



ESTHER WILL GO

TO JAIL - GBM

First Lady has no immunity to abuse public resources

Those in Esther's entourage are going to inspect fire trucks donation - Amos Page 7

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President Edgar Lungu leaves South Africa's Air Force Base Waterkloof for addis Ababa yesterday

Street vendors aren't patriotic, we'll wipe them out - Lusambo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Lusaka Province Minister Bowman Lusambo says vendors aren't patriotic, that's why they would rather trade from the streets instead of operating from multiple available markets.

And Lusambo has warned that those who want to politic in the streets will not succeed. Meanwhile, Lusambo says there will be no more demolition of mobile money booths because his office and the council have engaged the service providers. To page 3

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I'll welcome prosecution as sitting president - HK

By Mirriam Chabala
Democratic Party 2021 presidential candidate Harry

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Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) employees pose in an image building stance after Social Media went awash criticising their newly acquired uniform

By Thomas Mulenga

Transparency International Zambia (TIZ) has condemned First lady Esther Lungu's trip to the United States of America, where she travelled with a 24-member delegation to go and receive a donation of four fire trucks. In a statement, TIZ executive director Wesley Chibamba said the trip was a waste of public resources, as the fire trucks could easily have been received by Zambia's Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Ngosa Simbyakula. "Transparency International Zambia wishes to advise the Zambian government to avoid wasteful expenditure of public resources, especially that which is done legally because it attracts no sanctions. Legal wastage of public resources includes undertaking unnecessary trips as a way as carrying unnecessary huge delegations on such and other trips, people with no bearing whatsoever on the purpose of the trip. The story carried in News

TIZ condemns Esther Lungu's lavish US trip

Diggers! tabloid about the: "Committee to receive four fire trucks for the Republic of Zambia" makes very sad reading for any concerned Zambian. If the story is anything to go by, then we wish to condemn in the strongest sense this irresponsibility by the government towards public resource management," Chibamba stated. "Honestly, how does the whole lot of a First Lady set out to go and receive a donation in the United States? Where is the Zambian envoy to the United States? Even in the worst scenario where this becomes permissible, a 25-man delegation? And

receiving a donation for 15 days? How does that work? And all this happening when there are 'austerity measures' in place? Clearly, it seems our 'austerity measures' do not apply to a selected few Zambians." He said despite the rise in wasteful expenditure of public resources as revealed by successive Auditor General's reports, government has continued spending recklessly on trips. "According to the Auditor General's reports, wasteful expenditure increased by 219 per cent between 2016 and 2017, from K3,587,000 in 2016 to K7,865,000 in 2017. Ordinarily, this should have been a red flag and

a point of concern for the government where efforts should be focused to reduce wasteful expenditure. But as if to spite the tax payers, that is when authorities are authorising such trips as Mrs Esther Lungu carrying 25 people to go and receive a donation for 15 days. As an organisation, we have been categorical on these trips and not so long ago we had requested that the Auditor General undertakes a special audit of the presidential-related travels and the associated imprest and other resources allocated. We are still maintaining that call to the office of the Auditor General. We believe public resources should

not go to waste for political patronage or to please political cadres who have no business associates to these trips," Chibamba said. "TIZ has always advised government against spending lavishly at the expense of the Zambian people. To put it bluntly, this trip was unnecessary. A receiving ceremony could have been held in Zambia with the American Ambassador in attendance. Or the Zambian Ambassador to United States could have received the said donation. The delegation being carried is bloated. 25 people to receive four fire trucks over a period of 15 days, as if Zambia has not had enough

fire truck scandals. Even if the subject trip may be legal, it is still a wastage of public resources. Zambia is a poor country with a lot of competing interests. These funds could have been channelled towards more urgent national needs." He advised President Lungu to provide leadership and stop the reckless expenditure of public resources. "We further appeal to the Republican President Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu to provide leadership and ensure that effected austerity measures are actually implemented and respected by all. He should be the first to condemn such wanton mismanagement of public resources. We believe fiscal discipline and prudent financial stewardship should start with the President and this includes those who act in his capacity, including the First Lady. As a woman that, like her husband, ought to demonstrate the same level of fiscal discipline expected of him," stated Chibamba.



ActionAid Zambia country director Nalucha Nganga Ziba (l) with Roving Advisor Precious Nkandu (c) and Women's Rights programmes manager Maureen Zulu make a submission on Gender Based Violence before the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs, Human Rights, National Guidance, Gender Matters and Governance yesterday - Picture by Joan Chirwa/ActionAid Zambia

Kalima's sisters seek Court authority to sell properties to settle her debts

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Late Gender Minister Victoria Kalima's sisters have applied for authority in the Lusaka High Court to sell part of the deceased properties, saying as administrators, they feel duty bound to pay back some of the debts that she left behind. In an affidavit in support of originating summons filed in the Lusaka High Court, January 9, Mutiyo and Alice Kalima, who are both administrators of the late Victoria, stated that on June 11, last year, their sister died without leaving a will. The two further stated that they were appointed as administrators on June 27, 2018, by a court order. They disclosed that part of the estate of the deceased presently comprised of four properties. The duo stated that it had become necessary to sell the properties in order for them to pay back some of the debt that the late had amassed at the time she was alive.

They stated that they had consulted with the deceased's two children aged 15 and 12 years over their desire to sell the properties. "It has become necessary or desirable to sell the properties due to the fact that the late at the time she was alive, she had amassed some debts, which we feel duty bound as administrators that the debts should be paid back before we know the exact value of the estate of the late Victoria Kalima as required by the Intestate Succession Act," read the affidavit. "That the deceased was survived by two children; female aged 15 years and male aged 12 years now living who are the lawful beneficiaries of the deceased estate thus we have consulted with them as beneficiaries now living over the desirability to sell the properties." The duo stated that they had been advised that in order for them to effect the sale of part of the properties, the law required that they seek the authority of the court, hence their application.

ECZ explains 100% G7 progression rate

By Geoffrey Zulu

The Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) says there was a 100 per cent progression rate to grade eight for candidates who sat for the grade seven exams because of an abundance of space at secondary school level. In an interview, ECZ Director Dr Michael Chilala said it was inaccurate to say there was a 100 per cent pass rate. "There's a difference between passing and progressing. Passing in an examination has something to do with certification; progressing has something to do with selection. So, what we had at grade seven [2018 results] is not 100 per cent pass rate, but 100 per cent progression rate. What is there is that, this year,

we achieved 100 per cent progression rate. When it comes to progressing to grade eight, it has had to do with how much space is at grade eight. We have always had more primary school pupils than junior secondary pupils. When we have larger number of grade sevens, then a smaller number of spaces at grade eight, you must now come up with a level at which you can say, these are the only ones we can accommodate and that's how we come up with a cut point. The cut-off point is a number at which the total number of spaces at grade eight has been filled, therefore, those who do not make it in that category, do not [go] to grade eight," explained Dr Chilala.

"So, progression rate is about the number of pupils who are absolved at grade eight level as compared to those who sat for the grade seven exams; our grading system at grade seven level has division one, which is a distinction, division two, which is a merit, division three, which is a credit and division four, which is a pass. It is for that reason that those repeating grade nine would be given an external number even if they repeated the whole year, they will write with everybody else and they would still write as external candidates. The principle is that, the first time you write, you write as an internal candidate; the second time you write, you write as an external candidate."

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By Mukosha Funga

President Edgar Lungu says with strategic international cooperation, Zambia will become a middle income country by 2030. And President Lungu says like-minded countries from every corner of the world must come together to champion the principles of freedom, fairness and democracy. In an article published by New Europe, a leading EU affairs newspaper, Monday, President Lungu stated that he was encouraged that EU was seeking to reinvigorate the EU-Africa partnership on a more equal footing. "Upon becoming President, I took an oath to better the lives of the people of Zambia. Not just the lives of those that voted for me, but the lives of each and every person who calls our nation their home. In order to achieve this, I knew that Zambia needed to cooperate more than ever with its international partners and international institutions like the EU. I believe that a better future for Zambia will be a consequence of reaching out the hand of cooperation to our strategic allies and working together in areas of mutual interest. These relationships must be mutually beneficial and well balanced. It is therefore, encouraging to see that after the 2018 State of the European Union address by President Juncker, that the EU seeks to reinvigorate the EU-Africa partnership on a more equal footing and on a broad range of issues. Africa is more than one issue. It is a diverse, thriving, and vibrant continent. It is rich with the ambitions, innovation and determination of our young people,"

Zambia will be middle income country by 2030 says Lungu

President Lungu stated. "My hope is that with a renewed focus on creating this equal partnership between the EU and Africa, that Europe will come to see that Africa has as much to offer Europe, as Europe has to offer African nations like my own. We all need to plan for the future. The world's resources are limited, and our effective and efficient use of them must be a priority. Zambia is resource and agriculturally rich, and European cooperation and investment in Zambia will help sustain all of our social, economic, and political responsibilities of the future. Only a few years ago, economic and social change in Africa was minimal. In recent years however,

the determination and ambitions of Zambia have heralded great progress in health, the standard of living, education and sustainability. There is still much to do, but with strategic international cooperation, Zambia can, and will, become a middle-income country by 2030. High levels of investment from Europe, America and Asia in commodities and trade, as well as investment in our mutual challenges such as climate change, energy security, and democracy building, have built a solid platform for Zambia's growth for a generation." And President Lungu said like-minded countries from every corner of the world must come

together to champion the principles of freedom, fairness and democracy. "Globalisation means we are all ever-closer neighbours, and our challenges and opportunities are shared. I believe that countries like my own cannot retreat into an isolated corner of the past, but instead, need to seize this moment and all the opportunities that globalisation has to offer. Globalisation can revitalise our growth, fulfill our potential and transform the lives of all our citizens in the process. My priority has always been to ensure that progress and prosperity are inclusive, and deliver wide reaching benefits for achieving peace, security and stability within both

the African continent and the wider world around us. I believe this is something that Europe and African nations have in common. In a recent visit to Japan, I met with Prime Minister Abe who had just signed the EU-Japan economic partnership agreement. It highlighted that there is still a strong global network of countries with shared values, shared goals, and true cooperation, on the principles of equality and rules-based trade. Looking around the world, it sometimes feels like there is a shrinking space for freedom and democracy, and for the values we hold dear. That is why like-minded countries from every corner of the world must come together to champion the

principles of freedom, fairness and democracy within its economic and trading partnerships," stated President Lungu. "This is why Europe should ensure that it does not neglect Africa either economically or politically. The EU is a partner we want to strengthen our relationship with, but in order to achieve this the EU must take seriously its new commitment to strengthen our ties. Zambia already cooperates with countries such as Germany and Italy and the United States on issues related to health, mining, the environment, agriculture and technology. I want this network to grow, and I want our shared political agenda to provide solutions to the big challenges we all share. I am proud to stand side by side with partners like the European Union, and I hope that we can continue to work together to shape the world in a positive way."

Street vendors aren't patriotic, we'll wipe them out - Lusambo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Lusaka Province Minister Bowman Lusambo says vendors aren't patriotic, that's why they would rather trade from the streets instead of operating from multiple available markets. And Lusambo has warned that those who want to politic in the streets will not succeed. Meanwhile, Lusambo says there will be no more demolition of mobile money booths because his office and

the council have engaged the service providers. In an interview, Lusambo lamented that some vendors were still operating from the streets despite government building and renovating some markets. "You know the issue of street vending in Lusaka is a problem for all of us [and] not only for me as Lusaka Province Minister but even these people who are trading in the streets are a problem.

We are trying by all means to protect them from the situation we went through last time of cholera and all that and when cholera comes, it won't even choose to say 'this is a street vendor or this is who] it will wipe all of them. Apart from that, we want to maintain our cities, we want our cities to look neat. As the government of His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, we have invested a lot of money in putting up new markets and renovating other markets [but] the problem which we have [is that] the people we have in the streets are not patriotic to this country, they don't know why they

exist in this country, to them they exist to sell in the streets, no," Lusambo said. "We have markets which are available, we have markets in our constituencies, we have markets in our CBD (Central Business Districts) and surely you can't trade in those markets, and you [just] want to be trading in the streets? And for us as Lusaka Province we have resolved [that] we will move in and cleanup Lusaka and we won't even look on the faces of these street vendors. We will move all of them from our streets." He warned those politicking on the streets that they would not succeed. "And we would want to

also urge those people who want to bring politics in the streets, we should not be doing politics in the streets, let us do politics on the political arena. And political arena is by giving the people what they want by giving the good manifesto like the one which we have. And anyone who wants to bring politics in the streets will not succeed. For us as Lusaka province we will move in and clean up Lusaka. And we are just waiting for the time which we have planned to move in and make sure that...[but] all street vendors will move," he said. And asked why he allowed the Lusaka City Council (LCC) to demolish 2,700 mobile money booths in Lusaka, Lusambo said the issue was water under the bridge because the service providers were still being engaged. "That one is water under the bridge because we had a meeting with the service providers and Lusaka City Council and my office and I think we are moving very well. That thing is not there," said Lusambo.

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By Zondiwe Mbewe

Chiengi FDD member of parliament Given Katuta says she wholly supports her husband, Lawrence Mwelwa's decision to rejoin the ruling Patriotic Front, but adds that she will remain in the opposition and will even re-contest her seat on the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) ticket in 2021. On Tuesday, Dr Mwelwa, who is the CEO of Chreso University, rejoined the ruling Patriotic Front, resigning from his position as the FDD national treasurer. He said during a press briefing held at the PF Secretariat that the past 24 months of being in the opposition had been very challenging for him, hence his decision to rejoin PF so that he could contribute to the growth of the nation. Dr Mwelwa argued that the opposition had even stopped inspiring him. "The past 24 months have been very challenging! So, after very serious reflection and consideration and obviously serious consultation and discussion in my home, I made up my mind and went to my sister in law (PF deputy Secretary General Mumbi Phiri) and said 'I want to come back to PF.' I was in PF. We campaigned strongly for our President Edgar Chagwa Lungu in 2015. I was, of course, a

Even though my husband has joined PF, we remain sweethearts - Katuta



little disturbed because my wife was not adopted in 2016. So, I said: 'my wife, can we find a place to go?' However, my heart was still back home," Dr narrated

Mwelwa on Tuesday. "So, I have decided to come back home for one simple reason that, I need to contribute to the growth and development of our nation. It's not for personal reasons, but for the reason of our country and the people that I love. The opposition stopped inspiring me! Even now, I'm not inspired at all. That is why I have decided to come back home." But Katuta said in an interview with News Diggers! that she was happy for him, observing that no positions were permanent in politics. She said she supported her husband as long as he was happy. "What my husband has done is a good thing, to

show that we can also have unity of purpose. Your wife can be UPND and the husband is FDD or PF. These are just politics, no matter what, one day, you will find yourselves out of those offices. No one is going to be a leader forever. These are temporary positions. Personally, I'm not affected because I know how I get along with my husband. And we have agreed, when we are home, it's all about 'sweetheart, sweetheart'. If anything, he was PF; because of me, he had to leave PF in order to support me to become a member of parliament," Katuta said. "Because of the kind of mentality that we have is the reason we cannot talk to our opponents. We take

opponents as enemies. So, I support him as long as he is happy. In our house, he supports Manchester United, I support Arsenal. When we are watching, we just watch: 'oooh your team has lost, hard luck.'" Asked whether she would also ditch FDD to join her husband, Katuta said she had no intentions of leaving the FDD. "No, how can I join PF? I'm FDD! People will say: 'no, she's afraid of losing her seat'. I have never been afraid because I won that seat only on a ticket of FDD, which did not even have money. Even the way I debate in Parliament, I don't debate to appease anyone. I speak on behalf of the nation and the people of Chiengi. I'm FDD and I will still be FDD. I heard some people saying: 'there will be a by-election in Chiengi'. There won't be any by-election in Chiengi. By 2021, I will contest that seat on FDD and will still win the seat," replied Katuta.

By Milimo Namangala

Zambia's new mining fiscal regime coupled with declining copper prices is likely to lead to reduced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows this year, says financial market analyst Mambo Hamaundu. In an interview, Hamaundu predicted that the 2019 mining fiscal regime, which has led to planned job cuts in

Mining fiscal regime could lower FDI – Financial analyst

the mining sector, combined with falling copper prices on the international market, will realize less FDI inflows into the country this year.

Zambia's net FDI for 2016 dropped to US \$486.1 million from an all-time high record of around US \$3.2 billion in

2014, according to Bank of Zambia (BoZ) data. On the other hand, the implementation of the 2019 mining fiscal regime by government effective January 1, 2019, has seen an increase in mineral royalty rates by 1.5 percentage points at all levels of the sliding scale. The tax rate hike has forced mining giants such as First Quantum Minerals (FQM) to announce job cuts of around 2,500 local and foreign employees expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of this year, while Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) Plc have downsized its Nchanga Smelter operations due to low availability of concentrates. "Indirectly, if your tax regime becomes unattractive as a country, it definitely has an influence on the decisions that a potential investor has to make be it foreign or local. Because the role of enterprise is they want to maximize their returns and, therefore, the more conducive the tax environment, the more likely a person will invest in a particular jurisdiction," Hamaundu said. "But I think that with the introduction of these taxes, which appear to be punitive on the mines, indeed, potential investors would probably have to think twice. Even with the current standoff where I think the mines and the government

are still trying to reconcile have not yet reconciled their VAT refunds and issues surrounding that are not doing any good to support the cause of Zambia as an investment destination." He observed that copper prices, which have dipped to below US \$6,000 per tonne, would equally prevent investments being made in Zambia despite it being among the largest copper exporters worldwide. "The copper prices, the commodity prices are not performing particularly that well on the international market, so one would say, what are the prospects? Is it really worth it for one to put their money into the country?" Hamaundu wondered. And Hamaundu pointed out that financial literacy in Zambia needs to be addressed. "We have made a bit of improvement from the levels that we were way back, but I think that there is still a lot of work that we need to do as a country to improve the level of financial literacy. We must continue working on improving the levels of financial literacy of the citizens. I think it is very important for a country such ours which is faced with a lot of challenging situations, I think there's the aspect of debt, there's the aspect of unemployment, the economy generally is not performing that well," said Hamaundu.

Church has refused to meet ZCID, says Mumbi

By Thomas Mulenga

PF deputy secretary general Mumbi Phiri says the three Church mother bodies on Monday sent a letter to ZCID stating that they won't meet the centre to discuss the agenda for the dialogue event scheduled for this Friday. Phiri was speaking when she called in on the 'Let the People Talk' program on Radio Phoenix, Tuesday, which featured YALI president Andrew Ntewewe and political analyst Chris Zumani. "For your own information, yesterday as ZCID, we received a letter from the Church which said they are not going to meet the church so that we forge the way forward. Today we are having a meeting so that we see how we are going to do it and today again, I have just seen it in the paper the Church saying the dialogue is open for everyone. Can you imagine what scenario we are going to have if every Zambian was to come at the Cathedral or at Kapingila house, because it's open to everyone, according to what I have read in the paper," Phiri said. "It's so sad we have so much representation, it's a fact that as ZCID, we agreed with the Church that we will have a joint secretariat,

I am surprised that the church, especially my Church, the Catholic church, why they want to bring Caritas Zambia and JCTR. What if the other Church mother bodies such as Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and CCZ said they are also going to bring other people from their church to be part of the dialogue process? That would be total confusion." And Phiri said PF was going to hire a consultant to represent the party at the dialogue meeting if the process was left open for anyone to attend "There is no agenda for the dialogue, we were supposed to meet with the Church and agree on the agenda but yesterday, we received a letter from the church that they were not going to meet us. And that's one of the things that we were going to discuss on the agenda. How is it going to look if they say anyone can come to the dialogue meeting, of course even us the PF we have the capacity to hire a consultant to represent, we can do that, that's a fact," said Phiri. "And, we already had a paper which we were supposed to work on which was agreed upon by all political parties when we had a Siavonga meeting, as to the things we are going to look

at the ZCID. Now I don't know, I am failing to understand where this confusion is coming from. Let us, the genuine Christians and those who love this country, continue praying for this country so that God, it's only God, not a human being, can guide us and see how can move forward." And Ntewewe said the Church seemed to have a hidden agenda in the dialogue process which it did not want to disclose to other stakeholders. "Are we coming from a crisis situation where we say let's discuss a power sharing mechanism, let us discuss probably how government is going to be managed, is that where we are coming from? No! Are we coming from a civil war situation? No. And we do not want to beat about the bush, I want to indicate that what the church is doing is funning confusion. They must demonstrate leadership, they must come out very clean because very sooner than later, they will be seen to be pushing a political party agenda, which we wouldn't want to see the church to be doing. The Church is a place where all of us have to go to, despite our political affiliation, despite our opinions, despite anything that we have," said Ntewewe.

By Mirriam Chabala

Democratic Party 2021 presidential candidate Harry Kalaba says his government will introduce a law that will allow for the prosecution of a sitting Head of State because he wants to reduce powers of a Republican President.

And Kalaba says he will not attend this Friday's national dialogue meeting because he will be busy marketing himself as aspiring candidate for 2021 on that day, adding that leaders in the Democratic Party are capable of representing him.

Appearing on United Voice Radio's "Add Your Voice" programme, Wednesday, Kalaba said his leaders would be all about public service once in office, and that all those who would want to use the leadership as an opportunity to steal from Zambians would be punished.

"I advocate for the reduction of powers of the President and my powers will drastically reduce because I want to be... if I go wrong, I would want to be prosecuted when I am in office. This must be public service and I have told my friends in the Democratic Party, bena Nkonge and everybody around, I have told them that if you work with me, it has to be public service. If you are going to come into government because you want your stomach to grow bigger, you will end up in jail! Because for me, I served as Deputy Minister in the office of the Vice-President. I served diligently. I was all over the country, putting up bridges and all washed away schools, I was distributing food to those who didn't have, as deputy minister. I never rested," Kalaba said.

"In fact, president Sata promoted me [because I worked hard]. When he was promoting me, he called me to his office and told me 'I didn't know that Office of the President can do all this, you have opened my eyes. Here is your letter.' That is how he appointed me as Lands Minister, that's how I earned my promotion."

I will welcome prosecution as sitting president - Kalaba



And Kalaba explained that he would not be available to attend the much-hyped national dialogue meeting on Friday.

"On that day when they will be having the indaba, I know that the Democratic Party will go and attend the indaba, they

are the ones who have been invited. The Democratic Party has just invited me to be their presidential candidate and I will gladly be their presidential candidate in 2021. I will not be at the indaba because that day, I will be in Kasempa, marketing and selling myself

vigorously. So, the authorities in the Democratic Party will be attending and I will be well represented because Nkonge is smart; Precious Ntambu is smart; Nedson Nzowa is smart; I am mentioning the people that I am with in Democratic Party. Victor Mwale is smart;

Mashindi Ntambu is smart; Jane Zulu is smart; Judith Kabemba is smart... everybody around me, these are smart Zambians who are willing to die and sacrifice for Zambia. So, I believe in collective responsibility. So, they will go and hear, they will come and

tell me and their position will be my position," Kalaba said. Meanwhile, Kalaba explained that he was not really desperate to become the next Republican President but that Zambians could not wait to have him as their seventh Head of State because they needed a liberator.

"I am not desperate to become President, I can even wait for the 10 or 15 years to be President, but Zambia can't wait! Zambia is in a hurry to get out of this situation. Zambia is desperate to get out of the desperate situation we are in! The youths can't wait; the taxi drivers can't wait; the marketeers can't wait; those that are finishing school and can't find [jobs] can't wait. So, it's not even about me, it's about them. I was Foreign Affairs Minister. I can even apply to go and work in the United Nations easily and I can be based in New York or wherever because I am qualified. But the same reason I resigned as minister remains valid, that's why I cannot even go out. Zambia needs me now, more than ever. But if there was anyone who was strategically positioned to take over and lead that party PF, it was myself because already, I had won international support, they know me in the corridors of the international community and I was doing very well back here in my constituency and so I was poised to do that."

Lungu condemns Kenya terrorist attack

By Thomas Mulenga

President Edgar Lungu has condemned the terrorist attack in Kenya that left 14 people dead.

In a statement released by Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Amos Chanda, President Lungu said there was no space for violence in Zambia and Kenya as the two countries

were peaceful.

President Lungu also renewed Zambia's commitment to the global fight against terrorism "His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, president of the republic of Zambia, has sent a message of condolences and solidarity to president Uhuru Kenyatta of the republic of Kenya following the terrorist attack

on the capital Nairobi where 14 people died and several others seriously injured. In his message today, President Lungu said "to my brother Uhuru Kenyatta and to our friends, the people of Kenya, we the people of Zambia express our shock, our sympathy and our unwavering support following these tragic and senseless acts of violence,"

read the statement.

"The President is happy that the 19-hour siege at the Dusit complex is now over and that all the terrorists have been eliminated. He praised the courage and professionalism of the Kenyan security services who carried out a meticulous operation and managed to rescue more than 700 people from the hotel complex. The

President says Zambia and Kenya share the deepest of friendship. And those that seek to cause the two societies harm should know, there is no space within the brotherly neighbourhood for violence and terrorism-only peace and respect for one another."

President Lungu conveyed his condolences to the people of Kenya over the loss of life in the terrorist attack.

"As the hours pass, I hope we draw comfort from stories of courage, selflessness, and of those that stopped to help. These acts will always be testament to the prevailing good of the human spirit. The President condemned the destructive and senseless face of terrorism in all its forms and renewed Zambia's commitment to global efforts to fight terrorism and preserve peace and democracy knowing that unity in the face of such tragedy will make us stronger," read the statement. "On behalf of the government, the people of the republic of Zambia and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to convey my heartfelt condolences to your Excellency and the people of Kenya. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and those recovering, and I wish God's strength and fortitude upon you so that his light may offer some comfort during these darkest of times."

LCC shuts Chamba Valley school for open defecation

By Milimo Namangala

The Lusaka City Council has closed Chamba Valley Primary School with immediate effect for operating without water and with closed toilets, leading to open defecation.

In a statement, LCC assistant public relations manager Brenda Katongola said the school's facilities posed a health hazard to pupil.

"LCC has ordered for the closure of Chamba Valley Primary School in Lusaka for contravening the provisions of the Public Health Act Cap 295 of the Laws of Zambia, Local Government (Solid Waste Management) regulations of 2011 and Statutory Instrument (SI) number 12 of 2018 of the Local Government Act number 281 on

Street vending and nuisances. An inspection of the premises was conducted by the Public Health inspectors from LCC on 15th January, 2019 to ascertain the prevailing health conditions at the school and discovered that the school was operating under unsanitary conditions. There was open defecation around the school premises, there was no access to sanitary facilities for pupils as the toilets were closed at the time of inspection and there was no running water," Katongola stated.

"Other findings were that non-subscription to waste management, dirty sanitary facilities (toilets) for staff both male and female, no provision of waste receptacles in classrooms, poor vegetation

control (tall grass), improper waste management (littered surroundings and use of a pit to dispose off waste) and no provision of hand wash facilities. The school has been ordered to close until remedial measures are put in place and a re-inspection of the premises is conducted in accordance with the given instructions."

And Katongola stated that LCC had terminated its contract with Parkrite in accordance with clause 3 of the provisional terminal breach clauses of agreement on January 7. "This is in accordance with clause 3 of the provisional termination breach clauses of the Agreement; however, Parkrite will continue operations for the next three months until 7th April, 2019 within

which they are expected to wind up their activities and handover the parking sites back to the Council. The issue is currently in court," she stated.

LCC and Parkrite signed the MoA on October 12, 2016.

In a related development, the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) has withdrawn the case in which they had sued the council for failure to supply with site restoration orders issued on 1st August 2018. Pursuant to section 60 of the environmental management act no. 12 of 2011.

LCC was ordered to remove waste in parts of Garden, Kanyama and Misisi townships and the Town Centre and restore the sites to conditions satisfactory to ZEMA.



NDC
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS
The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom
Why we deserve your vote



Health Sector Plans And Reforms

A healthy population is a productive one. As such, it is paramount that citizens have access to affordable, good quality health services which is every persons right.

The health system in Zambia is facing many challenges. The majority of citizens fail to access basic health services owing to a number of challenges.

Although strides have been made to improve the health sector, a lot more ought to be done in this area so that all citizens access good health services.

54 years after independence, its sad to note that the majority of our citizens are still dying in their homes because they can not afford to pay for health services.

Finding health facilities in many areas, is still a far fetched dream.

As compared to other countries, the average life expectancy, maternal mortality rate and deaths from preventable diseases are alarming.

Government has continued spending colossal sums of money by evacuating its citizens to other countries to access specialised medical care.

Citizens are left with begging questions as to why the health sector is failing to tick.

The state of our health centers is still unpleasant.

Both Government hospitals and community health centers are riddled with shortages of staff, state of the art equipment and medication.

Worse still, our health centres face a critical shortage of professionals, and lack necessary tools for preventing and controlling communicable diseases.

The allocation of funds to health institutions remains worrisome.

In 2018 for example, most health centers operated on a tight budget as they did not receive their monthly RDC allocation from central Government.

Many health institutions now depend on well wishers for survival.

Worse still, over two hundred Medical Doctors and other paramedics were not placed on the payroll. What a way of demotivating health workers.

Our Plans.

The NDC in Government will improve the remuneration for all health workers across the board.

The NDC Government will further improve funding to the Ministry of Health.



The NDC Government will further improve transparency and accountability in the procurement of drugs and other essential medicines.

Currently, the procurement of drugs at the Ministry of Health is marred by rampant corruption and abuse. We have information as a party that the Ministry of Health is directly involved in the procurement of medicines.

We have facts to prove that only two local firms are getting contracts to supply medicines to the Health Ministry.

In this vein, we urge the Anti Corruption Commission ACC to probe the illicit happenings at the Ministry of Health.

Further, the NDC will ensure that state of the Art equipment are procured in health centers across the country.

Existing health centers will be upgraded and new centers in rural areas constructed.

Staffing levels in health centres will also be improved.

The recruitment and replacement of medical staff will be done annually. As NDC, our plan will be to recruit at least five thousand medical personnel annually.

In our views, this will reduce the ratios of health care workers to the number of patients to international acceptable standard. For instance to 1 nurse for 4 patients, to improve on care.

The NDC will bridge the gap among the Health sector, academia and the private sector.

We recognize that health care professionals are a valuable resource with expertise in every aspect of health and health services. We will develop the health-sector in collaboration with the education sector.

We will turn all provincial hospitals into university teaching hospitals, housing medical universities for all disciplines under the health sector.

We will also ensure the use of biotechnology in prevention, management, and treatment of diseases.

We will ensure that each district has at least more than two (2), level three (3) District Hospitals run by the government and each ward a clinic with a mortuary, operating theater, laboratory and well stocked pharmacy department that will be run by local government authority. The NDC will decentralize powers and health functions to local governments hospitals.

We will also support their effort to access international medical grants such as the Global Fund to fight the scourge of HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria and other communicable diseases. For the treatment of HIV and AIDS, we will ensure that Zambia adopts a fourth generation drugs.

We shall discourage medical personnel to be appointed to non-medical positions in government and the Private sector. We hope, this will increase output of medical doctors and all health personnel separate private medical practice from government medical practice so that doctors running private clinics have no part in government services except for referral purposes.

Those in Esther's entourage are going to inspect fire trucks donation - Amos Chanda

By Mukosha Funga

State House says government officials in First Lady Esther Lungu's 25-member delegation to the United States are going to assess if the trucks conform to Zambian standards.

Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Amos Chanda told Hot FM that First Lady Esther's trip was partially sponsored by the people who donated the four fire trucks to the Esther Lungu Foundation Trust.

He said the fire trucks would be subsequently handed over to government as the Esther Lungu Foundation had no use for them. Chanda stressed that government would only foot part of the travel expenses.

Last week, News Diggers revealed that First Lady Esther would this week lead a 25-member delegation on a two weeks visit to the United States of America where they are all going to receive four fire trucks.

According to records obtained from State House, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs processed American Visas for 25 travellers, among them a bedroom attendant, cook, cleaner, waiter, about seven police officers, four journalists, three secretaries, two fire brigade officers, a communications officer and accountant.

This is despite the austerity measures that government, through the Minister of Finance, announced last year under which Cabinet office made a directive that non mandatory trips would never be approved.

Vedanta wants pollution case heard in Zambia

By Diggers Reporter

Lawyers for Vedanta Resources told England's Supreme Court, Tuesday, that a case raised against the mining company by nearly 2,000 Zambian villagers should be heard in Zambia, not London.

India-listed Vedanta, which delisted from London last year but maintains a legal base in Britain, is appealing a lower court ruling that a case in which villagers alleged their land was polluted by a Vedanta unit could be heard in England.

The two-day hearing will be watched by other multinational companies with a base in London and facing legal challenges about their operations abroad from local residents.

England's highest court is not expected to deliver a judgment for several weeks, court officials said.

Vedanta's legal team argued that Zambia was the natural forum for the case and said the parent company did not control operations in Zambia, which were governed by Zambian law.

In 2017, London's Court of Appeal had found that 1,826 Zambian citizens living on the Copperbelt had the right to sue Vedanta in the English courts.

Vedanta is challenging this. The villagers allege their land and livelihood have been destroyed by water pollution caused by the Nchanga Copper Mine, owned by Vedanta through its subsidiary Konkola Copper Mines.

London law firm Leigh Day has argued that the English courts were the only route for the villagers to achieve justice.

Vedanta's barrister Charles Gibson QC told the court

today that the farmers' case was "deeply tiresome" and their "allegations have absolutely no substance."

Mr Gibson said that Vedanta only agreed to provide KCM advisory services as an independent contractor and that its management agreement showed Vedanta did not have capacity to control KCM.

Before the two-day hearing, Zambian campaigners George Mumbi and Esson Simbeye said their community has "suffered severe pollution of water sources ever since Vedanta took over the mines," leaving the land "poisoned" and local people "very sick."

"People used to think British mining companies were better, but Vedanta are one of the worst foreign investors in Zambia," they said. "It is time that justice came home to roost in Britain."

Vedanta's case will also likely be watched by miner BHP, which has said it will fight an English suit by Brazilians seeking damages over an environmental disaster caused when the Fundao dam that stored mining waste burst in 2015.

Outside the court, action group Foil Vedanta was among those protesting against what they allege is pollution by Vedanta.

"While the financial and material gains from copper have been allowed to flow seamlessly out of the country, justice risks being restricted by economic and institutional barriers of territoriality," Foil Vedanta campaigner Samarendra Das said in an emailed statement.

She said the company's "remorseless pollution of the River Kafue since 2005 continues the colonial legacy of environmental racism which made the Copperbelt a global pollution hotspot."

The villagers' solicitor, Oliver Holland of Leigh Day, said: "Our clients continue to suffer from the effects of the pollution both on their health and their livelihoods."

He said Vedanta's appeals had caused years of delay. British Green Party MP Caroline Lucas expressed solidarity with the Zambian claimants. She lambasted "Vedanta's irresponsible pursuit of profit," saying: "When British corporations like Vedanta cause toxic pollution overseas, it's absolutely right that they pay for the damage."

The case continues and a verdict is expected in April.

'Mini skirt' girl, aunt get malicious damage charge

By Zondiwe Mbewe

A juvenile and her auntie have been slapped with a charge of malicious damage to property. The duo was on Monday discharged of the offence of idle and disorderly conduct, in connection with how the auntie allegedly responded to a police officer over her niece's 'indecent dressing'.

The duo are alleged to have damaged two padlocks worth K70, property of Zambia Police. This is the matter in which Mirriam Mwanza, 28 and her 16-year-old niece are jointly charged with the offence of malicious damage to property. Particulars of the offence are that on December 22, last year, the duo jointly and whilst acting together willfully and unlawfully damaged two padlocks valued at K70, the property of Zambia Police Service.

And when the matter came up yesterday, magistrate Rachel Mwansa Statachi asked for the juvenile's age before the duo could take plea.

The juvenile informed her that she was 16 years old and doing her grade nine.

Magistrate Statachi then explained that since she was jointly charged with an adult, she lost her incentives of being tried as a juvenile.

She further explained that a juvenile needed the presence of her guardians to prove that she was indeed a juvenile.

This was after the juvenile told the court that her guardians were not in court and that her

father died on January 1, this year.

The court then adjourned the case to January 21 for plea and ordered that the juvenile's guardians should come and confirm her age.

On Monday, the State discontinued the matter in which the duo were charged with idle and disorderly

conduct allegedly in connection with how Mwanza responded to a police officer over her niece's dressing.

This was the matter in which the duo were jointly charged with the offence of idle and disorderly persons.

It was alleged that on December 22, 2018, the juvenile in the company of her auntie, publicly

conducted themselves in a manner likely to cause the breach of peace.

It was alleged that on the material day, the juvenile wore a short skirt and as she passed by Kamanga Police Station in the company of her auntie, an officer asked her why she was wearing mini skirt.

Her auntie challenged the

officer for allowing another person who was dressed in a similar manner to pass through earlier, her reaction to the police's question allegedly led to the apprehension of the two.

The State however discontinued the case after receiving instructions from the DPP chambers to have the matter discontinued.

Esther will be prosecuted for abusing public funds - GBM

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

UPND vice president Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba (GBM) has warned that First Lady Esther Lungu will face prosecution for abusing public funds through her lavish trip to the United States where she has gone with a 25-member delegation to receive a donation of four fire trucks. In a statement, GBM said time will come for Esther to account for the public resources being used to fund the extravagant 25-member trip, and that if found wanting, she will go to jail. GBM, the former Kasama Central PF lawmaker, argued that the First Lady and her entourage committed an offence, which qualified them for prosecution.

"The First Lady and her entourage have committed an offence, which qualifies them for prosecution. None of them have immunity; they are all amenable to prosecution. PF being a corrupt regime cannot see all this. However, PF needs to know that such records are kept and used for accountability purposes when time matures. We will ensure that an independent Judiciary is in place to preside over these, among other lawless conducts, which amounts to criminal," GBM cautioned.

"There is no law which justifies the First Lady's conduct of travelling abroad with that entourage using tax payers' money because there is no piece of legislation, which legitimises her act. If she meant well, she should have not gone, especially after media reports and highlighted people's concern. Time will come for her to account for these resources; failure to do so will enlist her for criminal prosecution at the opportune time and she will be the First Lady in the world history to be convicted and serve a jail sentence. That money could have served the hunger-stricken regions; pay retirees; pay salaries to civil servants who have gone months and months without salaries; boost students' bursary and uplift the underprivileged's education; purchase medicines for our hospitals. Unfortunately, this is a far-sighted issue with the PF."

He also lamented that Zambia has never experienced high levels of lawlessness and indiscipline such as what is currently obtaining under the Patriotic Front government.

"An assault on the intelligence of the Zambian people has been committed. Zambia has never experienced high

levels of lawlessness and indiscipline like the one Patriotic Front government is exhibiting now since time immemorial. I actually expected Mrs Lungu to have said 'No, No, I am not a civil servant; let those responsible go,' as women do in our homes when we men sometimes lose track," GBM stated.

He added that it was clear that President Edgar Lungu's family was in State House to enjoy and enrich themselves at the expense of citizens.

However, this clearly indicates that Edgar Lungu's family is in State House to enjoy and enrich themselves at the expense of citizens, including unborn children; we are now told 40 per cent are born stunted because of poor nutrition. How in every area of normalcy can an upright-thinking person, think of a wife of a civil servant to represent a public duty in the presence of the constitutional office bearers with defined mandate. I had taken time to visit the University Teaching Hospital just to interact with our medical personnel and encourage our ailing and bedridden patients, I could not believe the reality of what I saw in the wards, including cancer hospital," GBM stated.

"There are urgent and referred cases

at UTH requiring treatment from abroad because as a country, we have not acquired the enabling equipment to attend to certain medical situations our country is faced with. Sad to say the majority needing specialised treatment are vulnerable patients, should I say voters, who entirely depend on government to save their lives."

And GBM also bemoaned the delayed rehabilitation of the burned hostels at the University of Zambia.

"The burnt hostels at the University of Zambia are still not yet rehabilitated because of lack of funds, yet Edgar can send his wife using tax payers' money to go for shopping. Zambians should know that they paid for Mrs Edgar Lungu's trip, while they struggle to manage their families. Edgar Lungu and the PF have no mercy for the Zambian people, but themselves. Surely, Zambians, is this the family you want to continue in State House with such an attitude? You hold the key to State House. The United Party for National Development has been vindicated in many areas because all these un-budgeted expenditures are issues we have been talking about for a long time. But none has been heeded by the PF corrupt regime," stated GBM.

The rivalry and anguish that we are witnessing between the Church mother bodies and the Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue is slowly taking over the bitterness that exists between the Patriotic Front and the opposition United Party for National Development (UPND), and indeed the rest of the political opponents.

These are the two institutions that have been charged with the responsibility of bringing together the various political parties in the country, and getting them to a common position on several governance issues, which have led to political tension, bloodshed and loss of life in the past. But so far, what we are seeing is that the tension between the facilitators of the dialogue is getting out of hand.

Last week, we carried a story in which the Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue was accusing the Church of trying to hijack the planned national dialogue facilitation so that they could add more players to the process, and thereby, collect more proceeds from it. A few days later, we carried a bitter response from the Church, calling the ZCID ignorant and accusing it of insulting the Bishops.

ZCID spokesperson Jackson Silavwe: "We don't want to participate

Dialogue facilitators need the dialogue more than politicians

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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in the Church's politics. This Memorandum of Understanding [to facilitate the national dialogue] is not for CARITAS, CCMG or JCTR; the MoU is between ZCID and the three Church mother bodies. If you feel you need to consult CARITAS, then you can do it internally without involving us. The other thing is that the account for the national dialogue should not be domiciled at Caritas. As politicians, we don't understand why the Church is afraid for us to have an independent account. It has never been the intention of ZCID to differ with the Church. But we feel that the Church has pushed the ZCID board to the

corner..." ZCCB secretary general Fr Cleophas Lungu: "We have never asked ZCID 'where are you getting money to go to Siavonga?' Our friends are interested in the allowances, the Church is not interested in the allowances, it is interested in the functionality of the nation... We know their agenda is to tarnish the name of the Church, it is to paint the Bishops as men who are after brown envelopes... So, it is important for institutions like ZCID to humble themselves and be cautious in exposing their ignorance of the structure of operations of the Church."

This is like a father

and mother exchanging punches while trying to settle a dispute over who should stop their children from fighting. It cannot be expected that anyone can be rushing to a household where there is no peace to receive counselling. So, it is now actually laughable to imagine that these two bitterly aggrieved sides are expected to bring peace among the country's political rivals.

This bitterness would be understood if it was between politicians because bickering is their way of showing dominance. The party that is more aggressive towards the other is perceived to be more organized and functional, gets to stay in the news

headlines more often, and, thereby, becomes more popular. This is the endgame for politicians; that popularity from aggression is what they try to convert into votes during elections.

But we don't understand the endgame for the Church mother bodies and the Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue. We are struggling to wrap our heads around what is fuelling the spite between the two organisations. Is it about money or it is a battle for relevance? How will they bring national unity while they are divided?

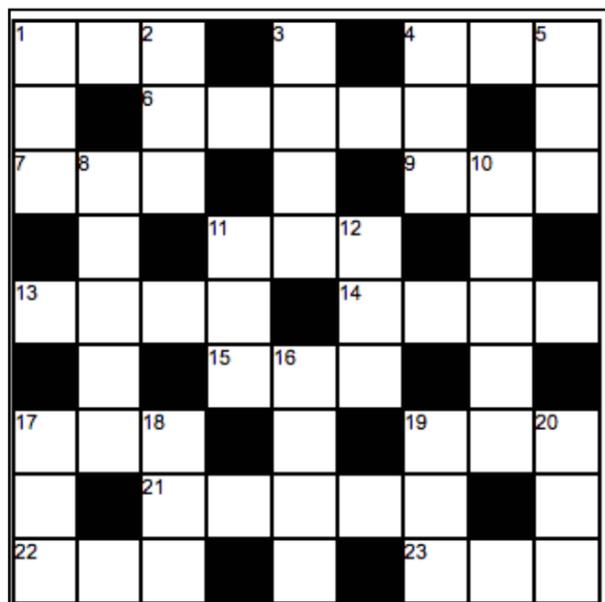
In our view, the two dialogue facilitators need dialogue. They need it more than the

politicians. We don't see how they can inspire peace to the aggrieved parties, while holding grudges in their hearts. It is right there in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us..." How will they forgive the politicians if they, as peacemakers, can't agree and forgive each other?

There is urgent need for the Church and the Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue to put away the bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and slander. If it is so hard for the peacemakers to put their differences aside, then they should not point fingers at the politicians. In fact, we are concerned that they are slowly losing the moral traction to be in charge of facilitating national dialogue, until their own dialogue succeeds.

But we wonder who will facilitate the dialogue for the dialogue facilitators, because at this pace, there is a possibility that another fight will ensue among those who are trying to get the Church and ZCID to dialogue. So, then, it will be 100 years before this dialogue trickles down to the PF and UPND who necessitated the original dialogue. One thing we know for sure is that it is not happening tomorrow as planned.

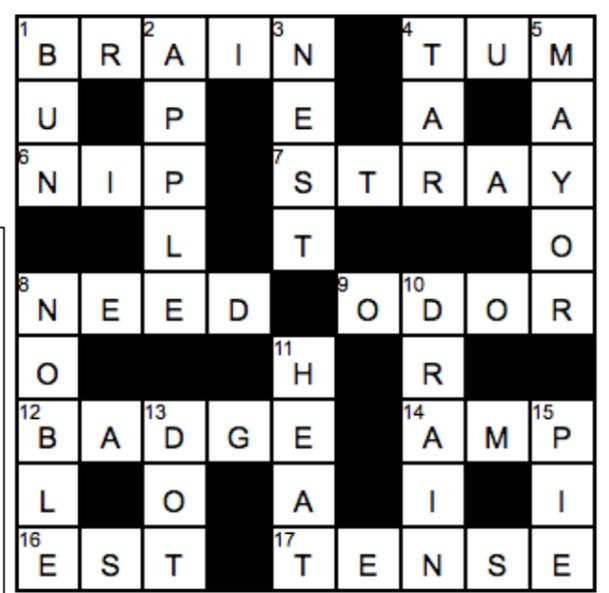
Crossword puzzle 274



"One rarely falls in love without being as much attracted to what is interestingly wrong with someone as what is objectively healthy."
- Alain de Botton

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Across</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memorable period of time 4. Race 6. Statement of belief 7. Eastern Standard Time 9. Strange 11. Hi-fi component 13. Hit the books 14. Underground plant part 15. Like some wines 17. Horse or house pest 19. Relaxing resort 21. More than enough 22. Outer edge 23. Pint-sized | <p>Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 12/24 or 12/31 2. Perform in a play 3. Give the impression 4. Kanga's kid 5. Silent approval 8. Turtle cover 10. Sag 11. Attention prob. 12. Be nosy 16. Lasso 17. Kitty's coat 18. Sweet potato 19. Darn 20. He is, we ____ |
|--|---|

Solutions to puzzle 273



Reader's feedback

Fr Lungu on ZCID exposing its ignorance over dialogue

Editor,

"The wise men have spoken! The wise should listen!" - Cephas Miselo

"Can Catholic Bishops really fight for allowances, zoono ZCID? These guys are surely ignorant!" - Edmond Arthur Soko

"Who can doubt the integrity of JCTR? Labour unions run to this institution for data before they embark on negotiations with employers." - Stephen Kabaye

"But why should be people be paid just for bringing two opposing sides together? And where will the money come from?" - Lawrence Tumwa Mumba

"I like the Church's stance; the meeting will be held St. Cathedral of the Holy Cross where there'll be no need for money to hire the venue....this is wonderful! And, really, this is a neutral place. Viva, Church! Viva!" - Timothy Mwali

'An NDC govt should focus on revamping DBZ, not introduce another bank

Editor,

"NDC please avoid that route. We already have DBZ. Just say how you will revamp DBZ. We already had Zambia Agricultural Development Bank, Lima Bank, Cooperative Bank. All these were

established as specialised banks to service the agro-industrial sector. All these have gone under because of under-capitalisation from the sponsors and shareholders. Another factor contributing to their demise is the insatiable appetite by the shareholders to dabble and interfere in the operations of the organisations. All without exception were abuse for political expedience. NDC, think of something else. I would suggest you look at measures that will promote and encourage savings so that there will be cheap funds available for borrowing from commercial banks. Also deal with the issues of high interest rates and inflation so that savers and borrowers are not exploited by banks and savings don't lose value." - Kanyata Mubita



Diggers' OPINION: Esther Lungu's abuse of public funds must be condemned, halted

Editor,

"Excellent article! Never wanted it to end! You have nailed it!" - Ian Malekani

"Very suspicious! Out of 25 only 2 fire officials? The truth will come to light soon or later." - Lyrical Soulz

"The analysis is on point. Too much hero worshipping in Zambia!" - Cracious Mulingula

"You have summed everything in this quote 'an entire family jumping on a Mazhandu Bus from Lusaka to go and collect K1,000 rentals from a tenant in Livingstone.'" - Convent Mtundulu

Lungu's U-turn on call for Govt of National Unity in DRC

Dear Editor,

"This is laughable; someone sees sense, suggests, and encourages dialogue to resolve post-election tensions in a neighbouring country, yet the same person abhors dialogue with opposition in his own country? Double-standards, what a hypocrite!" - Donald Oscar Phiri

"Uncoordinated statements from the boss are worrying!" - Chrissy Chuma

"Will he ever say anything sensible?" - David Zimba

"Busy pocking in other countries' problems, while you sweeping yours under the carpet..." - Layson Nyirenda

"Now, SADC realises that there is an active matter in the courts contesting the provisional

results. And the determination of this matter will define the course of action that SADC may take afterwards. Goes to show that SADC acted and continues to act hastily and prematurely by the two statements." - Felix Nkonge

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.

"We are our own enemies to servicing government loans starting from students, farmers, politicians and now cadres unless there can really be stiff punishment like even 40 years imprisonment for the defaulters, it sure will be abused." - Christopher Phiri

"Good idea, but it may go the Lima Bank way if it will run by NDC cadres!" - Metson Miyoba

China accuses Canada of 'double standards'



Canadian Robert Lloyd Schellenberg appears in court for a retrial of his drug smuggling case in Dalian, Liaoning province, China, January 14, 2019, in this handout picture received by Reuters January 15, 2019. Intermediate People's Court of Dalian/ Handout via REUTERS

China said on Wednesday that it was "not worried in the slightest" by mounting international concern over the death sentence handed to a Canadian for drug smuggling. Monday's sentence for Robert Schellenberg for smuggling 222 kg (489 lbs) of methamphetamines prompted Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to accuse China of "arbitrarily" applying the death penalty. The United Nations said it was opposed to the death penalty apart from exceptional circumstances, and Australia's acting foreign minister Simon Birmingham said he was "deeply concerned" by the case.

Speaking at a daily news briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Canada's "so-called allies could be counted on ten fingers" and did not represent the views of the wider international community. "I can very clearly state that we are not worried in the slightest," Hua said of the mounting outcry, adding that a majority of Chinese supported severe punishment for drug crimes. Schellenberg's sentence has further strained relations between China and Canada, already aggravated by the December arrest of Meng Wanzhou, chief

financial officer of Huawei Technologies Co Ltd [HWT.UL], on a U.S. extradition request as part of an investigation into suspected violations of U.S. trade sanctions. Days after Meng's arrest in Vancouver, China detained two Canadians on suspicion of endangering state security. **REUTERS**

Internet blackouts and business closures follow days of deadly protest in Zimbabwe's major cities. An uneasy calm returned to Zimbabwe's main cities but businesses and schools remained closed and mobile networks enforced a government internet shutdown on the final day of a national strike triggered by a steep rise in fuel prices.

In central Harare, shops, banks, fast-food chains, and some government offices were closed on Wednesday with little traffic on the roads. There was no public transport and some people could be seen walking from townships into the city centre.

Workers' trade unions called for a three-day nationwide shutdown to protest the government's decision to more than double the price of fuel. The action comes shortly after junior doctors ended a 40-day strike demanding salaries in US dollars and better working conditions.

"Ours is all about fuel. Ours is all about the skyrocketing prices of basic needs from fuel, health and food," said Kumbirai Magorimbo, while reading newspaper headlines in central Harare. Since 2009, after

Uneasy calm in Zimbabwe amid stay-at-home fuel price protest

hyperinflation and the devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, authorities refused to use national currency in payments and replaced it with US dollars, euros, South African rands and yuan. The southern African nation has experienced an acute shortage of dollars that has hampered imports of fuel and drugs and caused a spike in prices. The news agency Reuters reported that three people, including a police officer, died during Monday's demonstrations in the capital and second city Bulawayo.

Eight people were killed on Monday when police and military fired on crowds, according to Amnesty International. Another rights group said 26 people suffered gunshot wounds and that some were afraid to go to hospitals for fear of

arrest or assault. Police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd gathering for bread at a shopping centre near central Harare on Wednesday, as businesses remained shut, a Reuters witness said.

Activist pastor Evan Mawarire, who led a national shutdown in 2016, was arrested from his house in a Harare suburb.

"They are alleging that he incited violence through Twitter and other forms of social media in the central business district," Beatrice Mtetwa, Mawarire's lawyer, said on Wednesday. Zimbabweans accuse President Emmerson Mnangagwa of failing to live up to pre-election pledges to kick-start growth and to have a clean break from the 37-year rule of Robert Mugabe, who was forced out in a de facto coup in November 2017. **AL JAZEERA**

YouTube bans dangerous pranks as risky memes rage

YouTube clips that depict dangerous or emotionally

distressing "pranks" have been banned from the platform.

The move comes in response to so-called "challenges" that have sometimes resulted in death or injury.

The Google-owned video sharing site said such material had "no place on YouTube".

However, the firm appears to be failing to enforce its existing rules on harmful content.

A BuzzFeed report detailed how images depicting, or alluding to, bestiality were still appearing on the site - despite a pledge last April to remove the material.

Some of the videos had attracted many millions of views. YouTube said it "worked to aggressively enforce our monetisation policies to eliminate the incentive for this abuse".

But enforcing its new rules on pranks may prove even more difficult, given ambiguity over what may or may not be considered harmful.

"YouTube is home to many beloved viral challenges and pranks," a message added to the site's FAQ section read.

"That said, we've always had policies to make sure

what's funny doesn't cross the line into also being harmful or dangerous.

"Our Community Guidelines prohibit content that encourages dangerous activities that are likely to result in serious harm, and today clarifying what this means for dangerous challenges and pranks."

From now on, the site said it would not allow videos that featured "pranks with a perceived danger of serious physical injury".

This includes pranks where someone is tricked into thinking they are in severe danger, even if no real threat existed.

The site added: "We also don't allow pranks that cause children to experience severe emotional distress, meaning something so bad that it could leave the child traumatized for life."

YouTube said it had worked closely with child psychologists on what might constitute a traumatic experience. It did not post a full list, but said it included scenarios where a child is tricked into believing their parents had died.

The new rules come in response to several

instances of pranks and stunts that are seriously ill-advised at best, and deadly at worst.

In May, Minnesota woman Monalisa Perez, 20, was sentenced to six months in prison after shooting dead her boyfriend, Mario Ruiz. The couple had hoped video of their stunt, in which an encyclopaedia was meant to protect Mr Ruiz, would go viral on YouTube.

Also last year, the American Association of Poison Control Centers reported a spike in reported cases of illness from detergent ingestion following a craze that had people eating pods containing laundry detergent.

It prompted the product's maker, Procter and Gamble, to enlist the help of American Football star Rob Gronkowski to front a public awareness campaign on social media.

More recently, a challenge inspired by a scene in Netflix show Birdbox involved carrying out activities - such as driving - while blindfolded. At least one person is known to have crashed as a result. **BBC**

Powerful labour union to stage strike over wages in Tunisia

Tunisia's government and its powerful workers' union have failed to reach a deal to raise the wages for about 670,000 civil servants, officials said, making a nationwide strike this week likely. A strike by the Tunisia General Labour Union (UGTT) would include all airports, ports and government offices.

Tunisia is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to freeze public sector wages to help reduce the country's budget deficit.

"The negotiations with the government ended without any result, and we will go on strike on Thursday," Hafedh Hfaidh, an UGTT official, said.

A government source told Reuters news agency that

the negotiations had failed despite a new proposal from the government, without providing any details.

It was not immediately clear whether more talks would be held on Wednesday - sometimes, strikes get averted at the last minute.

Tunisia's economy has been in crisis since the toppling of autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, with unemployment and inflation shooting up. About 670,000 public sector workers went on strike and thousands protested across Tunisia last November to press the government to raise wages.

The government aims to cut the public sector wage bill to 12.5 percent of gross

domestic product (GDP) in 2020 from the current 15.5 percent, one of the world's highest levels, according to the IMF.

The public sector wage bill had doubled to about 16 billion dinars (\$5.5bn) in 2018 from 7.6 billion dinars (\$2.6bn) in 2010.

Tunisia struck a deal with the IMF in December 2016 for a loan programme worth around \$2.8 billion to overhaul its ailing economy with steps to cut chronic deficits and trim bloated public services, but progress has been slow.

The government wants to cut the budget deficit to about 3.9 percent of GDP this year from about 5 percent last year and 6.2 percent in 2017. **REUTERS NEWS AGENCY**

Simataa backs Banda's Ligue 1 move

By Alex Chilumbwe
 Football administrator Simataa Simataa says Under-20 AfCON winner Emmanuel Banda's French Ligue 2 move to Sportif Bezier is a good development saying majority of great African players started low. In an interview with Goal Diggers! Simataa said it was important to have traceable development in football by starting low just like Abedi Pele, Anthony Yeabowa, George Waah and others did. "It does not matter that he's joined a Ligue 2 side from pro League Belgian club Oestende because there are great African footballers who started low like him. It is all about hard work staying focused until you reach your dream standard," he said. Simataa further said that there was need to closely monitor Banda's performance in France and see if he would be the team's saviour from its 18th position on the table. "If he's not going to save his new side from its current position that is very close to the relegation zone, he should be brought back and be absorbed in one of our local elite club. We need to monitor him closely and not be blinded by the name of playing for a French side," said Simataa. When Banda's move was publicised by online publications, a number of soccer fans on social media indicated that they were displeased by his Ligue 2 move and resounded that he should be brought in the Zambian elite league instead of going to a lower league. Banda, 21, will be wearing his favourite Jersey number 12 at the 2007 established team Sportif Bezier that is currently number 18 on the French Ligue 2 table.

Federer and Wozniacki stay on track as Anderson crashes

Roger Federer ground out a tough three-set win to make the Australian Open third round for an incredible 20th straight year Thursday and stay on track for a seventh title, with defending champion Caroline Wozniacki also safely through. But it was curtains for South African fifth seed Kevin Anderson, who slumped out to young American Frances Tiafoe. On an overcast day at Melbourne Park, former US Open champion and fifth seeded Sloane Stephens joined the big guns in progressing, but the women's side also saw a top 10 player crash. Ninth seed Kiki Bertens, who raced through the rankings last year after winning three titles, was whipped in three sets by Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Federer might be 37 but he's not showing his age, with British qualifier Dan Evans the latest to fall under his spell as he works towards a third successive Australian crown and 21st major victory. He defeated Evans at Wimbledon last year with the loss of just eight games, but it was a much harder assignment this time, winning 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena. "I think if I could have pulled away earlier in the match it might have been easier," said the third seed. "I think he played very well, it was hard to pull away to his credit." The Swiss star's Australian achievements so far put him on a par with other six-time winners Novak Djokovic and



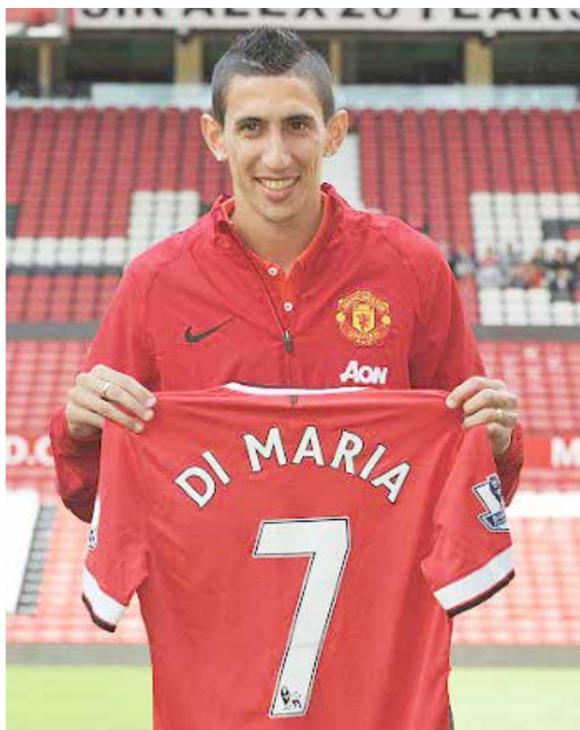
Roy Emerson -- although the Australian great's victories all came before the Open era. He next plays either France's Gael Monfils or American Taylor Fritz. If he goes on to win the tournament, he will become the first man ever to claim seven or more titles at two Grand Slams, having already won eight Wimbledons. His long-time rival and 17-time Slam winner Rafael Nadal takes on local hope Matthew Ebden in a night match. The Spaniard is bidding for his own slice of history by becoming the first man in the Open era, and only the third in history along with Emerson and Rod Laver, to win each Grand Slam on two or more occasions.

Anderson, beaten by Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final last year, was sent packing by Tiafoe 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5. The fifth seed struggled with an elbow injury early in the clash and couldn't cope with the 20-year-old power and finesse. World number 39 Tiafoe, who equalled his best ever Grand Slam result, next plays veteran Italian Andreas Seppi and said he was ecstatic. "It's all about competing, how bad you want it and I want it real bad," he said, fresh from playing the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth with Serena Williams. - Collision course - Sixth seed Marin Cilic, who lost in the final to Federer last year, had no such dramas, grinding past American Mackenzie

McDonald in four sets. The Croat now plays Spanish 26th seed Fernando Verdasco, who beat Radu Albot of Moldova. Another young gun, Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas, also stayed alive, overcoming a tricky test against Serbian Viktor Troicki in four sets. Dane Wozniacki, who is battling rheumatoid arthritis, steamrolled past Sweden's Johanna Larsson 6-1, 6-3 as she bids to become the first woman to defend the title since Victoria Azarenka in 2013. It set up a potential glamour clash with Maria Sharapova, who plays later. "I thought I started pretty well, started aggressively, but she started making less errors and I was just trying to stay

consistent," Wozniacki said. Meanwhile, Stephens, who endured a horror run at Melbourne Park since reaching the semi-final in 2013, exiting in the first round in 2015, 2016 and 2018, swatted aside former doubles partner Timea Babos 6-3, 6-1. It kept her on a collision course with world number two Angelique Kerber in the quarter-finals. Second seeded Kerber, the 2016 champion, resumes her tournament later Wednesday against fellow left-hander Beatriz Haddad Maia as she targets a 100th Grand Slam main draw win. Others safely through included 15th seed Ashleigh Barty and 19th seed Caroline Garcia. AFP

Di Maria blames LVG for Man Utd failure



Former Manchester United winger Angel di Maria believes manager Louis van Gaal was to blame for his failure to live up to his potential at Old Trafford. Argentina international Di Maria joined the Red Devils from Real Madrid in the summer of 2014 for a then-British record fee of £59.7 million (\$75m). But he struggled to perform on a consistent basis, contributing four goals and 12 assists in 32 appearances before departing for Paris Saint-Germain at the end of the 2014-15 campaign. Di Maria, though, believes he could have offered so much more had Van Gaal, who was regularly criticised for his negative brand of football, allowed him to express himself further. "I only stayed for one year. It was not the best time of my career, or rather I was not allowed to spend my best time there," he told France Bleu. "There were complications with the coach at the time.

"But thank God, I was able to come to PSG and demonstrate again who I was." Di Maria will return to Old Trafford with his PSG team-mates when the two sides meet in the last 16 of the Champions League. Despite being 13 points clear at the top of Ligue 1 and well on track to win a sixth French title in seven years, the Parc des Princes outfit have struggled to lay down a marker when it comes to their European performances. But, having come through a tough group containing Liverpool and Napoli, there is hope that Thomas Tuchel's side have what it takes to challenge in Europe's premier club competition. Di Maria, however, is wary of Man Utd's upturn in form under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, with the Norwegian interim manager winning all six of his matches in charge since replacing Jose Mourinho on the touchline. "We still have matches before facing Manchester," he added. "They have changed with their new coach and they have not lost a match. Goal.com



Chelsea to offer Cech chance to return after he leaves Arsenal

Chelsea are ready to offer Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech a role with them at the end of the season when he retires from football, Goal understands.

The 36-year-old announced that he will hang up his gloves at the end of the season after a glorious career which included 11 years at Chelsea - a period that was the most successful in the club's history.

The decision to bring back Cech would follow their strategy of wanting to recognise the contributions of some of their top former players by offering them roles when their playing careers come to an end.

The Gunners goalkeeper has yet to make a concrete plan over his next step after he leaves the north Londoners, preferring to focus on helping Unai Emery's side win a trophy in his final season.

He could, though, be offered roles ranging from a coach to an executive, or an ambassadorial role.

The former Czech Republic international has a personal relationship with Chelsea's owner Roman Abramovich, with Cech having recently moved house to a location that's closer to Chelsea's training ground than Arsenal's.

He would be following a host of ex-Chelsea players in having worked with the club after retirement, with John Terry, Frank Lampard and Jody Morris having all coached the club's youngsters in recent years.

They went onto secure positions with Aston Villa and Derby County, with Lampard having taken the manager's job at Pride Park. *Goal.com*

Messi hungry for more after reaching 400 La Liga goals



Lionel Messi paid tribute to team-mates past and present after reaching 400 La Liga goals for Barcelona in Sunday's 3-0 win over Eibar. The 31-year-old is the league's all-time top goalscorer by some distance, having surpassed the previous record of 251 - held for 59 years by Athletic Bilbao great Telmo Zarra - in November 2014.

His latest landmark goal

doubled Barca's lead over Eibar at Camp Nou, producing a typically clinical finish with his left foot in the 53rd minute.

The Argentina international is now 89 goals ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo, who left for Juventus in July, and the only other active La Liga players in the division's top 30 all-time leading scorers are Aritz Aduriz and Karim Benzema.

With 17 already, Messi is well on track to score 25 or more in the top flight for the 10th season running, and he was filled with pride to have reached another remarkable milestone.

"I'm proud to have reached 400 goals and I hope I can get some more," he told Mundo Deportivo.

"I don't focus much on the records or numbers, I prefer to focus on the day-to-day.

More than just scoring goals, I think of each game as a challenge where we have to go to win to add three points and fight for La Liga, the tournament that rewards the most consistent team.

"I try to help, but not only with a goal, also with some assists or even participating in some key moves.

"It is clear that without the help of all my colleagues, those I have now and those who were before, it would have been impossible to score the 400."

Although Messi regards every goal as "special", he did single out his first - way back in May 2005 - when asked about his favourite.

"The first against Albacete from the pass of Ronnie [Ronaldinho], I will never forget," he added. "The goals of the Clasicos are always special and against hard opponents that are usually Atletico Madrid, Valencia and Sevilla. Also those that I have had the luck to score in front of our fans. In Camp Nou they are always nice.

"In the end, the most important goals are not the most spectacular, but those that serve us as a team to win." *Goal.com*

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