



HOW K31M WAS STOLEN AT ZAMPOST

Auditor General says the money vanished with no bank records

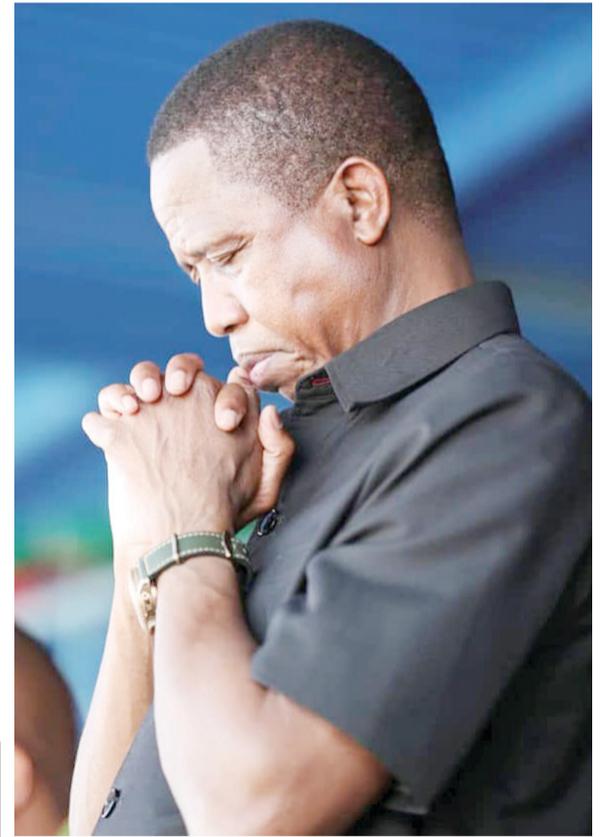
By Joseph Mwenda

The latest Auditor General's Report has revealed how over K30 million disbursed to ZAMPOST to pay 144, 142 poor and vulnerable citizens under the Social Cash Transfer programme did not reach the beneficiaries but instead vanished with no banking records of deposits in the ZAMPOST accounts. Meanwhile the Auditor General has revealed how the Zambia Army spent millions to procure utility vehicles which were never delivered. The Report further details how the University of Zambia paid over K19 million in meal allowances to over 3,800 students who are not on the government bursary programme.

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The combined defence choir performs during the National Day of Prayer in Lusaka; right, President Edgar Lungu joins in worship at Railways Grounds in Kabwe yesterday.



We can't abandon borrowing, allow Lungu to borrow more for the economy – Malozo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Muchinga Province Minister Malozo Sichone says it is suicide to abandon borrowing at this stage because many economic sectors need investment for

them to make returns.

And Sichone has appealed to Zambians to support President Edgar Lungu and allow him to borrow enough for this country.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs Minister Stephen Kampyongo says Chishimba Kambwili should avoid breaking the law because he faints when the same law visits him.

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Roll call at Day of Prayer annoys civil servants

By Mirriam Chabala

JAWUZ president Peter Mwale says it is unacceptable for government to conduct a roll call at the National Day of Prayer just to ensure that civil servants were in attendance. On Tuesday, Kabwe DC Dominic Mulenga extended an invitation letter to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in which civil servants were urged to attend the prayers at Godfrey Chitalu Stadium without fail, warning that a roll call would be conducted at the prayers.

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By Abraham Kalito and
Stuart Lisulo

KPMG, the globally-renowned audit, tax and advisory services firm, has warned that government's insistence to introduce Sales Tax next April will create uncertainty in the Zambian economy, which would be very injurious to business.

And KPMG says government should not have introduced the scheme three months into a financial year as its implementation and administration will be a huge challenge as well as a nightmare to companies.

Meanwhile, Consumer Trust Unity Society (CUTS) coordinator Chennai Mukumba noted that the Sales Tax roll out would have a negative impact on lower-income consumers.

Last month, Mwanakatwe told Parliament that government intends to abolish the Value Added Tax (VAT) and replace it with a non-refundable Sales Tax, which, according to her, is simpler to implement.

Government proposes to introduce the sales tax on April 1, 2019, in a bid to avoid paying VAT refunds, especially to mining companies, who demanded close to US \$1 billion, thereby straining government coffers.

Speaking during an Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ)-British Chamber of Commerce-organized public discussion in Lusaka, KPMG tax partner Michael Phiri cautioned government against rolling out Sales Tax next year because it will bring uncertainty in the local economy, which would be "very injurious" to business.

"My first remark would be, uncertainty is very injurious to business; tax

KPMG warns against Sales Tax implementation

systems need to create certainty if we are to promote investment as a country. And to have measures announced, the rate not known, the scope not known...all we know is that, it is going to take effect on 1st April [2019]. Essentially, it stalls business activity until certainty is created," Phiri told a packed auditorium at Pamodzi Hotel in his concluding remarks, Tuesday evening. "No investor would want to invest and put money in an uncertain environment; so, the quicker we create certainty, the better."

He stressed on the need for government to dialogue with all stakeholders before they rush to implement the controversial Sales Tax.

"My second intimation would be that, dialogue doesn't mean that you lose your final authority; it doesn't demean anybody if they dialogue, you don't lose your ministerial portfolio if you engage and listen to people. It's important that we dialogue and hear what the complaints of the people are and be able to listen," Phiri advised.

"I would regret to be a Minister of Finance who passes a bill today and only have to reverse it six months down the line."

Earlier, during a keynote presentation, Phiri said the Sales Tax was a trial and error scheme by government, adding that the scheme could backfire terribly and cause the economy to collapse

completely.

"But the [Finance] Minister [Margaret Mwanakatwe] has indicated that Sales Tax is coming whether we like it or not. It reminded me of another meeting that was held here where the then Minister of Finance, ABC (Alexander Bwalya Chikwanda), and I was making an indication to him that the proposal to increase MRT (Mineral Royalty Tax) to 20 per cent wasn't just going to work because the mines will not continue to operate. And then I was labelled a 'Trojan Horse,' but I was vindicated six months later," Phiri recalled.

He outlined that Sales Tax was a mistake by government because it would cause a cascading effect, which would force an increase in the tax rate and the cost of production.

"We have had Sales Tax before and it had problems, which were cured by VAT. And, essentially, we are going back to where we were. And so, why it matters is that this tax gets directly to the consumer on purchase on non-exempt goods. The problem is that, it grows with time and it can increase the cost of doing business and we know that they are trying to exempt some institutions," Phiri said.

"This is really another trial and error that could back fire and cause the economy to collapse! The other thing they should consider is the increased cost of doing

business across sectors. Because I'm sure that they have not considered the impact that this sales tax can have on companies that are currently contributing cooperation tax at 35 per cent. Because when you have all your costs, including Sales Tax and if your level is high enough, then you cannot expect that companies that are making any profits will continue to make any profit. So, they need to consider the increased cost that this will have across all sectors. The other thing they should consider is that, Sales Tax will only address that VAT problem; it will not address tax compliance. I do think that they need to make their recent measures in terms of CCTV's, TPIN's, just all those things that we want them to do to broaden the tax base."

And Phiri said government should not have introduced the scheme three months into a financial year as its implementation and administration would be a huge challenge as well as a nightmare to companies.

"In a nutshell, the problem with Sales Tax is that if you are a wheat farmer, and those who administer VAT know that wheat is standard-rated, and so, the intimation now is that all standard-rated products will be subject to Sales Tax. And so where we have a problem is that, if you are a wheat farmer, they will expect you to pay sales tax on that wheat.

And primarily, you will be selling your wheat to a miller, and that miller, too, is expected to charge Sales Tax. And that miller will not consume the milled wheat, they will look to add value added to that milled wheat and sell it to a bakery; and the bakery when they are selling that bread and buns they are expected to charge Sales Tax. And then, you move from the bakery and you know they will not sell to individuals. They will redistribute these through supermarkets; they, too, will be expected to charge Sales Tax. And then, now, you have the people who are selling in the retail shops also charging Sales Tax on the consumer," narrated Phiri.

"So, when you look at that cascading effect, and the impact it will have on the consumer, like you and me, it just goes towards increasing that cost significantly. So, we had a problem with this proposed sae tax because of its potential to cascade the Sales Tax rate to much higher rates as a result of its non-exemption mechanism. Maybe they will allow for some exemption, some certificates, but going by the way they had challenges in administering issues like withholding VAT, which provides for those certificates, it doesn't inspire much hope that the Sales Tax system will be able to work. It's a bigger cost, it causes tax on tax, it

increases costs, it neglects investment in a country. VAT remains the best tax system in the country, but since the Minister is hell-bent on introducing Sales Tax, what we are proposing to them is that they must consider, you cannot change such a significant tax midstream three months into a financial year because we know that system implementation is a challenge and I am sure that it is even for the Zambia Revenue Authority. And to have it happen in the middle of the year creates a nightmare for business because not all businesses trade in two, three goods, some have several lines."

Meanwhile, Mukumba noted that the Sales Tax would have a negative impact on businesses and low-income consumers.

"What we would see is this cascading effect, which would have some of the most direct impacts on consumers. Given some of the issues that we are dealing with; the poverty, inflation, [it] would have negative effects, particularly lower-income consumers," said Mukumba.

While the EAZ sent out an invitation to government, no official was present to speak on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and to answer and explain the pending Sales Tax proposal.

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By Abraham Kalito

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has called for absolute restraint from any form of extra-judicial action against Political Commentator Chilufya Tayali during future court sessions, saying such action are against the rule of law.

Tayali was exposed to physical harassment, Wednesday, by suspected UPND cadres on his way to answer to criminal charges after being sued by UPND president Hakainde Hichilema.

HRC spokesperson Mweelya Muleya condemned the harassment of Tayali adding that perpetrators of violence exhibited some level of intolerance and lacked self-restraint as expected in a multi-party democracy.

“The Human Rights Commission (HRC) condemns the harassment of Economic and Equity Party (EEP) president, Mr. Chilufya Tayali, by some suspected United Party for National Development (UPND) sympathisers at the Lusaka Magistrates Court Premises where he had gone for a Court Session on 17th October 2018. However, the Commission hasten to salute the Zambia Police Service for their alertness and quick protection of Mr. Tayali from further punishment by guaranteeing him his right to personal security. The harassment and roughing up of Mr. Tayali within the court premises, which resulted in tearing

HRC comes to Chilufya Tayali's defence after his beating at court

up of his jacket, was deeply regrettable and must be condemned as an act of lawlessness that should not be allowed in a democratic country such as Zambia. Mr. Tayali had been sued by the UPND President, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, for alleged criminal defamation and he had lawfully gone to answer to the charges as directed by the court. It was therefore regrettable that he was almost physically manhandled, and his clothes torn before the Police rescued

him,” he said.

“After speaking to some of the eye witnesses, including some UPND sympathisers and Mr. Tayali himself as a victim, the Commission is of the view that the perpetrators of violence against Mr. Tayali exhibited some level of intolerance and lacked self-restraint as expected in a multi-party democracy. The Commission is therefore calling upon all those who may be aggrieved by the alleged utterances and actions of Mr. Tayali

to refrain from taking the law into their own hands but exercise patience and allow the law to take its own course. Suing the EEP President was one of the civilised forms of redressing grievances in a democracy. To this effect, it is important to allow justice to take its course uninterrupted by any form of human rights violation such as physical, psychological or verbal abuse of either parties and/or their agents or witnesses.”

He said the violence

against Tayali has potential to undermine a conducive environment for protection of human rights and freedoms.

“Mr. Tayali, like any other individual, has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law through the courts of the law. Therefore, those aggrieved by either his utterances or action should not take any slightest opportunity to arbitrarily punish him because that would be a violation of his constitutional rights. The

Commission, therefore, calls for absolute restraint from any form of extra-judicial action against Mr. Tayali during future court sessions because such action would be incompatible with respect for the rule of law, human rights and constitutionalism. The Commission is against any form of breach of law and order such as violence because it has potential to undermine a conducive environment for protection of human rights and freedoms.”

Zambians won't spare PF in 2021 – Musenge

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

National Democratic Congress (NDC) secretary general Mwenya Musenge has warned the PF government that Zambians will not spare them for making critical decisions such as the purchase of expensive aircraft without engaging them.

This follows an announcement by

Ministry of Defence Permanent Secretary Stardy Mwale that the Ministry, through the Zambia Air Force (ZAF), purchased five planes and explained that one of the planes would be used for VVIPs, one for maintaining airspace and monitor poaching, while the other three would be used for commercial purposes.

Mwale, however, rubbished the Africa Confidential exposé, which revealed that the Zambian government had gotten a US \$400 million loan to procure an anti-missile VIP jet for the Head of State, but admitted that the defence modernisation committee had been investing in the latest military aircrafts to replace the old fleet.

But in an interview, Musenge warned that Zambians will not spare the PF for going ahead in purchasing extravagant aircrafts without seeking approval from the masses.

“It was a misplaced thought and a misplaced priority and I think on this one, government has missed it. If they purchased them, they have probably gotten a loan to purchase those planes. The truth of the matter is that the Zambian people will not spare them for doing that because they have just exhibited huge levels of arrogance towards their masters who happen to be the Zambian people who elected them. And, definitely, 2021 is not very far, they may exercise so much power and think they are masters over their masters, but time will soon catch up with them,” Musenge warned.

He observed that government had misplaced priorities.

“You know, the problem that we have is when you have leaders who think that they were just elected for themselves and forget that they are answerable to the people that elected them. The problem that we are experiencing as a nation has been because those who know that they

should be in government have opted not to engage their masters who happen to be the Zambian people in very important decisions that they make. For example, the purchase of the five air planes that we are hearing about, the purchase of a jet for the President and those other jets for ZAF. We are in a very difficult economic situation where our current leaders who are purchasing such expensive machines are calling for austerity measures of managing the country. How do you expect the Zambian people to support you?” wondered Musenge.

“On one side, you are saying, ‘things are not okay’ and then on the other side, you continue contracting huge debts on behalf of the Zambian people and yet we all know that such debts will affect the majority of the Zambian people, including the unborn children. So, for me, government has not performed very well and the purchase of those aircrafts needs serious consideration. If anything, they need to be cancelled. You need to inform the Zambians to say, ‘we are doing this, we feel this is extremely important for two reasons.’”



President Edgar Lungu prays during National Day of Prayer Railway Stadium in Kabwe on yesterday - Picture by Salim Henry

Auditor General's report details how Social Cash Transfer money was squandered

By Joseph Mwenda

The latest Auditor General's Report has revealed how over K30 million disbursed to ZAMPOST to pay 144,142 poor and vulnerable citizens under the Social Cash Transfer programme did not reach the beneficiaries and the money vanished before it was even deposited into the ZAMPOST accounts. And the report which covered the year ended December 2017 further reveals millions meant for the Social Cash Transfer money allocated to Luapula and Western Province under a distribution agreement with ZAMPOST were diverted to Copperbelt, Northern and Muchinga Provinces among other areas outside the contract; but it still did not reach the beneficiaries. Meanwhile the Auditor General has revealed how the Zambia Army spent millions to procure utility vehicles which were never delivered. The Report further details how the University of Zambia paid over K19 million in meal allowances millions to over 3,800

students who are not on the government bursary programme. During the period under review, the Ministry of Community Development remitted amounts totalling K109,386,458 to ZAMPOST for payment to scheme beneficiaries to districts in Luapula and Western Provinces only, according to the contract. "It was however observed that for the September/October 2017 Cycle the Ministry remitted funds in amounts totalling K30,947,320 to ZAMPOST for disbursements to North Western, Northern and Muchinga Provinces and Masaiti and Lufwanyama on the Copperbelt which were not included in the contract. In her response dated 14th September 2018, the Controlling Officer stated that having noted that the contract did not adequately cover the provinces in question, the parties signed an addendum on 26th April 2018 after it was cleared by the Attorney General's Office. However, the inclusion of North Western, Northern and

Muchinga Provinces and the two districts on the Copperbelt was done in October 2017 before the addendum was signed," The report revealed. "During the period under review, the Ministry remitted amounts totalling K30,947,320 to ZAMPOST to pay the September/October 2017 cycle to 144,142 beneficiaries in Northern, Muchinga and North Western. However, as at 31st August 2018, ZAMPOST had not paid the beneficiaries and the funds were not accounted for in that there was no evidence of banking and no cash was found on hand. Contrary to the Appropriation Act of 2016, amounts totalling K116,893 meant for Social Cash Transfer Scheme activities were spent on activities such as Grants for juvenile conveyance, purchase of furniture and contribution towards traditional ceremonies among others, activities not related to the purpose for which the funds were appropriated." Under the Ministry of Defence, the report revealed that that the Zambia Army bought

cars which were never delivered. "On 16th July 2017, Zambia Army entered into a contract with a local supplier, Edat Ecosan Development, for the supply and delivery of 15 second hand Toyota Crown motor vehicles at a contract price of K2,400,000 with a delivery period of four to eight 8 weeks from the date the contract was signed. The terms of payment were that the advance payment of 25 per cent of the contract price shall be paid within 30 days of signing the contract, 50 per cent to be paid within 60 days on receipt of the goods and upon submission of the documents, while the 25 per cent balance to be paid within 60 days after the date of the acceptance certificate. On 19th October 2017, the contractor was paid the advance payment of K600,000 being 25 per cent of the contract price. However, as at 31st July 2018, only 10 vehicles had been delivered. In addition, there was no evidence that the Army had taken any action against the contractor

for the failure to deliver the remaining vehicles," reported the Auditor General. "Zambia Army entered into a contract with Razz Exports of South Africa for the supply and delivery of an ambulance at a contract price of K952,018 122 (R1,356,538) with a delivery period of six to eight weeks. On 9th October 2017, the contractor was paid the advance payment of K238,005. However, as at 31st July 2018, the ambulance had not been delivered. In his response dated 17th August 2018, the Controlling Officer stated that the supplier had delivered an ambulance with wrong specifications which was rejected and sent back, and that the supplier had been given up to end of June 2018 to deliver the ambulance. However, as at 31st August 2018, the ambulance had not been delivered." And the report revealed how Maina Soko military Hospital in Lusaka spent over K1.3 million without authority from the Secretary to the Treasury. "An examination of

accounting and other records maintained at the Ministry Headquarters, Defence Services Commands, Maina Soko Military Hospital and Staff Colleges and physical inspections of selected projects carried out in March 2018 revealed the following: On 31st December 2017, Maina Soko Military Hospital had a bank balance of K1,304,589. It was observed that the Hospital had raised cheques between 27th and 30th December 2017 amounting to K1,304,589. Since these funds were committed the Treasury could not mop them at the end of 2017. However, in January 2018, the cheques were cancelled without any apparent reasons and the funds were later utilised without authority from the Secretary to the Treasury," the report read. And the report explained that the University of Zambia billed government for funds paid to students who were not in the bursary data base. "A comparison of the invoices from UNZA for sponsored students to the database of Bursaries Committee supported students revealed that 3,568 students were appearing on the UNZA invoice but not on the bursaries list of Government supported students. As a result, the University over billed Government in amounts totalling K71,082,937 for the 3,568 students. In addition, it was observed that there were 3,191 students who appeared on the bill but were not on the overall registered GRZ Sponsored students database," revealed the Auditor General. "During the year under review, meal allowances in amounts totalling K19,503,068 were paid to 3,864 students who did not appear on the list of students on the University Invoices. As a result, it was not possible to ascertain whether the payments were made to intended students."

Kambwili asks Lungu, Sikazwe to forgive him

By Zondiwe Mbewe

NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili has asked President Edgar Lungu to forgive him if he has wronged him by accusing him of things he has not done, apart from theft, which he he says is a provable fact. Meanwhile, Kambwili has also apologized to Presidential Affairs Minister Freedom Sikazwe for calling him a witch doctor in Parliament on Tuesday evening, saying the remark was meant to be a light moment in the House. Kambwili was speaking at a press briefing held at his house yesterday. "Let me be the first one to say that, to you, my brother

President Edgar Lungu, if I have wronged you in anyway, today is National Day of Prayer and Reconciliation, I ask for forgiveness. If I have wronged you President Edgar Lungu, forgive me. If I have wronged you, president HH, president Mulongoti, forgive me. And I want also to ask all those I have wronged in one way or the other, that let this day reflect as a genuine day of reconciliation and repentance. I would not go before God to ask for repentance if I do not ask for forgiveness from all the people that I have wronged," Kambwili said. Asked if by asking for forgiveness from President Lungu he was also reversing

the theft accusations against the Head of State, Kambwili insisted that he wasn't withdrawing those sentiments because they were facts. "No, no, no! A thief will always be a thief! If President Lungu has been stealing, I don't withdraw those sentiments and I have no apologies to make. I mean that, if I have hurt him in anyway where he has maybe not done something wrong and I accused him of something he has not done; if I have wronged him in anyway, which, maybe, led to my expulsion from PF, because I don't know what I wronged him for him to expel me from PF, if I had wronged him, I'm

asking for forgiveness. But for stealing, I'm very sure he steals and I have facts, for that I'm not apologizing," Kambwili replied. "And let me also appeal to my brother, Honourable Sikazwe, who almost turned into a boxer two days ago when I, as some kind of light moment, I said he was supposed to be a witchdoctor in some village, he got very upset! To you, my brother also, I say from deep down my heart that I'm extremely sorry if I hurt you. I did not mean any malice or impunity. My words were just meant for a light moment in Parliament. And I also appeal to the other leaders also to ask for forgiveness to all the people that they have wronged."

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Minister of Finance Margaret Mwanakatwe has insisted that the PF government shall not default on any of its debt obligations, adding that to every debt that is being repaid today, a school, health facility, road and market has been built.

And Mwanakatwe says the increase in debt servicing in the 2019 budget is largely driven by infrastructure development projects that government has delivered and is still delivering to Zambians.

Government's spending on serving external debt has drastically leaped to nearly K15 billion in next year's budget, more than double the amount of K7.26 billion allocated in the 2018 budget.

But Mwanakatwe defended the increase in debt servicing delivering a statement on the closure of debate on the 2019 budget speech.

"The Honourable members rightfully observed the projected increase in debt servicing in 2019; let me clarify that, this is largely driven by the infrastructure development projects that the government has delivered and still delivering to our people to enhance public service delivery, as well as unlock economic growth in the various sectors," Mwanakatwe said.

"My colleagues will agree with me that, when the PF government came into power in 2011, this nation had a huge infrastructural deficit. There was, therefore, a serious need to accelerate our investment in this area in order to speed up economic growth. In this regard, this government opted to leverage on resources in the credit market as a quicker, effective model of erecting this much-needed infrastructure." She observed that for every debt that was being repaid by government, there was a school and health facility, among other amenities, that had been built, insisting that government would not default on any of its debt obligations.

"In view of the increase in debt service, government has proposed realignment of some expenditures in the short-term in order to ensure fiscal sustainability. Critical

Mwanakatwe closes budget debate, defends increased debt service allocation

expenditures relating to health, education, water and sanitation and social protection, have been safeguarded. This includes, amongst others, grants to facilitate the operations of schools and hospitals, as well as social safety net," Mwanakatwe added.

And on the increase in this year's allocation in the defence budget, she observed that one of the most prized possessions Zambia had was its reputation for peace and stability, and that it was cardinal to invest in modern defence equipment.

Government has proposed to increase the Ministry of Defence's budgetary allocation next year to around K5.1 billion, from K3.5 billion in this year's budget.

This represents an increase of over K1.5 billion and gobbles around 5.8 per cent of the 2019 national budget, while also more than doubling the allocation for social protection whose funding is only K2.2 billion, down from K2.3 billion allocated in the 2018 budget.

"One of the most prized possessions Zambia has is its reputation for peace and stability. It is cardinal to invest in modern defence equipment to allow the Zambian defence forces to meet the standards required under the UN peace-keeping missions, Mwanakatwe argued.

She said government would continue with institutional capacity-building interventions aimed at modernising tax administration

and strengthening tax compliance.

"I have taken note of the various suggestions regarding the need to enhance domestic revenue mobilisation so that our development path is fiscally sustainable. Revenue mobilisation will remain the cornerstone of this government's inclusive broad-based development. We will continue with institutional capacity-building interventions aimed at modernising tax administration and strengthening tax compliance," Mwanakatwe said.

And she said government would continue to streamline the tax incentive structure to ensure it was sustainable and well-aligned to their development efforts.

She said it was in that context that she had proposed to abolish customs duty rebase for construction of shopping malls.

"In the same vein, government will continue to streamline the tax incentive structure to ensure it is sustainable and well-aligned to our development efforts. It is in this context that I have proposed to abolish customs duty rebase for construction of shopping malls. We shall also continue to put in place measures that are aimed at addressing profit-shifting and tax base erosion. It is for this reason that I have proposed limitation of interest deduction," she explained.

And Mwanakatwe said she had no doubt that the revenue measures she

had proposed in the 2019 budget presented a win-win solution that would secure maximum benefits for the nation.

"I'm pleased to inform the House that Zambia Revenue Authority has already commenced collaboration with local authorities and independent tax agents to assist with broadening of the tax base to the informal sector. Other initiatives, such as the roll out of land titling, will continue so that we can enhance property taxation, as this is one of the most stable sources of public resources. I have no doubt that the revenue measures I have proposed in the 2019 budget present a win-win solution that will secure maximum benefits for our nation," said Mwanakatwe.

We cannot abandon borrowing now, allow Lungu to borrow more for the economy - Malozo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Muchinga Province Minister Malozo Sichone says it is suicide to abandon borrowing at this stage because many economic sectors need investment for them to make returns.

And Sichone has appealed to Zambians to support President Edgar Lungu and allow him to borrow enough for this country. Meanwhile, Home Affairs Minister Stephen Kampyongo says people like Chishimba Kambwili should avoid breaking the law if they know that they faint when the same law visits them.

The duo were speaking when they debated the 2019 national budget in Parliament, Wednesday.

"We have a situation in this country, and this talk about borrowing will continue; we are basically dwarfing the economic development or growth that we have been experiencing all these years. So, are we going to begin to fight middle-way so that we abandon to plan to borrow and invest properly and fully in these

economic sectors? If we are going to abandon at this point, Madam Speaker, that is suicide because some of these sectors will not begin to give us returns. Can we allow this government, let's give this government support, let's give the President of the Republic of Zambia support so that we borrow enough and ensure all economic drivers start to roll so that we start getting returns from these investments," Sichone argued.

He added that President Lungu does not do a lot of press briefings because those are only "talk shows."

"We need to do more than talking and that is why you have seen the President, His Excellency, doesn't even spend time on press briefings because that is talking. Those are talk shows. We are saying can we be serious and start to work. Madam Speaker, I discovered why the opposition will always be the opposition. The opposition is not practical, they simply criticize! Can we bring matters or issues that will help

us grow this economy because once this economy is injected or stimulated, you will discover, Madam Speaker, that the future of this country will be smooth," Sichone added.

And Kampyongo said Kambwili should avoid being a law-breaker if he is not strong enough to face the law.

"And I am surprised today; I hope the Minister of Justice has taken judicial notice of the Honourable member of parliament for Roan who we know as MP for PF [and] today was declaring that is opposition. It's understandable that those who break the law must be brave to face the consequences! But if you break the law and when they visit you, you breakdown, you faint as if you didn't know the consequences...you have heard about witchcraft this afternoon. Madam Speaker, to reduce the investment in law and order to canisters is shameful because here we must be knowledgeable to give accurate information to those that have sent us to this August House," Kampyongo said.

Meanwhile, Kampyongo said that most finance ministers have received pressure from Cabinet if they don't consult on the budget components before presenting it.

"The challenge that we have had, Madam Speaker, and in all the previous ministers of finance will attest to this, is the pressure they get from their colleagues in Cabinet if there is no consultation. The pressure that is mounted on them is what makes them veer off their trajectory. I must also register my disappointment on the hypocrisy that characterised the debate of this motion and it's at a time, Madam Speaker, where we remember former MPs like one MP for Bwengwa, Honourable Highvie Hamududu, because when he stood here this time around to talk about the budget, to analyse the budget, to criticize and to offer solutions, we all said, 'yes, indeed, job well done,' because he was not only criticizing baselessly, but he was criticizing and ensuring that he provided solutions," recalled Kampyongo.

By Mirriam Chabala

People's Party president Mike Mulongoti says cases of theft of public funds will continue increasing in the Auditor General's Report every year because Zambia does not have leaders of integrity to superintend over its resources.

And Mulongoti says he decided to stay away the so-called National Day of Prayer yesterday because he would not have felt comfortable to start seeking God's help over man-made problems.

Commenting on the recently-published Auditor General's report, which has revealed a sharp rise in unaccounted for funds that has increased from K386,000 in 2016 to K31 million in 2017, and misappropriation of funds from K3 million in 2016 to K5 million in 2017, Mulongoti warned that things would only get worse under PF because the current leaders lacked integrity.

The latest Report of the

Zambia has no leadership that can stop theft of govt funds, says Mulongoti

Auditor General was on the Accounts of the Republic of Zambia for the financial year ended December 31, 2017.

"The reason is that when leadership is dishonest, the civil servants are watching what the leadership is doing and they are simply following suit. So, you can't blame them. If they see a corrupt Minister, like what happened to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of General Education (Henry Tukombe), they are learning that all the top officials and politicians are thieves and because

of that...I mean why didn't they do that when Mwanawasa was there? It's because Mwanawasa had integrity and the basis of integrity, everybody followed suit. When you [have] leadership that's got no integrity, it cascades to everybody else. So, the challenge we have is that, who is going to set an example, because the culture of consequence can only be enforced by an upright leader. But if the leader is corrupt and he is a thief, how does he enforce the culture of consequence? Because soon as he does

that, the person punished will turn around and say, 'but you also doing the same things!' So, it weakens your moral standing, and I think that's the challenge that PF is facing," Mulongoti told News Diggers! in an interview.

He advised that the best way out the current situation for the country was to find an interim arrangement where people of integrity got together to look at leadership potential and then clean up the whole system through an election. "In the current circumstances, the current

leadership is unfit to continue to superintend over the resources of this country. The solution is one, to find leadership of integrity; this cannot be done at once by going through the polls because if you go to elections with the same crooks who have amassed so much wealth, they will use the same money to bribe and pay people. The best thing is to find an interim arrangement where people of integrity must get together like we did in 1991 over MMD, get together and look at leadership potential, look at the challenges that are being faced, and on the basis of that, start a cleaning up process first," Mulongoti argued.

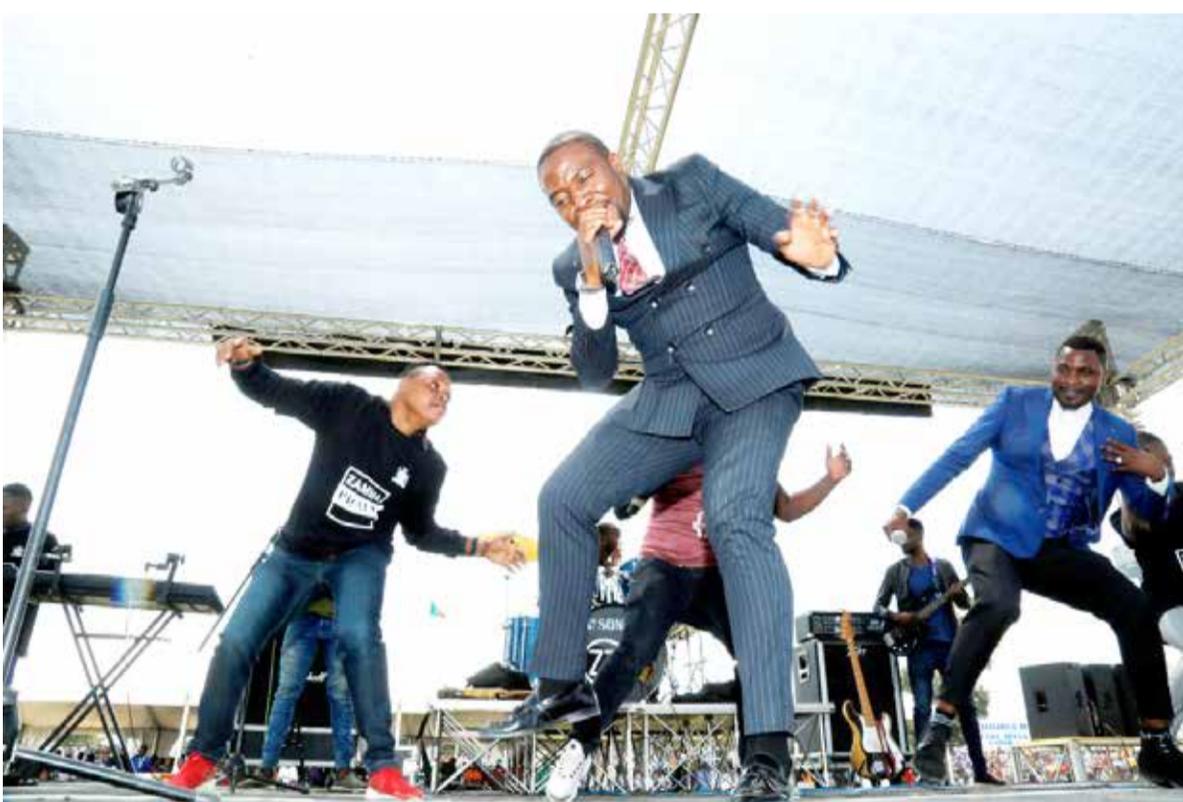
"It's not an election that will clean up the mess, first of all, it's to clean up the process by ensuring that all the crooks and whatever are eliminated and those who need to be prosecuted are prosecuted. Once you've done that, then you can start afresh by saying, 'let us go to elections so that people can have free and fair elections.' You can't have free and fair elections with people who have amassed so much wealth from corruption because they will use the same money to corrupt people, so that's not the solution. We must first target all the criminals and clear them, once that is done, then we can have free and fair elections, and then we can have a decent

government where people can work using honest behaviour and outcomes can then be predicted."

And asked why he had decided to shun the National Day of Prayers slated for October 18, Mulongoti said he did not want to be a hypocrite like those in PF.

"If you look at the subjects for the prayers, they are all man-made. So, I don't think I will feel comfortable to go and ask God to help me sort out problems that we created ourselves; it's a matter of hypocrisy. Honestly, how does God intervene in corruption? How does God intervene in police brutality? All these are issues that we don't need to go to God for, we must do introspection ourselves and ask whether what we are doing is right and go to God and seek for forgiveness quietly on our own. Now, President Lungu is drunk 24 hours every day, is it possible for him to have communication with God in that manner? No! That's hypocrisy," said Mulongoti.

"Most of those guys going there (for the National Day of Prayers) are with hangovers, they will just be dosing the whole time they are there and their minds are elsewhere. No, I cannot be part of that. I know how to pray, I pray at home, I pray at church and that's what's most important. I even hear that Mr Lungu is threatening to dismiss civil servants who won't attend the prayers. Mr Lungu made an instruction for all civil servants to go and pray, I think I heard this on the news, on ZNBC news. But come on! Do you have to force people to go and pray? No! But you see, PF have lost touch and they are now desperate, they are in panic and they think that by doing all those things, it's going to help them. But now, time has caught up with them."



Kings Malembe Malembe and his band performs during National Day of Prayer in Kabwe - Picture by Salim Henry

Speaker must restore decency in the House - Lifuka

By Mukosha Funga

Transparency International Zambia president Rueben Lifuka says Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini must restore decency in the House. And Lifuka says it is high time President Edgar Lungu began to demand for exemplary behavior from members of his Cabinet.

On Tuesday, Presidential Affairs Minister Freedom Sikazwe attacked Roan PF member of parliament in the House after the latter called the former a witch.

But commenting on the fracas in a statement, Lifuka observed that such vigilante behavior was not expected from a minister.

"The recent incident in Parliament which involved a physical altercation between Hon

Chishimba Kambwili and the Presidential affairs Minister- Hon Freedom Sikazwe, is not only sad but an embarrassment to this nation. Our leaders are supposed to be role models who should act with decorum deserving of their positions. This vigilante behavior is not expected from a Cabinet Minister or indeed a Member Of Parliament. It is time that Mr. Speaker brought back the dignity of the House. For far too long, we have witnessed the degrading of morals and values of decency in the House. In this era when parliamentary proceedings are broadcast live, we hear and see so many things that lower the standards of public leadership," Lifuka stated.

"It is shameful to listen to running

commentaries and even the intemperate language at times which does not show respect for one another and underscores the democratic norms of tolerating divergent views. Differences in opinion are to be expected but certainly it will not do for our leaders to resort to physical fights to settle differences."

And Lifuka stated that President Lungu was duty bound to instill discipline in his Cabinet.

"President Lungu is equally duty bound to instill discipline in his Cabinet. It does not reflect well on him when his own Presidential Affairs Minister finds nothing untoward with his conduct and is not remorseful. President Lungu should begin to ask for better and exemplary behavior from the men

and women that are in Cabinet. The insulting language, sarcasm and demeaning language should come to an end. The people of this country did not elect you to go and engage in school boy or party vigilante like conduct- they expect a high level of seriousness and commitment to finding solutions to the many problems that they face. Our ministers and Members of Parliament have no luxury to busy themselves with minutiae. People continue to lose lives as you engage in banter and other irrelevant activities. We demand an apology from both Hon Sikazwe and Hon Kambwili- please take us seriously as the electorate. We are tired of our elected leaders trivalising the problems that the majority of the people face.

We equally want to hear from the Speaker of the House on the measures he is putting in place to restore order in this August body," stated Lifuka.

"People continue to lose lives and yet you find comfort to engage in banter and prattle and now brawling. This kind of behavior is a betrayal of public trust and it is demeaning to the people who are yearning for proper leadership through their representatives. The measure of success of all the MPs at the end of their tenure of office will not be in the number of punches thrown or insults traded- it will be assessed in the improvements in the quality of lives for the people you serve. This should be the central goal of any political leader worth his or her salt."

Our political leaders are running away from addressing national challenges - VJ

By *Miriam Chabala*

Veteran politician Dr Vernon Mwaanga says it is unfortunate that Zambia currently has a crop of political leaders who do not want to sit and talk about the problems the country is facing.

And Dr Mwaanga regrets that the current political leaders do not value the struggle that freedom fighters went through to liberate the country.

Meanwhile, Dr Mwaanga says it is unfortunate that veteran broadcaster Ben Kangwa has died at a time when Zambia's upcoming journalists still had a lot to learn from veterans like him.

In statement, Dr Mwaanga observed that the country has abandoned its "one Zambia one Nation" motto because of some irresponsible and immature politicians who wanted to create divisions

among citizens for their own selfish interests.

"As a freedom fighter, I am disappointed that our vision of 'one Zambia one nation' has been lost in recent years. We seem to have abandoned it in the sense that we no longer share a common future. Leaders are busy promoting divisions among our people, instead of bringing them together. Our people in the townships live in peace and harmony, regardless of ethnicity, but it is irresponsible and immature politicians who want to create divisions among our people for their own narrow selfish interests," Dr Mwaanga stated.

"We cannot have a shared future, for as long as this cancer persists. There is urgent need for a change in the mindset of our new political leaders,

who must embrace all Zambians regardless of where they come from. Zambia is for all Zambians. They are entitled to development from whatever

government is in power, without discrimination. Let the original spirit of development for all be our guiding principle, not just in words, but deeds. Let all Zambians feel that they are part of Zambia and share in the limited resources of our great country. Personal greed, selfishness, looting of national resources by a few, should no longer be tolerated. We fought for the upliftment of the lives of all Zambians and not just a few, who hold power. Sacrifices when required, must be for all, so that together, we can genuinely have a shared future of hope and better lives for all Zambians."

And commenting on the country's upcoming 54th Independence Anniversary, Dr

Mwaanga noted that the current crop of leaders focussed more on denouncing each other and inciting their supporters to attack each other and create instability in the country instead of promoting peace and unity.

"During our time, we talked to the African National Congress (ANC), about everything and that is how we formed the first coalition black government in 1962. In this day and age of dialogue and reconciliation, we have political leaders, who don't want to sit down and talk to each other about the problems facing our country. They seem content to denouncing each other

in the media and inciting their hired supporters to attack each other and create instability in our country. Even the worst of enemies, the United States of America and North Korea, are talking to each other and finding something positive in each other," he observed.

"What is wrong with our current crop of political leaders? Sit down and talk to each other, because that is what a majority of our people want to see. Discuss the many problems facing our people such as poverty, unemployment particularly among young people, political violence, restoration of the rule of law, the constitution, the public order act, declining education standards among others and come up with solutions. This is what leadership is all about. Make us the

freedom fighters who fought so hard and sacrificed so much, feel that our sacrifices were worthwhile. You may not know what we went through or who we are, but that is not important. You may not even invite us for independence celebrations, but that too is not important. Just do the right things for our country and people."

Meanwhile, commenting on the passing of veteran broadcaster, Ben Kangwa, who died on Wednesday night after an illness, Dr Mwaanga said it was sad that the cold hand of death had snatched yet another soul worth emulating from the country's media industry.

"The death of Ben Kangwa came as a shock to many of us. He was a consummate professional broadcast journalist, who observed ethics up to the end of his life. He has gone too soon, because he had a lot to impart to young journalists and broadcasters in terms of objectivity and clarity. He was deep in his analysis of national issues and yet humble. Even when he was being humiliated by his employers from time to time, he suffered in dignified silence and showed no signs of bitterness. He was a gentleman among gentlemen and never failed to rise to challenges he faced from time to time. Once again, the cold hand of death, has robbed our country of a valuable national asset, whose professional accomplishments can at best, only be matched, but certainly not surpassed. Our deepest condolences go to his wife Jayne, the children and grandchildren on their sad loss. We can only ask God to comfort them during this difficult time and give them strength in the full Christian belief, that God's will has been done. May the angels open the gates of Heaven, so that this humble servant, can be granted eternal peace by his creator," mourned Dr Mwaanga.

Attendance roll call at Day of Prayer annoys civil servants

By *Miriam Chabala*

Judicial and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (JAWUZ) president Peter Mwale says it is unacceptable for government to conduct a roll call at the National Day of Prayer just to ensure that civil servants were in attendance. On Tuesday, Kabwe District Commissioner Dominic Mulenga extended an invitation letter to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in which civil servants were urged to attend the prayers at Godfrey Chitalu Stadium without fail, warning that a roll call would be conducted at the prayers.

President Edgar Lungu gazetted October 18 every year as the National Day of Prayer, Fasting, Repentance and Reconciliation. "As Central Province, our National Day of Prayer, Fasting, Repentance and Reconciliation will be held at Godfrey Chitalu Stadium from 06:00 hours to 18:00 hours and will be officiated by His Excellency, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia. The theme for this year's commemoration is 'facing

the future as a reconciled, united and prosperous nation under God's guidance.' In this regard, I request that you make sure all teachers attend this important function a roll-call should be done," instructed Mulenga.

But commenting on the matter in an interview with News Diggers! Mwale said there was no need to force anyone to attend the prayers because Zambians had been praying even before the declaration of October 18, as the National Day of Prayer.

"I don't think it is in order for people to be forced to go and pray! Us, as civil servants, we pray every day. Even before the National Day of Prayers was declared, we were praying to God. We didn't even need the day of prayer ourselves because we have been praying everyday due to the suffering that we go through. We know that it is only God in Heaven who can hear our pleas and cries, so the forcing of everyone to go for prayers is not applicable in the civil service. We can't be forced to pray because we have always been Christians and we have

always been praying. So, on behalf of all civil servants, and especially those in the Judiciary, I can confirm that we pray every day because we suffering and we want our conditions of service to change. Everything is just bad, the cost of living, the cost of fuel, the cost of food, the housing allowance that we are getting, the salaries are very low. So, to us we have been praying to God, even before the National Day of Prayer. And we didn't need anyone to clear it because we have already resolved that we shall believe in the Almighty God," Mwale said.

"Personally I can't go for those prayers and I don't think I will ever attend them because I have always been praying. A genuine Christian prays every day and for us in the Judiciary, we worship God on a daily basis because we know that God commanded the people that believe in him that; 'you shall worship me ceaselessly,' so you don't cease to worship God. I know that people go [to church] on Sundays and Saturdays, but prayer is something that a

genuine Christian should do every day. We pray when we are going for work, we pray when sleeping, we pray when we want to do anything and we praise God for everything he has given to us every day. So, we don't need one special day for prayer because to us, every day is a special day in the Judiciary and in the civil service."

He insisted that government was mocking God by inviting citizens in prayer when the country had so many unresolved issues.

"Let us not mock God here, I mean, what does it amount to for us to go out there and pray and fast because it's National Day of Prayer, Fasting and Reconciliation, yet we have so many issues that we haven't resolved as a nation? Civil servants are getting peanuts for their salaries and they cannot even take care of their families properly, then this nation is just divided politically. And then, today, you want people to come and join in prayers? The same people whose cries you don't want to listen to? It doesn't work that way," said Mwale.

We would like to start by acknowledging the humility of the American Ambassador to Zambia His Excellency Mr Daniel Foote. This is not a man who has been very well known to us because he has mostly been loudly silent since he took over office from Mr Eric Schultz. But we have just realised that his deliberate low-key presence in this country has been granting him abundant time to interact with low-key Zambians – the ordinary citizens who usually never have opportunities to meet with such distinguished foreign envoys.

While other diplomats accredited to Zambia have taken off the gloves to trade verbal punches with our government leaders in the fight against corruption and embezzlement of donor aid, Ambassador Foote has been extending his footprint across the breadth of this country, getting to understand the lifestyle and challenges of the local people. But his low profile approach is fast being challenged by the overbearing recklessness of our government. The American Envoy can't shy away anymore from the elephant in the room because Zambia has now just pricked his heart.

Before we talk about the disastrous government decision that has provoked Ambassador Foote to start questioning the reasoning of our leaders, allow us to share with you how this top American diplomat would like Zambians to know him.

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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Temp 8, Alex Chola Road, Nyumba Yanga, Lusaka.
PO Box, 32147. Cell: +26 0965815078/0977708285
Email: editor@diggers.news/mukosha@diggers.news

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Listen to the bonehead from Upstate New York

We learnt about this when he paid a courtesy call on Kabwe Catholic Diocese presiding Bishop Clement Mulenga on Wednesday this week.

"It's wonderful for me to come and see you, and despite my title, I don't consider that, and I don't feel like I am a big deal. I don't like to be treated like I am such a big deal. I am just a regular bonehead from upstate New York who has been very lucky throughout his life," Ambassador Foote said.

"My aunt was a [Catholic] Sister of the Franciscan Order, so whenever I misbehaved as a boy, my mother would send me to the convent for the afternoon and all the sisters would help me to learn how to better behave. I can't say that I have been a wonderful catholic in many years; I do go to church twice a year and that's probably not very much. But I do talk to the big man upstairs privately

very often."

In short, Ambassador Foote was simply saying 'ndine muzungu wapaize, or guy wapaize as we say it in Lusaka. There is nothing special about him and he has his own shortcoming in life. You don't need to reserve him the most comfortable seat when he joins you for a meeting and neither do you have to exaggerate his diplomatic title in an effort to please him. But behind all this humility, we see an exceptionally intelligent bonehead from New York. He has a way of conveying a very firm message without intent to disrespect his subjects.

During that meeting with Bishop Mulenga, the American Envoy had a an entertaining way of bringing up his frustration over the failure by President Edgar Lungu and UPND's Hakaide Hishilema to dialogue and unite a politically torn country.

"We have talked about

political dialogue for over two years now. I told both the President and HH that I would love to see them have dialogue but I got to tell you I don't think I'm a good marriage counsellor so hopefully they will and we will get them together at some point in time but that's more up to them that it's up to us. The church, Civil Society, ZCID, the US Embassy, the Chinese Embassy, the Pope, the Baroness of Scotland, everybody can try to get involved in this process but at the end of the day they are the two guys who need to sit down and have a conversation," Ambassador Foote said.

We don't think the American Envoy is a bad marriage counsellor. In fact, we believe that it's part of his diplomatic training to be a good negotiator and unifier of political rivals. So he knows too well that his counseling skills remain unquestionable, but Mr

Lungu and HH are just about the most arrogant and egoistic Zambian leaders who only listen to themselves. The failures in this case are Lungu and HH, not Ambassador Foote.

Anyway, coming back to the government decision that has baffled the American Envoy. Cabinet has just approved a concession for culling of about 2,000 hippos in the Luangwa River on grounds that the animals are dying from anthrax due to overpopulation. Ambassador Foote is asking one question; 'before you murder those animals under the guise of protecting their species, where is the scientific evidence to prove that indeed a study was done and culling was recommended?' He says there is a science that goes with game cropping and it is not determined by the scarcity of relish in someone's household.

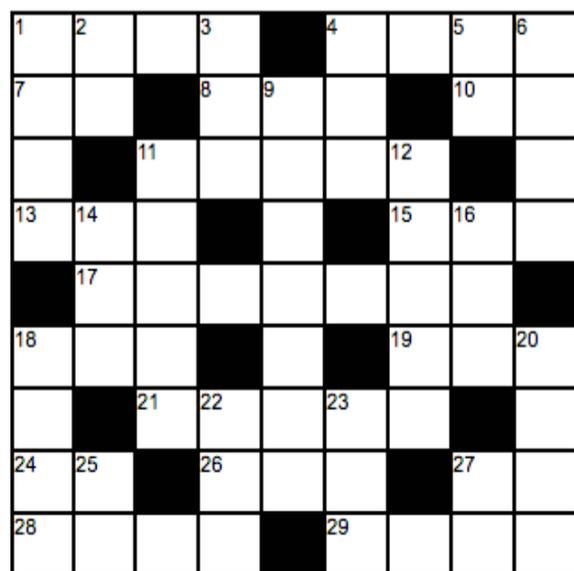
The government of

Zambia must listen to this bonehead from New York because he is not only a strategic envoy to this country, but he is also a passionate conservationist who has been silently mobilizing millions of dollars for Zambia's wildlife sector. This is money our government can never access without his involvement. The hippo culling issue is very close to his heart and he is warning that if the decision is not reversed, he will fold his hands and watch the tourism inflow to Zambia dwindle. This will go down with Zambia's reputation of being a high-ranking and endowed wildlife conservation heritage destination.

But this government doesn't listen to such advice; as long as dollars are involved it's touch and go, no reverse gear. In fact, they are treating this caution from the muzungu community as mere noise that is distracting them from executing their deal with the company awarded a licence to kill our hippos.

Please ba Lungu and your Cabinet, leave the hippos alone. If the Luangwa River has too many hippos, redistribute them to other parts of the country where they will continue to add long-term economic value to Zambia's conservation sector. At least continue bullying and traumatizing us your fellow humans, but spare the hippos because they won't be able to answer back in 2021.

Crossword puzzle 212



Across

1. Dryer traps it
4. Lunch or Supper
7. Advertisement
8. Frozen water
10. __, myself, and I
11. Alarm bell sound
13. Poseidon's domain
15. Color of blood
17. Fitness guru
18. Shake, as a tail
19. Hearing organ
21. Large body of water
24. Sound of surprise
26. Estimated Time of Arrival
27. Present tense of be
28. The Tonight Show's Jay
29. Slangy negative

Down

1. Young lady
2. Identification (abbr.)
3. ___ death do us part
4. Adult males
5. I __, you are, he is
6. Starring role
9. Cupboard
11. Freighters filler
12. Eco-friendly
14. Seventh Greek letter
16. Baseball stat.
18. Made from sheep fur
20. Take a break
22. Chief executive officer
23. Battery size
25. That male person
27. Within

Solutions to puzzle 211



Reader's feedback

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Go to our News Diggers Facebook page, select a story you like and jot down your comment. We will pick that as your feedback and get you published on this page. The shorter the comment the higher the chance of getting published.

Note that we block Facebook users who use abusive language.

Mukanga's utterances on not giving the opposition plots & jobs

Editor,

"Unpatriotic, useless and divisive from a man who once held a ministerial position; no wonder he lost his parliamentary seat to an Independent

lawmaker. What a shame. This kind of attitude is probably the reason why he couldn't run his Ministry effectively and efficiently with such utterances coming from a person like him." - Henry Kazombo

"The fool, how did we end up with such hopelessness? Doesn't he know that land and housing are basic rights?" - Jacob Kanyika

"The divisions, hate and tribalism that PF is sowing in Zambia is really bad and I hope now they will reap what they sow #one Zambia, one nation." - Mutinta Mulonda

"Very sad. That is what is wrong with PF; they forget one day, it will be them with no power. Do they want to be treated like that?" - Musili Nguvu

"So, opposition members are not Zambians? Where is democracy if everyone will support the ruling party? Are we not having National Day of Prayer and Reconciliation on Thursday? And how do such plans reconcile with Christianity and one Zambia, one nation?" - Patson Hanjele

"Sata was a genius, he knew why he called you what he called you; he saw your small brain that does not understand multiparty politics yet you call yourself an engineer! Cry my beloved country!" - Joshua Gladys



AG's Report on increased embezzlement

Dear Editor,

"It's only in PF, that stealing has become a lucrative competition." - Nawa Njekwa

"The lack of corrective action on glaring irregularities as contained in the Auditor General's reports year in, year out, is what sickens me. This systemic failure must be treated with the urgency it deserves. There is no way we can handle public finances in such a casual manner." - Mwape Nkongwe

"No wonder mansions everywhere!" - Kebby Chanda

"Imagine this filthy, corrupt government and they tell us fast?? I'm eating tomorrow." - Bernard Musonda

"It's like they are now competing." - Brian Mweene

"Ba Pompweeee! When are you going to spare our tax payers' money from your appetite to steal??" - Chanda Emmanuel

Sumaili's struggle to explain Religious Ministry's 'milestones'

Editor,

"It's my opinion that this Ministry is fake and useless; it should be done away with!" - Enerst Ngosa

"This Ministry has to be disbanded once we have a new government in place." - Simon Da Kinsman

"I have never heard the Ministry talking about corruption, injustices, condemning violence; always quiet on national dialogue! I wonder who are they serving?" - Munalula Siyawa

"Which values? Any institution of worth does not need to justify itself. People will see for themselves." - Geoffrey Samusungwa

"Don't concentrate on Zodwa; talk about injustices in Zambia." - Mildred Muleba

"Her Ministry should tackle corruption without fear or favour based upon the Auditor and other reports, instead of referring to speeches. Values based on lip service is unacceptable, values should be seen in action." - Kay Mwenya

Harare, Zimbabwe - A new dispensation - a term you hear often on the streets of the capital - a progressive change now resting with Zimbabwe's new President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

The government says it's paving the way with a new mantra geared towards economic and political reforms.

Since the removal of longtime president Robert Mugabe in 2017 - after the military intervened - and July's presidential elections, the

Zimbabwe's new information era

ruling ZANU-PF party says it's been working to relax the rules around traditional and digital media outlets.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

Act, which restricts media freedom and bars foreign correspondents from working in the country full time, was put in place by Mugabe's regime.

The law has gagged the

media and access to information.

Roughly seven million Zimbabweans have access to the internet. Mnangagwa is one of them.

The president is active on social media, interacting with citizens on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

Monica Mustvangwa, the minister of information,

told Al Jazeera a free media is important for a new Zimbabwe.

"Zimbabwe is open for business, we've got everything to benefit from the freedom of press. I think as a country, as a ministry, it's our job that we rebrand Zimbabwe. What we are going to do is maybe look at the legislation and maybe we will use a tooth-comb to brush out what we don't need," Mustvangwa said.

A departure from the past - but not everyone is convinced. **AL JAZEERA**

Uganda 'human-trafficking' arrests after Jordan death

Two people have been arrested in Uganda on human-trafficking charges following the death of a Ugandan woman in Jordan, apparently after her kidneys were removed, police are quoted by local media as saying.

Juliet Nakiyimba, said to be a 31-year-old mother of five, died in Jordan's

capital, Amman, on 4 September, and her body was repatriated to Uganda on 24 September.

"The post-mortem reports confirmed that the deceased's kidneys had been removed - a condition that may have resulted in her sudden death," the police were quoted as saying. **BBC**



Indian police beat a Hindu activist in protests over women's access to a Hindu temple in Kerala. **AFP**

Washington on Wednesday again declined to call China a currency manipulator but said the yuan's fall and Beijing's exchange practices were of "particular concern."

In putting Beijing and five other US trading partners on notice, the US Treasury once more refrained from escalating a fight over China's currency as US President Donald Trump had once pledged to do on the campaign trail.

"Of particular concern are China's lack of currency transparency and the recent weakness in its currency," US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in releasing a twice-yearly report to Congress on how countries manage exchange rates and trade. "These pose major challenges to achieving fairer and more balanced trade and we will continue to monitor and review China's currency

China not manipulating currency but lacks transparency, US says

practices, including through ongoing discussions with the People's Bank of China." In Wednesday's report, the Treasury also said Germany, India,

Japan, South Korea and Switzerland remained on a "monitoring list" of countries whose currency practices required "close attention."

Washington has long

argued Beijing keeps its currency artificially low to make its exports more competitive.

In recent years, however, the yuan or renminbi (RMB) has strengthened

and economists now say it is more in line with China's economic fundamentals.

Still, as US interest rates have risen, the US dollar has strengthened further,

which makes American exports more expensive. The dollar this year is up 6.6 percent against the RMB, which began to weaken substantially in June. **AFP**

A former Nigerian pharmaceuticals executive who was implicated in a BBC investigation into the illegal sale of addictive opioids has been arrested.

Chukwunonye Madubuike was detained west of Lagos, close to the border with Benin, police said.

He went on the run in May after he was filmed illegally selling codeine syrup to an undercover BBC reporter.

Police said he told them he thought he was selling to a genuine businessman and regretted not checking his ID.

Codeine syrup addiction: Nigerian arrested after BBC expose

The BBC documentary exposed the extent of addiction to the codeine-based cough mixture among Nigeria's youth.

Codeine is a painkiller, which is highly addictive and if taken to excess can cause organ failure and trigger schizophrenia.

The Africa Eye film also

exposed the black market practice of selling the medicine to people without a doctor's prescription or a pharmaceutical licence.

Chukwunonye Madubuike was a business development executive with Emzor pharmaceuticals, who sacked him after the film was aired.

Lagos State Commissioner of Police Imohimi Edgal said the arrest was made in the border town of Idiroko in Ogun State. He had been heading to Cotonou in Benin.

He said Emzor had reported Mr Madubuike in May on suspicion of having "knowingly supplied the

controlled drugs to persons who were not supposed to have access to them contrary to" Nigerian law.

Mr Edgal went on to say Mr Madubuike, in his statement, said he was "was only trying to meet his sales target", acknowledged he should have carried out greater checks to verify the identity of the person he was dealing with and "regretted selling controlled substances to unauthorised persons". **BBC**

Female students in Senegal's schools sexually exploited by teachers, HRW says

Fanta was just 16 when she began having sex with her 30-year-old teacher. A year later, she found out she was pregnant by him. The teacher denied he impregnated the student when her father tried to make him accept the pregnancy. Fanta lives in the Sédhiou region of southern Senegal, an area

with high teen pregnancy rates. She abandoned her education as the pregnancy progressed. Fanta is one of the dozens of girls who told rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) that they were coerced into having sex with their teachers in Senegal's secondary

schools. "I felt humiliated in front of my classmates," she told HRW. In a new report titled, "It's Not Normal: Sexual Exploitation, Harassment, and Abuse in Secondary Schools in Senegal," female students -- some as young as 16 years old -- said their teachers lured them

to have sex in exchange for better grades, food, mobile phones, and new clothes. Sixteen-year-old Aïssatou, whom HRW is not identifying by her real name, told the rights group that her teacher lured her to his house. He threatened to lower grades when she refused

his. "One day, he asked me to go to his house. When I went to his house, he offered to give me money and resources. And I told him no. ... He became nasty, (he said) he was not going to give me good grades," she said. Students who got pregnant by their teachers have had

to drop out of school, the advocacy group said. School-related sexual- and gender-based violence is a serious problem in Senegal, HRW said in the report. CNN has put in multiple requests for comment to the ministry of education in Senegal but has yet to receive a response. **BBC**

China has finally announced the opening ceremony for the world's longest sea bridge, which will connect Hong Kong, Macau and the mainland, but critics hit back Thursday over the secrecy surrounding the project. Construction started in 2009 on the 55-kilometre (34-mile) crossing, which includes a snaking road bridge and underwater tunnel, linking Hong Kong's Lantau island to the southern mainland Chinese city of Zhuhai and the gambling enclave of Macau, across the waters of the Pearl River Estuary. It has been dogged by delays, budget overruns, corruption prosecutions and the deaths of construction workers. While supporters promote it as an engineering marvel, others see the multi-billion dollar project as a costly white elephant designed to further integrate Hong Kong into the mainland at a time when Beijing is tightening its grip on the

Hong Kong mega bridge launch announcement sparks backlash

semi-autonomous city. Local media received invites from Beijing's liaison office in Hong Kong

Wednesday to an "opening ceremony" in Zhuhai on Tuesday, with no further details given.

China's President Xi Jinping is reported to be attending the event, but there has been no official

confirmation whether the bridge will go into operation that day. Hong Kong's transport

department had no immediate answer Thursday when AFP asked whether it would be fully commissioned Tuesday. Bus companies supposed to be operating on the bridge complained they were in the dark. "At such short notice and without any details, how can we make the necessary logistic arrangements?" Eddie Choi, a spokesman for coach operator One Bus Hong Kong Macau, told the South China Morning Post. The operator's website lists the schedule and prices for the bus rides, but a staff member said the transport bureau had not confirmed the opening date with the firm and information about ticketing was not yet available.



Activists in Argentina wear the "Handmaid's Tale" costume in August 2018 to protest the legalization of abortion. AFP

Brazil: Temer's lawyers attempt to block corruption charges

Lawyers for Brazil's President Michel Temer have asked the country's top court to annul a federal police report that recommended he and his close associates be charged with corruption and their assets confiscated. Police have been investigating Temer for allegedly taking bribes in return for helping shape a decree regulating Brazil's ports, and in particular for extending concessions in the port of Santos to benefit companies owned by close associates. Temer maintains his innocence. He has faced several corruption allegations but is immune from prosecution while in office, unless the Supreme Court decides to strip his immunity.

The president's defence team argued that the federal police should not be able to charge Temer without the authorization of the Supreme Court or the public prosecutor's office. Temer's term - during which he has become one of the most unpopular Brazilian presidents in decades - ends on January 1, and with it his immunity from prosecution. Congress voted twice last year to block Temer from standing trial in the Supreme Court on three corruption charges levelled against him. The federal police report recommended that Temer, his daughter Maristela, former adviser

Rodrigo Rocha Loures and eight others face charges and have their assets confiscated for their role in allegedly laundering bribes through real estate transactions. Carlos Marun, Brazil's minister of government, said on Wednesday that Temer, who took office in 2016 after former President Dilma Rousseff was impeached, was "outraged and shaken" by the police report. Supreme Court Justice Luis Roberto Barroso, who is overseeing the case, said on Tuesday he would wait to see the findings of Brazil's public prosecutors office before deciding on how to proceed. **AL JAZEERA**

An official from the mainland-based bridge authority told AFP the bridge would be "considered open" from Tuesday and confirmed there would be access that day to registered cars and buses, but did not elaborate. The China Daily newspaper cited a source familiar with the matter saying the bridge would be open to traffic later in the day, after the opening ceremony. Pro-democracy lawmaker Kwok Ka-ki who sits on the Hong Kong government's transport panel said he only learned of the launch ceremony from media reports Wednesday and had not received an invite to the opening. **AFP**

Time for women to sexualise men says TV star Rae

Rising US star Issa Rae held her hand up Wednesday to sexualising men in her hit television series "Insecure", saying it was time for the "female gaze" to have its day. The African-American writer and producer, who first broke through playing herself in the cult YouTube series "Awkward Black Girl", admitted she was all for the camera lingering longer on the glories of the naked male.

"Men are more sexualised in the series because we are seeing this through the female lens," she told TV executives at MIPCOM, the world's top entertainment showcase in Cannes, where she picked up its "Personality of the Year" award.

"When I am in the act myself I don't say, 'Ooh! Look at my body!' You are seeing what I see, what I am looking at. It is all very intentional. We are all always seeing titties and ass on screen, this is an opportunity to reverse that." Rae, 33, admitted that her mother, "a good Christian woman", squirms when she watches parts of her HBO series.

"She hates it. The bad language, the sex... She'll say, 'Why did I even bother with parental control and having you not watching R-rated movies if you grow to make the things that you weren't allowed to watch?'" She was particularly shocked by "the threesome gone wrong experience in season two," Rae revealed. "She called me after to say, 'You are basically making porn!'"

But Rae said she makes no apologies for "telling the truth" or seeing the world

through the eyes of black women.

"What attracts people is we

are telling the truth," she argued.

Nor is she afraid of

exploring everyday racism in a world "whose default is white", she said.

"There is an idea that no one wants black women, that we are not considered desirable. Whether it is a myth or not it is something that permeates the world of dating.

"We are living it. Our writer's room is mostly black women... although there is one white guy. We are always telling him, 'Now you can see what it is like for us,'" she joked.

Which is why she was so surprised to discover that 60 percent of her audience are white.

"That threw me way off," she declared.

"That must mean that even white people are tired of only watching white people and seeing everything from their point of view."

Rae said she grew up in the 1990s watching lots of shows with black characters but that was "wiped away by reality TV". AFP



On Day 3 of their visit Down Under, Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, flew from Sydney to Melbourne, taking a walk to Government House and meeting members of the public along the way. USATODAY

Swift took to Instagram Wednesday morning to give her followers some words of wisdom about voting early in the upcoming midterm elections, continuing to use her platform to advocate for being politically active.

"Something I wish I knew about when I was 18 and voting for the first time: EARLY VOTING," Swift wrote in the caption on her Instagram post. "It

Taylor Swift teaches fans how to vote early in Instagram post

makes it so quick and easy to go and cast your vote before November 6."

She continued, giving fans information about how to vote early in her home state of Tennessee, writing, "Early voting starts TODAY in

Tennessee and goes to Nov 1."

The Taylor tips didn't stop there, though. Swift provided her Instagram followers with the link to the Vote.org early voting calendar, pointing them in the direction to

the link in her caption.

"You can check out your state's early voting dates at the link in my bio," she wrote.

Something I wish I knew about when I was 18 and voting for the first time: EARLY VOTING.

It makes it so quick and easy to go and cast your vote before November 6. Early voting starts TODAY in Tennessee and goes to Nov 1

You can check out your state's early voting dates at the link in my bio.

Swift, who previously kept her political leanings notoriously private, made a rare political statement on social media earlier this month, denouncing Republican incumbent Marsha Blackburn and endorsing Democrat Phil Bredesen in the Tennessee Senate race.

Her statement sparked a major uptick in voter registration, inspiring 65,000 people to register to vote, according to Vote.org. However, her political post drew the ire of President Donald Trump, who tweeted that he likes "Taylor's music about 25% less now."

USATODAY

Hailey Baldwin reveals she wants to have kids with 'incredible' beau Justin Bieber

For Hailey Baldwin, it's a "No Brainer" why Justin Bieber is so amazing.

"He is incredible," she lauded in an interview with Harper's Bazaar published Tuesday. "He crushes everything. Every song, every feature."

Clearly in awe of her reported husband, the new face of Tommy Hilfiger and "Drop the Mic" co-host added: "It's crazy to see what he does. I'm always blown away."

And in case you were wondering if the two were going to have baby, baby, babies, it seems Baldwin is certainly set on having children.

"I want more (tattoos), but I'm keeping space for my kids' names, and certain sentimental things, and I don't want to fill all the cute spots before ... I get there."

Baldwin said her whirlwind romance with Bieber has catapulted her brewing career into the national limelight: "Over the past year ... I've had more attention on me than I've ever had in my life."

TMZ first reported the news that Bieber, 24, and Baldwin, 21, got engaged in the Bahamas in July after years of on-again, off-again dating rumors.

The "Love Yourself" singer declared his

love for Baldwin and confirmed their relationship status a couple days after he got down on one knee: "Was gonna wait a while to say anything but word travels fast, listen plain and simple Hailey I am soooo in love with everything about you!"

Despite numerous media outlets who reported the couple said "I do," Baldwin assured everyone in September that she and Bieber aren't hitched yet.

"I understand where the speculation is coming from, but I'm not married yet!" the model said in a now deleted tweet.

USATODAY

New mom Cardi B got real about childbirth and motherhood when she stopped by "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" on Wednesday. Not only is adjusting to motherhood in the limelight a challenge, she said, but giving birth baby Kulture hurt way more than she expected.

"I don't want to show my baby out to the public right now," the "Bodak Yellow" rapper told Kimmel. "I just want to protect her. I'm not mentally ready, so it's just like paparazzi be everywhere, even in my (expletive)."

She added, "I would like to do normal things with my baby, but right now I gotta keep it very low-key," she said.

As for those normal activities, she said, "I want to go to the beach with my baby, I want to take a stroll down the street with my baby, and I can't because I don't know who's next to me and who has certain intentions."

And then there was the physical impact of giving birth, which Cardi B admitted she wasn't quite prepared for.

Cardi B: 'I don't want to show my baby to the public right now'

When Kimmel asked her if giving birth was easier or harder than

she thought it would be, she confessed that it was "totally harder" and said

that baby Kulture "broke" her. "Nobody told me they

were going to stitch my vagina," she said. "People just be like 'Oh, you know

when you give birth, it's going to hurt; but nobody tells you."

The delivery room was packed to welcome daughter Kulture when Cardi gave birth. Husband Offset, sister Hennessy Carolina, her publicist, her parents and mother-in-law were all on hand for the arrival of the baby.

Pain and paparazzi aside, Cardi told Kimmel that she loves being a mom.

"It's the best," she said. "It's like 'Oh my gosh, should have had you when I was a teenager! This is what I've been missing my whole life? I love you.'"

Not as great for the 26-year-old mom? Kulture already has Cardi's "feisty" attitude. "I be like 'Oh snap, I already see it coming,'" she said, joking that the three-month-old is "very demanding." *USATODAY*



Keira Knightley bans daughter from watching some Disney films

Keira Knightley says she has banned her three-year-old daughter from watching Disney films whose portrayal of women she disagrees with.

Eddie Knightley Righton is not allowed to watch Cinderella or Little Mermaid.

Knightley told Ellen DeGeneres that 1950's Cinderella "waits around for a rich guy to rescue her. Don't! Rescue yourself. Obviously!"

She said of Little Mermaid: "I mean, the songs are great, but do not give your voice up for a man. Hello!" The actress added: "And this is the one that I'm quite annoyed about because I really like the film. I love The Little Mermaid! That one's a little tricky - but I'm keeping to it."

Knightley, who starred in another Disney franchise, the Pirates of

the Caribbean, said not all Disney films were barred from her home.

Finding Dory, which was voiced by DeGeneres, "is a big favourite" and "Frozen is huge, Moana is totally fine."

Knightley is currently promoting a Disney film of her own, The Nutcracker and the Four Realms, in which she plays the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Kristen Bell, who played

Disney princess Anna in Frozen, has also waded into the debate on Disney and feminism.

She told Parenting Magazine that Snow White sends the wrong message about consent to children.

She spoke about her daughters Lincoln, five and Delta, three and said: "Every time we close Snow White, I look at my girls and ask, 'Don't you think

it's weird that Snow White didn't ask the old witch why she needed to eat the apple?"

"Or where she got that apple?"

She added: "Don't you think that it's weird that the prince kisses Snow White without her permission?"

"Because you can not kiss someone if they're sleeping!"

Disney's more recent

representations of heroines now include the trailer for Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2, which comes out in November, and includes Bell's Frozen character Anna.

It features a joke between one of the newest Disney princesses, Vanellope von Schweetz and the likes of Alice, Sleeping Beauty and Pocahontas.

Rapunzel sarcastically says

to Vanellope, "Do people assume all your problems got solved because a big, strong man showed up?" Vanellope replies, "Yes!! What is up with that?"

The scene also features some of the most recent additions to the Disney Princess world, including Merida from Brave, Elsa from Frozen and the 21st century version of Tiana from The Princess and the Frog. *BBC*

Two 'Love & Hip Hop' stars arrested in separate Atlanta incidents

Two stars of this past season of VH1's "Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta" have been arrested in separate incidents in metropolitan Atlanta.

Atasha Chizaah Jefferson, known as Tommie Lee, was arrested Tuesday on assault and child cruelty charges. Citing a Smyrna

police warrant, WSB-TV reports the 34-year-old shoved her child's head into a locker at a middle school.

She was released on bail Wednesday. Cobb County

detention records indicate she was arrested again that night on charges including aggravated stalking. It's unclear what those charges concern. Jail records didn't list an

attorney. WSB-TV reports 30-year-old Erica Mena was arrested Oct. 12 on marijuana possession charges after an argument with her boyfriend,

Clifford Dixon. Johns Creek police records indicate Dixon was charged with criminal trespassing. It's unclear whether they have lawyers. *USATODAY*

Philippine boxing idol Manny Pacquiao said a January fight in the US with American Adrien Broner is almost certain, but he dodged the mounting speculation of a possible rematch with rival Floyd Mayweather.

Pacquiao, 39, pumped new life into his storied but slowing boxing career in July when he delivered his first knockout in nine years in a bout against Lucas Matthyse of Argentina.

Since then Pacquiao has defied calls to retire and promised to fight again, which has prompted unclear reports about a range of possible contenders.

But at a charity function late Wednesday in Manila Pacquiao told reporters "Broner, Adrien Broner".

He added that he preferred to face the former four-division world champion on either January 12 or 19, "probably" in Las Vegas.

"It is almost final but it is not yet there," Pacquiao said, adding that the match was "90 percent" likely to push through.

Manny Pacquiao says '90 percent' sure will face Broner in January

Mayweather, 41, said in September he would come out of retirement to face Pacquiao later this year in a rematch of their 2015 superfight that earned both men millions.

However, no concrete plans have emerged for that contest and Mayweather subsequently said he would be back "for a huge boxing event" in Tokyo before fighting Pacquiao.

Asked at the event Wednesday about another bout with Mayweather is in the offing, Pacquiao said "it is not yet finalised". Ahead of the fight against big-punching Matthyse, Pacquiao said he considered himself the "underdog", but he rolled back the years in the July bout.

It was a dominant display as Pacquiao registered the 60th win of a fabled 23-



The Philippines' Manny Pacquiao (right) pumped new life into his storied but slowing boxing career in July when he delivered his first knockout in nine years in a bout against Lucas Matthyse of Argentina

year career that is now nearly sure to extend beyond his 40th birthday

in December.

Pacquiao, who is also a senator in the Philippines,

lost his World Boxing Organization welterweight title to

unfancied Australian Jeff Horn in Brisbane last year. **AFP**

Sprint superstar Usain Bolt has turned down a contract from Maltese champions Valletta and will remain in Australia to pursue his dream of becoming a professional footballer, his agent said Thursday.

The eight-time Olympic champion has been on trial with A-League club the Central Coast Mariners since arriving Down Under in August.

He scored two goals in a pre-season friendly last Friday but is yet to be offered a deal, with cashed-up Valletta dangling a two-year trial-free contract to entice him away earlier this week.

Sprint king Bolt rejects Malta football offer

But Bolt's agent Ricky Simms said he had opted against a move to the Maltese Premier League team, which is backed by a group of investors from the Sanban Group in the United Arab Emirates.

"There is a lot of interest in Usain playing football," he told ESPN.

"We regularly receive similar approaches. I can confirm Usain does not wish to pursue this opportunity in Malta."

Valletta chief executive Ghasston Slimen told the broadcaster: "We wish Usain Bolt all the best with his football career. The Valletta FC offer is always on the

table."

Australia's domestic A-League season starts this weekend, with the Mariners in action on Sunday away to Brisbane Roar. With no contract, Bolt is not eligible for selection.

Club chief executive Shaun Mielekamp said this week the Jamaican "will continue

his indefinite training period ... until any further notice".

Reports suggest the Mariners are waiting for governing body Football Federation Australia to decide whether it will contribute to a potential Aus\$3 million (US\$2.1 million) offer to the 100m

world record holder.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph on Thursday reported Bolt and Mielekamp sat down for a coffee in the wake of the Malta offer for clarity on his future.

It said the 32-year-old, who regards Australia as a second home, might consider accepting less money if it means locking in a contract. Coach Mike Mulvey was reluctant Thursday to talk about Bolt, saying he was not involved in contract negotiations.

"I'm really not interested in it (contract speculation) to tell you the truth," he told reporters.

"He's been great among the guys and I was very happy for him last week with the two goals he scored, but we move on."

Mariners captain Matt Simon dismissed suggestions the chronicles of Bolt were distracting the squad ahead of their A-League opener.

"He's been here for a couple of months now, so everywhere we go with Usain, everyone's talking about him," Simon said.

"We've just been down to business, concentrating on the season and putting into practice what we've been doing at training for the last 12 weeks." **AFP**

Vidal fined 800,000 euros for Munich nightclub fight

Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal has been hit with a 800,000 euros (\$921,812) fine by a Munich court after being found guilty of assault during a nightclub fight last year.

Munich district court fined the Chile international based on 80 days worth of wages, calculated to be 10,000 euros per day for the Barcelona player, who left Bayern Munich in August after three years with the

German giants.

The 31-year-old was not in court in Munich to hear the judge's verdict as he played in Chile's 1-0 win over Mexico on Wednesday, which "professionally prevented" his appearance in Bavaria, his lawyer said.

Vidal and his half-brother were both found guilty after attacking another man at Munich's Crowns Club in September 2017, which was

reportedly caught on security camera.

Vidal's half sibling Sandrino, 25, was fined 18,000 euros, based on 120 days salary at 150 euros per day -- a higher penalty because he also threw a glass during the incident.

Since joining Barcelona Vidal has struggled for game time in the star-studded midfield, only twice being included in the starting line-up in eight Spanish league matches. **AFP**

Bodybuilding not for thugs – Mr Zambia

By Alex Chilumbwe
Current Mr Zambia Sylvester Mwila says he is saddened that even in 2018 there are people who still think Bodybuilding is a sport for thugs. Mwila noted that there was need to educate people about the sport as a way of ending myths that surround it. In an interview with Goal Diggers! The successive three times Mr Zambia expressed sadness that few people knew that BodyBuilding was a sport like any other. "It saddens me to hear people say that Bodybuilding is a sport for thugs. They cannot even defend that statement because there is nowhere in Zambia where I have heard of someone being

attacked by a gang of bodybuilders. It is a normal sport that also

requires discipline and dedication," Mwila said. Mwila further

highlighted some of the key attributes to being a good bodybuilder.

"One has to be well-disciplined and well-mannered because vent

planners will from time to time hire you to offer security services to functions like musical ones. They will always for bodybuilders that are behave well. It also requires dedication, hard work and patience. Shortcuts like using steroids are not acceptable and they actually harm one's body," advised Mwila. "Ladies in Zambia shy away from this sport unlike in other countries. Of course they are capable of attracting sponsors but I should mention that this is a very expensive sport. Supplement products that are needed to train effectively are expensive but the results are great. I will see to it that bodybuilding grows in Zambia."



By Alex Chilumbwe
Former Chipolopolo striker Christopher Katongo says it is unfortunate that the national soccer team is struggling to qualify for next year's AfCON. The 2012 BBC African footballer of the year who captained the squad to the first ever Championship victory for Zambia that year, noted that the current national team squad was too good and youthful to struggle to get out of the group stages of the qualifiers. In an interview with Goal Diggers! Katongo who is also an assistant coach for Green Buffaloes football club (GBFC) said Zambia had a big name in football in Southern Africa, adding that there was need to keep growing the name. "It is quite unfortunate that we are struggling to qualify for AfCON looking at the calibre of

Chipolopolo's struggle to qualify worries Christopher Katongo

players we have in the squad. It is a mixture of youthfulness and experience. Most of them play for big clubs so we should have had it the easy way. Let us struggle when we are in the tournament

not the group stages of qualifying," Katongo said. The 2012 AfCON winning skipper also appealed to the players to maintain high spirits and morale ahead of the Namibian encounter

at home, as well as the Mozambique away game. "Our players should not beat themselves as there is no guarantee that a particular team should win. They all train and play for victory so it cannot

always be easy. Just keep yourselves in high spirits and morale; fans are still rallying behind you. We still have great confidence in the team and the coach," said Katongo. Meanwhile, FAZ president

Andrew Kamanga demanded a win against Namibia next month. "They should settle for nothing else but a win. We will have a bigger crowd and they know very well that fans are thirsty for a win. It can be a very disappointing thing failing to qualify looking at the squad managed by an expatriate coach. I personally await a win come next month," demanded Kamanga.

By Alex Chilumbwe
The Zambia Under-17 Men's Football National Team has commenced preparations for the 2018 African Union Sports Council Regional 5 games to be staged in Botswana in December. Team manager, Lombe Chipupu released the names to FAZfootball.com indicating that 25 players had been summoned to duty. The camp will run up to 20th October while the second

U-17 regroups ahead of Region 5 games in Botswana

session will be convened on November 4-10. Most players from the 2018 COSAFA U17 Championship have been retained in the provisional squad. The tournament will run from 07th to 16th December. FULL SQUAD (Goalkeepers)

Phillip Malunga (Blue Soccer Academy), Vincent Chate, Lackson Tembo (Free State Stars), Benson Simwanda, Bisalom Mwanza (BSA Chiparamba), Morgan

Botha (Lusaka Sporting Academy), Brian Phiri (Young Kafue Celtic) (Midfielders) Alex Mwiinga (Kascol Rangers), Bernard Bwalya (Vector FC), Joseph Banda Sabobo, Richard Ngoma (BSA Chiparamba), Toffee Musariri (Young Lusaka Dynamos), Chiwisa Manna (Lusaka Youth Academy), Lasmond Phiri (Blaze Sporting Academy), Peter Chikola (Garden Youth Academy), Steven Mungomema (Kabangwe Academy), Daniel Tembo (Celtics), Joshua Mutale (Young Power Dynamos), Kelvin Mwanza (MUZA Academy) (Strikers) Enock Sakala (Young Zesco United), Vincent Kalinda (Chama Youngsters), Collins Tembo (Vector FC)

MBA salutes coaches for growing sport

By Alex Chilumbwe
Midlands Basketball (MBA) President Maziko Phiri has commended basketball coaches for their contribution to growing the sport in the country. Phiri said coaches had exhibited great dedication towards the game adding that it was evident in the game results recorded by game tacticians. In an interview with Goal Diggers! Maziko appealed to coaches to ensure that they groomed younger players in order to avoid creating a gap when older ones retire. "If you look at the top six teams in the league right now, the points difference is either two or three yet we are playing the second series. This is a clear indication that players are improving, all thanks to coaches. Coaches are doing so much to see that the sport is

growing and it is encouraging. We are always making baby steps everyday and before we know it, basketball will be bigger than this in Zambia," said Phiri. And 2017 Midlands All Stars Most Valuable Player (All Stars MVP) Lubinda Simukonda said the top four finish in basketball had never been this unpredictable, saying competition had grown. "This season is very competitive. This is a league that has three series and we are in the second one yet there has not been a stable table topper. There is no team that has maintained the first, second and third position on the table for more than a week. The league is now full of fresher blood and the competitiveness of it has intensified. It will be interesting to watch third series games as most

of us will be battling to either win the league title or play in the championship," said Simukonda. Munali Suns tops the table with 24 points while UNZA Pacers and Green Buffaloes share the second place with 21 points. Looters and Matero Magic share the third position with 20 points while Hawks is fourth with 19 points. In the feminine category, Green Buffaloes escalated to the top of the table with 23 points after beating long time rivals UNZA Honeys 72-64 and Magic Sparks 68-57. Sparks and NAPSA Breeze are second with 20 points while Honeys is third with 19. Hotspurs has 12 while Nishati Shells has 10. Lusaka City Council's Lootress are on the bottom with 9 points.



Since retiring from athletics, Bolt has been pursuing his dream of becoming a professional footballer but he has now rejected a contract offer. Story page 14



Barcelona and Chile midfielder Arturo Vidal fined 800,000 euros for Munich nightclub fight. See story on page 14

CHIPOLOPOLO WOES

WORRY KATONGO

By Alex Chilumbwe

Former Chipolopolo striker Christopher Katongo says it is unfortunate that the national soccer team is struggling to qualify for next year's AfCON.

To page 15

...this team is too good to fail to qualify for AfCON



Kawhi Leonard made his debut with the Toronto Raptors a successful one as the Raptors beat Cleveland 116-104. AFP



The reigning Mr Zambia Sylvester Mwila says bodybuilding is not for thugs. See story on page 15