yet to crack the top six in the Ballon voting in his career. Consistently linked with Real Madrid, the 26-year-old may feel a move to one of the big two in Spain might boost his chances of claiming the honour.

Paulo Dybala

While Dybala is a key figure for Juventus right now, his Ballon d’Or hopes in the long run rely on the opportunity to replace Messi in the Argentina team. Still, at 24, there’s no need for the forward to panic. Helping the Bianconeri reach the Champions League final last season helped raise Dybala’s profile, while he started the current Serie A campaign with a blistering spell of 10 goals in six games. If he can maintain that hot streak over an extended period, voters will be forced to take notice.



Neymar

Viewed by many as the third best player in the world right now, Neymar is the obvious choice here. The Brazilian, who finished third in 2015 and fifth last year before returning to the top three in 2017, is no longer in the shadow of Messi at Barcelona, with his world-record transfer to Paris Saint-Germain allowing him to break out on his own. The forward’s move outside of Spain should allow him to make a stronger case to win the trophy too, even if Ligue 1 is viewed as a step down from La Liga.



Kylilan Mbappe

A team-mate of Neymar’s at PSG, teenager Mbappe burst onto the scene last season with his exploits for Monaco and has settled in quickly to life in the French capital. He admitted in October that he still has “a lot of steps to go” to be considered a serious contender for the Ballon d’Or, but the talented teenager has time on his side to outlast not just Messi and Ronaldo, but also the other names included on this list.

I'LL RECLAIM GOLDEN BOOT - WALTER

By Nyambe Lubasi
Nkana striker Walter Bwalya says he is hungry to reclaim the FAZ Super Division Golden Boot in 2018 after failing to repeat his 2016 top scorers feat when he scored 23 goals. Walter finished the 2017 season on 12 goals, nine behind his DR Congo compatriot Chris Mugalu of Lusaka Dynamos. His challenge for the 2017 top scorers award was hit after his two month long ban following is illegal transfer from his former DR Congo club to Forest Rangers over two years ago before joining Nkana from the latter initially

on loan in July, 2015. "My target was to score 30 goals but you know what happened when I missed 12 games," Walter said. "I have never give up whatever I go through or thrown at me in my life. If I had played them all, it would have been different but next year I

will work harder on my target." But Walter added that the consolation was seeing Nkana qualifying to play continental football in the 2018 CAF Confederation Cup. Nkana finished 3rd to qualify for the CAF Confederation Cup together with Green

Buffaloes who ended the 2017 season in 4th place. Champions Zesco United and runners-up Zanaco will compete in the 2018

CAF Champions League. "Our our mission this year was to play either Champions League or Confederation Cup

and we will play in the Confederation Cup. We are happy about that and ready for it and will hold our own," said Walter.



Nkana Striker Walter Bwalya Binene looks forward to continental football

Mopani unveils 4-year deal for Zambia Open

By Nyambe Lubasi
Mopani Copper Mines has announced a four-year deal to sponsor the Zambia Open Golf Tournaments. The deal for an unspecified sum will see Mopani extended his relationship with the Zambia Open until 2021. Mopani has been the headline sponsor of three editions of the Zambia Open Golf Championships starting in 2014, 2015 and 2017. "As Mopani and Red Path, we would like to appreciate the confidence the ZGU have in us by allowing us to take up the sponsorship for four years. To this end,

we pledge to work towards making the tournament a resounding success once again," acting Mopani Chief Executive Officer Chris Vermeulen said. Meanwhile, Zambia Golf Union President Jason Kazilimani said Mopani's long-term relationship with golf was testament that they were all-weather friends to the sport. "We are very happy as a Union because it's very difficult to find sponsors in these economic times," Kazilimani said. Kazilimani also made a plea for other sponsors to come on board and help develop junior golfing in Zambia.

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