

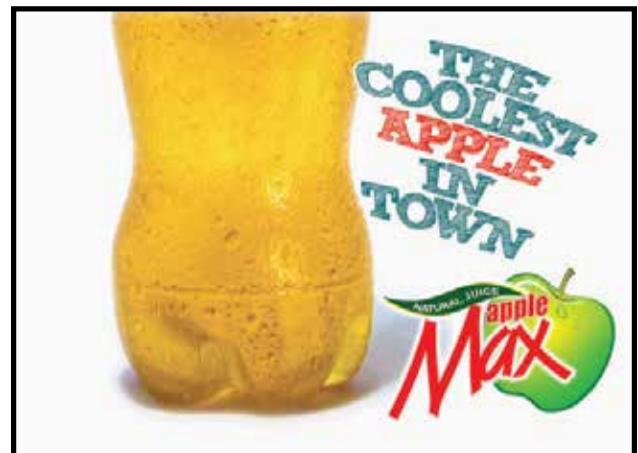
News Diggers! ear to the ground

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Friday January 25, 2019



PF FOOLISH - HH

No mine is funding UPND



NGOCC executive director Engwase Mwale speaks during the Swedish and Zambian Dads Exhibition at Lusaka National Museum yesterday - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

By Mirriam Chabala

Only foolish people in the PF can deliberately choose to misinterpret my position on the mines, out of stupidity, to claim that I don't want investors to pay taxes, says UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema.

And Hichilema has insisted that Zambians

and all business houses cannot wait to have him as their President because they know that the UPND government will turn the economy around with better investment policies. Meanwhile Hichilema says under his rule, mines which will be found guilty of evading tax would lose their mines.

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Only way of stopping 3rd term is by voting out Lungu in 2021 - Wynter

By Mirriam Chabala

Wynter Kabimba says the only way to stop President Edgar Lungu from holding office for a third successive time is by voting against

him in the 2021 general election.

And Kabimba says PF policy

inconsistencies are making stakeholders lose confidence in the regime.

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Marijuana helps me play football, boy tells court

By Zondiwe Mbewe

A 16-year-old boy of Lusaka's Kanyama Compound has told the Magistrates' Court that smoking marijuana helps him play football.

The Court has, however, wondered why he is not playing in the Zambia national team as proof that cannabis helps boost performance.

In this matter, the juvenile is facing one count of trafficking in psychotropic substances.

It is alleged that the juvenile offender on January 10 this year in Lusaka, did traffic in 81.9 grammes of marijuana without lawful authority.

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2021 polls won't be peaceful without Church-led dialogue, - Chief Hamusonde

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Police probing Sichalwe for circulating porn video

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Police Spokesperson Esther Katongo told journalists yesterday that the command is investigating Chiefs and Traditional Affairs Minister Lawrence Sichalwe for circulating obscene materials.

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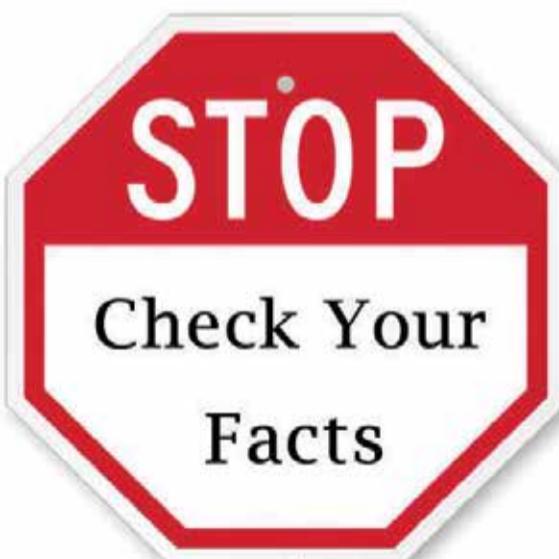
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Horticulture farmer Mirriam Kamalata Katongo with Fortune World Investments managing director Mukumbi Kafuta and administration director Patrick Matanda during the mentorship visit at Kyawama township in Solwezi – Picture by Claver Mutinta/SUMA SYSTEMS

LCC terminates MoU with Parkrite

By Milimo Namangala

The Lusaka City Council (LCC) has terminated its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Parkrite Zambia Limited (PZL) following the latter's request to end the agreement. According to a letter issued by LCC Town Clerk Alex Mwansa, the decision was made in response to PZL's submission to terminate its agreement held with the LCC. The company was subsequently advised to conclude their activities in parking sites within three months and hand them back to the Council. "Re: Termination of memorandum of agreement; Reference is made to the above subject matter and your missive dated 18th September, 2018, 25th September, 2018 and 4th October, 2018. As indicated in your correspondences wherein you invoked the provisional termination and breach

clauses of the Memorandum of Agreement between yourselves and Lusaka City Council, wherein you expressed your intention to terminate the said Memorandum of Agreement, we wish to inform you that Lusaka City Council, through its Full Council meeting held on 5th November, 2018, vide Minute No. C/171/11/18 resolved to terminate the said Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in accordance with your intention to terminate," wrote Mwansa in a letter dated January 7, 2019. "In the premises, be informed that as per clause 3 of the Provisional Termination and Breach Clauses of the Memorandum of Agreement, you have been given 3 months from the date hereof to wind up your activities and, thereafter, hand over back all the parking sites to Lusaka City Council. I thank you for your corporation and doing business with us."

NDC will remove Sales Tax to boost tourism sector

By Zondiwe Mbewe

National Democratic Congress (NDC) secretary general Mwenga Musenge says an NDC government will exempt tourists from Sales Tax in order to boost the tourism industry. And Musenge says the NDC will restructure the Zambia National Tourism Board and adequately fund it to ensure that tourism potential is sufficiently marketed. In NDC's newsletter to News Diggers! Musenge noted that issues that needed to be addressed in Zambia's tourism sector included: high taxes, poor infrastructure to support access to the tourist

destination sites and lack of a marketing strategy. He bemoaned that tourism in Zambia largely remained a preserve for foreigners and the rich, adding that to promote tourism in the country, NDC would reduce the bureaucracy associated with opening up business start-ups, among others. "NDC will: (i) Identify and list economic

activities that will be branded and identified as tourism activities for easy marketing; (ii) We will reduce red-tape and bureaucracy associated with opening up business start-ups and entrepreneur ventures in the tourism industries. By doing so, we will encourage entrepreneur ventures into local tourism and

also strategies to enable Zambians venture into local tourism; (iii) We will also streamline taxation and registration in the tourism industry and revise downwards visa fees for visitors who come into our country for tourism purposes," Musenge stated. He added that an NDC administration would further identify areas and zones whose tourism potential had not been exploited due to poor infrastructure, adding that businesses that set up tourism facilities in these areas would be given tax incentives. And Musenge stated that NDC would also open up water-ways for tourism. "We will open up our water-ways for tourism such as; the Zambezi River from North-Western Province to Livingstone and allow ferries to move along the rivers. This will enable various sites along the river to be developed into tourism sites. We will revisit all laws governing water fronts in favour of protecting locals living in those areas and enable access by both foreign and local tourists," he explained. Musenge observed that tourism in Zambia was still extremely expensive and rated as being for foreigners and the wealthy elite.

He, therefore, stated that to improve local tourism, NDC would remove the controversial Sales Tax whenever a local tourist accessed tourism services. "We will remove Sales Tax whenever a local tourist accesses tourism services or pays for lodging, game drive, boat cruises and other activities identified as tourism activities in areas identified as tourism zones. We will also reduce taxes upon registration and ensure that the industry creates special rates for locals, SADC region, COMESA and international visitors," Musenge pledged. He stated that an NDC government would also give tax relief for tourist firms that attracted market and provided 35 percent services identified as tourism services to Zambian citizens. Meanwhile, Musenge stated that the NDC would also improve infrastructure by constructing air strips, roads and telecommunication infrastructure in areas designated as tourism zones. He stated that their government would also restructure the Zambia National Tourism Board and adequately fund it to ensure that tourism potential was sufficiently marketed.

Musenge further stated that the NDC would cut bureaucracy that hindered Zambians and locals from obtaining hunting licenses and participating in game cropping. "Game cropping and hunting licenses will be a preserve of Zambians and locals who will in turn sell to foreigners and investors. The locals will be given 75 per cent of the value of all hunting concessions. This will go towards building schools, hospitals and social amenities in the local area. We will train and deploy all locals in national parks and game reserve areas as game scouts," he added. Musenge stated that the NDC would equally be giving rewards to locals that would help in curbing illegal poaching, a scourge that has ravaged the wildlife sector in Zambia. "We will give rewards to locals who help to curb down illegal poaching. Proceeds of all illegal poaching will be given to locals. The highlighted reforms discussed will ensure a thriving tourism sector, competitive internationally and ensure access to our citizens and non-citizens. It will also ensure increased income generation for our local tourism entrepreneurs and government Treasury," stated Musenge.

ACC nabs Kasama cop for corruption

By Milimo Namangala

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has arrested a Kasama Central-based police officer for corrupt activities involving over K5,000. In a statement, Thursday, ACC public relations manager Timothy Moono stated that Arnold Mutunda, a police officer, aged 31, was arrested for corrupt practices as a public officer, contrary to the law. "Arnold Mutunda, aged 31, has been arrested and charged with one count of corrupt practices by public officer contrary to section 19 (1) of Anti-Corruption Act No. 3 of 2012," revealed Moono. "Particulars of the offence are that, on dates unknown but between 1st

September, 2017, and 31st December, 2017, at Kasama in the Kasama District of the Northern Province of the Republic of Zambia, Arnold Mutunda being a public officer, namely a police officer employed in the Zambia Police Service, did corruptly solicit and received a total of K5,500.00 cash gratification from Mukula Bwalya as an inducement for him to facilitate the change of the offence from aggravated robbery to theft." The suspect has since been released on bond and will appear in court on February 19, 2019. Mukula Bwalya was arrested earlier by the Zambia Police Service in Kasama for an offence of aggravated robbery, according to the statement.

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By Geoffrey Zulu
The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has expressed concerns about the misinformation surrounding Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) across the country. In an interview, NBA communications officer Sandra Mulowa said aggressive awareness campaigns have to be carried out across the country for the general public to be fully informed on GMOs because some people do not understand what GMOs are. "On 14th January, we (NBA) had a stakeholders' engagement and over 40 stakeholders that came that we could also explain and sensitize them on our (NBA) mandate because we have realized that there is a lot of misinformation on GMOs and some of the people that are talking about GMOs may not really understand what GMOs are," Mulowa said, adding that the sensitization and inspection programmes on GMOs are ongoing. "We do sensitization with the general public, government officials and some of our stakeholders just make sure they are kept abreast with what we are doing, and if they have any queries then they are on-

hand to explain and answer them," Mulowa added. She further explained that NBA had MoUs with the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), among other stakeholders, at various border points to enhance the NBA's operations. "With MoU with them of which they are providing us with 15 health inspections; these are based at point of entry

and perform duties of NBA. Also our colleagues, ZRA (at borders) are very much alert," said Mulowa. NBA was established under the Biosafety Act No. 10 of 2007.

Through the Act, the NBA regulates the research, development, application, importation, export, transit, contained use, release or placing on the market of any GMO whether intended

for use as a pharmaceutical, food, feed or processing, or a product of a GMO also to ensure that any activity involving the use or a product of GMO prevents any socio-economic impact or harm to human, animal health and the environment in the country.

Zambians need sensitization on GMOs – NBA

2021 polls won't be peaceful without Church-led dialogue - Chief Hamusonde

By Thomas Mulenga

Senior Chief Hamusonde of the Tonga-speaking people says the 2021 general elections will not be peaceful if the Church is allowed to lead the national dialogue process as it was the only non-partisan mediator. And chief Hamusonde says people in his chiefdom have not yet received farming inputs from government. In an interview Chief Hamusonde warned that the 2021 polls would only be peaceful if the Church is allowed to lead the national dialogue process as it was the only non-partisan mediator. "If the dialogue was to be

run by the ZCID (Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue), we are not going to have a peaceful election in 2021 because that is going to be working for a political party, whichever political party. Now if it is done by the three Church mother bodies, I am very sure and positive that everything will be right in 2021. God should be feared first as we are a Christian country and we are Christians, politicians should, therefore, respect the clergymen who are working for God, according to our belief as Christians. They will not cause us any harm in anyway politically, so we should allow them to

lead the dialogue process smoothly. I am telling every politician in this country, fear God first once we fear God, we are not going to be pointing unnecessary fingers at each other because we shall have all our rights and ambitions in the armpit of Jesus Christ. I am telling the politicians that they should align themselves to any of the Churches that worships Christ and they will be good Christians and Zambia will be a good Christian country. If you are only saying we are Christians, but you are dragging the country outside Christianity, then you are not a Christian," Chief Hamusonde said. "I will tell you directly from deep down my heart, I will not cheat you. The Church-run dialogue is what we have been waiting for quite a long time. National dialogue is not political party dialogue, even if I haven't been to school enough, but the little that I picked in class, there is a great difference between national dialogue and political inter-party dialogue. National dialogue means a lot of things, not only politics, but it also involves things that are outside politics. And it

can only be held properly by a non-partisan entity like the Church, which does not have partisan interests of favouring any political party. So, that's the only institution that should be allowed to conduct national dialogue." And Chief Hamusonde said the Church-led dialogue would represent every Zambian. "I am personally so happy to hear that the Church is now leading the national dialogue, that's a proper way in which every Zambian will feel covered. If it's political party dialogue, those who belong to UPND, will be fighting to suit their party and those who belong to PF will be fighting that some other clauses don't come in, so that they remain in power forever and ever, suiting PF because they are already in power. National dialogue will not favour UPND, national dialogue will not favour PF, whether it is the party ruling, it will favour 17 million Zambians, so that Thomas Mulenga would be able to express himself freely in a democratic country, so that chief Hamusonde will express himself freely without fearing anything, because he knows that he

will be protected by law, not by the wish of the party. Not being protected by the party because it's the party in power. I don't belong to any party, I have no card for any political party, nothing, since I was born, not even before I became a chief, so I am speaking from the bottom of my heart," chief Hamusonde explained. Meanwhile, chief Hamusonde disclosed that people in his chiefdom have not yet received farming inputs from government, and has urged government to be planning for the farming season in advance in order to avoid inconveniencing farmers. "My people, the Illa people of Bwengwa, the Lundwe people of Bweengwa, have had no farming inputs. It is so bad what's happening in Monze, how farmers are waiting for inputs. The MP for Bweengwa and my coordinator, were amongst the people that were being troubled yesterday over farming inputs. This signifies that the people of Bweengwa have not yet received farming inputs. The government should start planning for the farming season early enough to avoid this kind of inconveniences to farmers," said chief Hamusonde.

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By Mirriam Chabala
 Rainbow Party General Secretary Wynter Kabimba says the only way to stop President Edgar Lungu from holding office for a third successive time is by voting against him in the 2021 general election. And Kabimba says PF policy inconsistencies are making stakeholders lose confidence in the regime. In an interview, Kabimba said the only way for Zambians to oppose the Constitutional Court's judgement that President Lungu is eligible to contest elections in 2021 is by voting against him in the August, 2021 polls. "The Constitution says the decision of the Constitutional Court is final. So, the only institution in this country, by the Constitution, which is mandated with the interpretation of the law, is the Judiciary. That is important to understand. But that is different from saying that you do not agree with the judgement. Unfortunately, even if you don't agree

Only way to stop 3rd term is to vote out Lungu in 2021 - Wynter



with the judgement, which opinion as a citizen you have a right to express; I do not agree with the judgement

by the ConCourt myself, but it doesn't change the judgement because I am not the one that by law is vested

with powers to interpret the law, that power is vested in the ConCourt. So, the only way President Lungu can be

stopped is at the ballot. If Zambians feel strongly that he didn't deserve the third term or another term; or if they want to disagree with the judgement of the ConCourt, they may go and vote against the man," Kabimba advised. "Then they would be telling the ConCourt that 'we did not agree with your decision, so we shall use the court of public opinion to pass our own judgement!' But to continue the debate that the country is polarised because there are those that do not support and those that support, it's academic. The decision that has to be made is political because the political power is not vested in the ConCourt."

the long-awaited national dialogue to take place and other political stakeholders can then raise those issues and together with government, we can get a comment to commit itself to the amendment that are going to take place. But I have also read a statement from the Minister of Justice (Given Lubinda) that amendments to the Public Order Act will be going to the next session of Parliament from his earlier statement that those amendments will have to await the Public Order Act," said Kabimba. "So, it is these contradictions in pronouncements by government that do not give confidence to those outside government that the government is serious about the issues that have been raised by stakeholders in terms of the weaknesses in the Constitution and the implementation in the enforcement of the Public Order Act. We keep on hearing contradictory statements along the way! So, it is, therefore, very easy for somebody to say that this is not a government that is serious with effecting those amendments. We probably need another government in future that will deal with these issues."

Chitotela directs EIZ to explain govt projects

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Housing and Infrastructure Development Minister Ronald Chitotela has directed the Engineering Institute of Zambia (EIZ) to be proactive in explaining technical features associated with various infrastructure projects across the country. Chitotela lamented that government had on several occasions been unfairly criticized by several stakeholders for constructing various projects, yet EIZ had opted to remain silent despite having all the correct technical information. He said he expected EIZ to defend the engineering profession by providing factual technical

information on various projects government had embarked on. This is according to a statement issued by ministry public relations officer Jeff Banda. Chitotela was speaking during a courtesy visit at his office in Lusaka paid by the EIZ executive led by their president Eng Sydney Matamwandi. "On several occasions, it has surprised me that the EIZ has not explained technical facts on various infrastructure projects, which government is putting up and some people have opted to spread falsehoods on them," Banda quoted Chitotela as saying. Chitotela cited the cost

of the Michael Chilufya Sata Toll Plaza on the Ndola-Kitwe dual carriageway as one project that several stakeholders raised concerns on, but that EIZ remained mute in defending the project. He urged the EIZ to rise to the occasion and highlight technical facts associated with all infrastructure projects government undertook. He also appealed to the institute to uphold professionalism and ethics among all its members. "You must take action on some of your members who are employed as consultants on some poorly-constructed projects in the country. It raises questions

as to what motivated someone whether it is profit or just being unethical," said Chitotela. Chitotela further urged EIZ to be innovative and assured the institute of unwavering government support. And Eng Matamwandi pledged continuous support to government policies.

Marijuana helps me play football, boy tells court

By Zondiwe Mbewe

A 16-year-old boy of Lusaka's Kanyama Compound has told the Magistrates' Court that smoking marijuana helps him play football. The Court has, however, wondered why he is not playing in the Zambia national team as proof that cannabis boosts performance. In this matter, the juvenile is facing one count of trafficking in psychotropic substances. It is alleged that the juvenile offender on January 10 this year in Lusaka, did traffic in 81.9 grammes of marijuana without lawful authority. When the matter came up for plea before Magistrate Nsunge Chanda, Wednesday, the juvenile, who is currently not in school, pleaded guilty to the charge. Asked why he trafficked the drugs, the juvenile said it helped him play football. At this point, the Court then wondered why he was not in the national team to prove that cannabis helped.

"So, you are now in the national team so that you prove that cannabis are good? Where do you play football? Because I have never heard of your name on television? Where?" magistrate Chanda asked. The juvenile said he played football at Kanyama grounds. Asked whether he was aware that smoking marijuana was an offence, he said he wasn't aware. Magistrate Chanda then asked him where he bought the drugs. "So, you buy it from the market? In Soweto market they just put cannabis for you to buy? You stay in Kanyama and [you] don't know that cannabis are not allowed? Meaning you can't change, the way you answer will tell what kind of a child you are," said Magistrate Chanda. Magistrate Chanda entered a plea of guilty and adjourned the matter to January 29 for facts, as the juvenile remained remanded in custody.

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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

UPND secretary general Stephen Katuka says it is a shame that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) has failed to play its constitutional role of providing a free and fair elections even when members of his party continue to be provoked by PF. Meanwhile, five UPND supporters in Sesheke have been arrested by police for removing PF campaign materials. But commenting on the violent clashes between his party members and PF in Lundazi early this week where some UPND supporters were attacked, Katuka said his party had the capacity to defend itself when provoked. According to a statement issued by the UPND media team, Thursday, Katuka stated that his party was a sober, civilized and disciplined political party, but with a capacity to defend itself when provoked.

"We do not believe in violence like the PF, but this manner of uncivilized behaviour by the PF leaves us with no choice, but to demand that our members defend themselves against PF and police aggression on them because we are equal to the task. What defensive mechanisms the members will employ is dependent on themselves; [but] this is not right and the ECZ is watching instead of playing its role as an election referee. This we shall not tolerate," Katuka stated. "We had a meeting with the ECZ on 7th January, 2019, with president Hichilema and other senior party officials at which we told the Commission that it is failing to manage elections in the country. Yesterday's (Wednesday) violent attacks in Lundazi and Sesheke have vindicated us. It is the role of the ECZ to manage the elections by detailing the police and telling them what is expected of them. Teargas is unnecessary in an election. Elections should not be a

ECZ responsible for Lundazi, Sesheke violence - UPND secretary general

source of conflicts, but a joy for choosing representatives." He further accused PF of being the major beneficiaries of a defective Public Order Act and misrule, hence its snubbing of the Church-led national dialogue process, which would have ironed out a number of issues. Katuka also advised Inspector General of Police Kakoma Kanganja to tame his police

officers' insatiable appetite for teargas, describing their conduct as primitive and aimed at intimidating voters and campaigners. "We have since written to the Electoral Commission of Zambia and attached video evidence of the PF violence in Lundazi. We have since demanded that the Commission disciplines the PF as the sponsor of

violence and show cause why its candidate should not be disqualified in line with the Electoral Act. Any failure by the Commission to take remedial steps against the PF will leave us with no choice, but believe that they are in collusion with the PF," Katuka said. Meanwhile, five UPND supporters in Sesheke were arrested by police for removing

PF campaign materials. In a statement, police spokesperson Esther Katongo disclosed that the five were arrested, Wednesday, around 13:00 hours after police received a report of them removing some campaign materials. "When police made a follow up of the report, they apprehended five people among them four men

and one woman and also recovered improvised shot buttons (offensive weapons) from a Land Cruiser, which was being used by the UPND team. UPND cadres later went to the police station to find out why their colleagues had been arrested and on their way back they blocked the road with stones, which they picked from a construction site located near their camp," narrated Katongo. And Katongo appealed to all political parties to adhere to electoral laws and always preach messages of peace as well as desist from any provocative acts.

PF foolishly misinterpreting my position on mine tax, says HH

By Mirriam Chabala

Only foolish people in the PF can deliberately choose to misinterpret my position on the mines, out of stupidity, to claim that I don't want investors to pay taxes, says UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema. And Hichilema has insisted that Zambians and all business houses cannot wait to have him as their President because they know that the UPND government will turn the economy around with better investment policies. Meanwhile Hichilema says under his rule, mines which will be found guilty of evading tax would lose their mines. In an interview with News Diggers! Hichilema rubbished claims by the Patriotic Front media director Sunday Chanda who accused the UPND leader of siding with the mines instead of the Zambian people, because the opposition party was funded by foreign investors. What we said on Radio

was very clear. Only a foolish person in the PF can deliberately misinterpret what I said. Out of stupidity they have twisted what Hichilema said to suit their agenda. There is not a single mine that has ever financed the UPND, that's a lie! They (PF) are holding on to a stool because they are thinking the river is too strong, the current in the river is blowing. This 'chimbwi no plan' PF has no idea how to run the economy. The only reason any business or individual in Zambia will support HH, not financially, is because they know his policies will make them better. The economy will be better, businesses will be better, marketeers will be better, including Zambian suppliers. We will put a law that will require that all businesses operating in Zambia should favour Zambians. We will introduce that law, which will affect the mine suppliers as well. Let me give you this example... let's move away

from the mines because this is the motion around the stupidity of the people in PF, lack of understanding, ignorance and just sheer stupidity! We are saying, in this law that we are going to put in place, the government of the UPND will have adverts to place for any programme, developmental projects or tenders; we will give the adverts [to] Zambian-owned media," Hichilema explained. "The UPND is funded by citizens of Zambia and I am one of them. Am I not a citizen? GBM is another, isn't he a citizen? And many well-wishers, Zambians, wherever they may be, in this country or outside. Anyone else who wants to support UPND, they are welcome. The issue is that UPND is funded by Zambians, that's why we want the economy to grow so that there can be more stronger Zambians running businesses. We will give them to Diggers!, to Daily Nation, the Mast because we

want Diggers! to grow not just from the cover price of the newspaper of K10, but any adverts that will come from the government will equitably be placed in those newspapers because we want business retention and money to be in the economy. But those ignorant PF people don't understand what we understand in the UPND." Hichilema further explained that mines will not be allowed to make profits without paying a fair. "We want mines to pay a fair tax, an appropriate tax. They must contribute to Zambian revenue, it's our desire and it's what we will implement. Our policy [as UPND] is that everybody must pay their tax, which includes the mines. They must all pay their fair tax to the Treasury so that the revenue can be used to support investment in different areas. In fact, when we form government, there will be a law that will seek to prosecute mines that evade tax, and if they are found wanting, they will lose their mines to the State. Then we would also like the mines to support education as it were in the past, we want to scale internal scholarships by mining companies and other businesses...that's very clear and stronger than this nonsense that the PF are doing in the mines, they don't even know what is happening in the mines. We know what is happening in the mines, but the PF don't understand. So, mines will also contribute to the revenue of this country. But what we will not do is to overtax mines or any other businesses for that matter," Hichilema said. Meanwhile, Hichilema stressed that Zambians could not wait to have him as the seventh Republican President because they knew that the UPND government would support their businesses and improve livelihoods of all citizens with strong policies. "Zambian farmers should be happy, in fact I can confirm that Zambian farmers are

happily waiting for a UPND government and HH's leadership because they know that the cost of fertilizer will be down. They know that fertilizer will be given on time; they know that they will be paid on time and given a fair price for their maize. I can confirm to you that in Lundazi, that's why you see that support from there, because the farmers in Lundazi are eagerly waiting for a UPND government because they know that HH's policies will support them. They are looking forward, they are talking to us. After that radio programme, mine suppliers were phoning me to say: 'HH please come quickly, we listened to your programme, we love it!' It is only the evil PF, the brutal dictatorial PF are unhappy because we've exposed them! Then they want to start saying that 'HH is getting funding from the mines that's why he's saying that mines are waiting for us', let me replace mines with Diggers! with radio stations, the farmers, with retirees, ba kopala, they are all looking forward to UPND and HH's government for the many reasons I have always talked about," explained Hichilema. "It's not fair to single out and pick that HH favours the mine owners, no! I am favouring Zambians through this package I am explaining, which PF cannot understand. If they understand this level of thinking, they are corrupt and they don't want to implement it because if they implement it, it will save a Zambian job. That's why they don't want to see a Zambian who has got a bit of income because those Zambians will make independent political decisions, they will not be bought like tomatoes in the market, the way councillors are being bought. So, there is no money that we get from the mines as UPND, it is Zambians, and I am appealing to all Zambians to support the UPND, including funding UPND."



NGOCC executive director Engwase Mwale interacts with Social and Gender Specialist Lovisa Arlid and Swedish Ambassador Henrik Cederin during the Swedish and Zambian dads exhibition at Lusaka National Museum on Wednesday - Picture by Tenson Mkhala



PAC

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Why we deserve your vote



ZIMBABWE

By Andyford Mayele Banda

There just seems to be no good news coming out of Zimbabwe lately. Just from being inundated with news of a free falling Zimbabwean economy, widespread security forces brutality, boom the legend himself Oliver Mtukuzi is no more. This is definitely overwhelming for our brothers and sisters beyond the southern border of Zambia as Tuku, as he was fondly called, really epitomised everything that was right about Zimbabwe.

Today, before we go deep discussing Zimbabwe, we would like to pay tribute to a gallant son of Africa who has impacted our lives positively for as long as we can remember. Oliver Mtukuzi was a Zimbabwean music legend who sang among others, the never-forgotten legendary song called Neria, which became a sound track for a Zimbabwean Movie of the same name. The movie was a hit we loved to watch in the 90s either on ZNBC TV or on Video Cassette Recorders where he even featured. We know that people are not perfect but Tuku demonstrated that discipline is an integral character in pursuing your career or calling. This can be attested from almost a zero negative headline on him, at least not that we are aware of. We say thank you for the memories and may you rest in peace legendary son of Africa Oliver Mthukuzi.

Our pick on Zimbabwe is based on the events that have escalated in the past few weeks. This is also to highlight the importance of having the right leadership in place to avoid such escalating levels of injustice and lack of a direction for a once admired country. Zimbabwe's economic meltdown should serve as a big warning to the people of Zambia to do whatever it is within their power to avoid going through the same path. While we complain about the cost of living in Zambia, in Zimbabwe it's a nightmare. Zimbabwe was once upon a time deemed the breadbasket of Southern Africa. Visiting Zimbabwe about two months ago, it was frustrating to see a beautiful country having been run down by a few greedy men. The cost of commodities is way too high with unending fuel queues. We had to carry gallons with our own fuel to avoid being caught up in the same crisis.

The challenges of Zimbabwe did not start yesterday, last week or last month or just the other year. This degeneration did not start at full blast but slowly and surely the damage was being created. It all started with political parties not having the space to operate freely, unfriendly business policies by the government resulting in the economy performing poorly and people losing jobs. The Zim-dollar then was slowly depreciating against major convertible currencies. There was also a rise in police brutality against people with divergent views. We have heard time and again of stories about how later the policy was to abduct people who opposed the political establishment and a good number of people disappeared. Many were never heard of or seen again ever since. All this started slowly.

Of course the freefalling of the economy was escalated due to the policy of land redistribution where white owned farms were grabbed without compensation. Then, aid was withdrawn and sanctions and trade embargoes against Zimbabwe followed. As a case in point, in February 2002, the European Union imposed a number of sanctions against the republic because its government was found to have been in serious violation



of human rights, as well as violation of the freedom of opinion and freedom of free assembly. And today our neighbours are not even sure of what their currency is. This is sad for a country that we really admired. What's also sad is the amount of talent that has been wasted or exiled due to lack of opportunities in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe not only has one of the most educated populous but it also has some of the most skilled people.

The problems of Zimbabwe have not been due to lack of skilled labour, resources or any disadvantage you can think of in a country but it's been due to leadership. The problem comes in when you have a leadership whose sole purpose is to keep power as opposed to serving the people. It seems they are hell-bent on doing anything possible even if it means stifling institutions such the Judiciary and Police just to make sure that they are in control of everything. The problem comes in when we think these are just politics and yet we cannot notice the danger of such acts in our society.

There is definitely a problem with the leadership of Zimbabwe. They are out-dated and not in tune with our times. Their sole purpose is power and they care less about the people just as long as they, and their children are guaranteed of a meal, shelter and the luxuries you can think of. As we have advocated time and again for Zambia, Zimbabwe needs a leadership shift. The Zanu-PF system must be ripped off and replaced with a new generation of patriotic leaders. It's clear that the current leadership of President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his Vice President Constatino Chiwenga are only in power for the luxury of it. They seem to have no clue whatsoever about what's happening in their own country. Hence, they have forgotten and have started brutalizing the same people that supported their takeover in November 2017. I believe Zimbabweans can identify a leadership that wants to work for legacies as opposed to enriching themselves.

Not surprisingly and probably conveniently, many African Presidents, including our own President Lungu have decided to turn a blind eye to such atrocities. Our appeal is that President Lungu must speak out against what's happening in Zimbabwe if he treasures peace and the brotherhood we share with Zimbabwe so much.

Many politicians when elected to office forget that these countries they are given to govern are not their countries but belong to the citizens. That's why citizens have the right to protest. But because they feel they own the country, and that their enjoyment must not be disturbed, they end up firing bullets at the owners of the country- the people. The PAC government will not play quiet diplomacy when such things are happening anywhere around the world especially in Africa and more especially to our neighbours.

We want to appeal to the people of Zambia to be wary and stop being tolerant of things that we can clearly see that are wrong and heading in the wrong direction. Since the PF took over government, we have seen things getting worse in as much as they want to sing the song of roads everyday. There are thin opportunities for employment in this country; the exchange rate moved from K5.6 to a dollar to around K12, fuel prices have soared from K8.5 to around K18. Worryingly, debt is rising and we have seen reports of how our forex reserve are depleting. Opposition political parties' operating space has been reduced and confidence in key institutions is at its worst since the introduction of multiparty democracy. It's also clear how the PF have demonstrated their desire to keep power by all means; they show lack of tolerance for divergent views and violence in elections. Zimbabwe started from a place much like where we are as a nation today. With the debt repayment plans this year, we cannot expect the cost of commodities such as fuel to reduce or the exchange rate to appreciate but all we can expect is an increase.

While we are not yet at Zimbabwe's level, we should never forget about how it all started. Please let us open our eyes. Let's not tolerate things that we must not tolerate otherwise we will let a few greedy men run down our country for the luxury of power just like what has happened to our brothers in Zimbabwe. Let's speak and pray for our brothers in Zimbabwe so that they can get their lives back to normal. And for our own sake and future generations' sake, let's be vigilant.

Andyford Mayele Banda
President
People's Alliance for Change (PAC)

By Geofrey Zulu

The Bank of Zambia (BoZ) has cautioned the members of public to be wary of a company trading as Mineral Pay, which is providing financial services without a licence issued by BoZ contrary to Section 6(2) of Banking and Financial Services Act no.7 of 2017 (BFSA).

According to a statement released by the BoZ communications department, the central bank conducted a review of Mineral Pay's business model and it

BoZ cautions public not to deal with Mineral Pay

was discovered that the company engaged itself in a 'money circulation scheme,' which is prohibited under Section 157 of the BFSA. "Mineral Pay has been offering

financial service by collecting deposits from members of the public. In that regard, the BoZ in collaboration with Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and Financial

Intelligence Centre (FIC) are currently investigating the company for activities contrary to the BFSA, as well as under the prohibition and Prevention of Money

laundering Act respectively," read the statement. The central bank further cautioned that the money circulation scheme was an unsustainable investment

operation that pays returns to its investors from their own money or the money paid by subsequent investors, rather than from profit earned by the individual or organisation running the operation.

"The schemes are of various forms but all promise high returns to individuals who are recruited by depositing money into an account after which they are issued with a purported investment document," disclosed BoZ.

"Be very cautious with any investment that promises huge returns in a very short period without any underlying economic activity. Further, the public is urged to only deal with financial service providers licensed by the BoZ, SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) or Pensions and Insurance Authority."

Zim, DRC chaos may affect intra-African trade - ZACCI

By Geofrey Zulu

Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) president Michael Nyirenda says the existing trade relations among countries in the southern African region may be negatively affected by the crises in Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In an interview, Nyirenda observed that the continued instability in these two countries had serious and negative trade effects, especially that Zambia is in the middle and a link to other neighbouring countries. "We (Zambia) are in a middle and do anchor in terms of linkage from the south to Cairo and we contribute towards trade whether by rail or by road. We stand to benefit and encourage trade as a land-linked country. So, with challenges in both Zimbabwe and DRC, trade may be cut off completely," Nyirenda said. "With the challenges in these two countries, I do hope that the traffic is not cut off completely, but with riots, anything is possible, and you find that what would happen may be traffic or cargo trucks from South Africa might be rerouted through Botswana as you may be aware. We (Zambia) have not completed the Kazungula Bridge yet, so we see some congestion at the ferry at Kazungula because I think we have one or two pontoons that are working." Nyirenda said the crises could also inconvenience the travelling public and cross-border businesses, among others, by suffering additional costs that were not planned for due high traffic

flow, congestion and delays. "With DRC is that most of the trucks we see passing through Zambia from South Africa is for supplies to mines in DRC itself; that may also jeopardize the business people those who are interested in Zambia to be part of distribution network to supply into DRC. That is what we might experience, but we do hope that things like that (impasse) can be resolved as soon as possible. We do note efforts being made, especially regarding Congo (DRC)," he explained,

adding that reports indicated that DRC was relatively calm and hoped the situation may be under control. He challenged the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to quickly intervene in helping these two countries solve their problems by urging the two leaders to put interests of their individual countries first. "I know that both Zimbabwe and DRC are members

of both the COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and SADC (Southern Africa Development Community); let these two bodies discuss, internally and at a higher level, which is at regional level," said Nyirenda, adding that cross-border trade will flow smoothly provided there is peace in the two countries. Zimbabwe has been rocked by protests in the past two weeks, with several people dead and many more injured following President

Emmerson Mnangagwa's decision to increase fuel pump prices by about 150 per cent, while the DRC's electoral commission last Thursday declared opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi as winner of the December 30 presidential polls. The outcome, however, has raised tensions among the other opposition candidate Martin Fayulu's supporters, who viewed the Constitutional Court's ruling to uphold Tshisekedi's victory as a sham.



President Lungu at Crossroads mall yesterday - Picture courtesy of Smart Eagles

Mulongoti is fairing well, says Mwamba

By Mirriam Chabala

Zambia's High Commissioner to South Africa Emmanuel Mwamba says People's Party president Mike Mulongoti is responding well to medication. In an interview, Mwamba said Mulongoti had been visited by a number of staff members at the Zambian mission in South Africa, including other Zambians who are based in that country. "He is fairing well. He is still undergoing treatment after various medical tests were done on him. He has been visited by myself, my staff [at the mission] and other Zambians based in South Africa and those coming from Zambia. He also has his wife and daughter at the bedside," said Mwamba. Mulogoti was recently evacuated to South Africa for specialist treatment by the Ministry of Health following an instruction from President Edgar Lungu.

Before his evacuation, Mulogoti was admitted to the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka, where he spent a week before he could be moved to Avrwyd Medical Centre in Johannesburg.

Police investigating Lawrence Sichalwe for circulating porn

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Police Spokesperson Esther Katongo says the command is investigating a matter in which Chiefs and Traditional Affairs Minister Lawrence Sichalwe circulated a pornographic video on WhatsApp. Responding to questions from

journalists who wanted to know what police was doing about the matter, Katongo said it did not matter whether one posted obscene material by mistake or not because the law forbade anyone from being in possession or sharing such. Katongo said for someone to post by mistake, it meant that the person

was in possession of the same. "Our officers are already investigating the matter. I told the Diamond TV reporter that I had not seen the video but to comment from a general perspective, it does not matter whether one posted obscene material by mistake or not because the law says possession

of such material is an offence. For someone to post by mistake it means that person was in possession of the same. I was asked whether he would be prosecuted being a minister and my response was that the law does not segregate, even a minister can be prosecuted," said Katongo.

All People's Congress (APC) party president Mr Nason Msoni is a perfect example of a Facebook politician. Very few Zambians have the slightest clue where his party secretariat is, who are his members, not to mention the leadership structures. As a matter of fact, he often spends his time abroad, making it even harder for his followers (if he has any) to meet him for planning and strategy.

But we have observed that this particular politician has a very astute niche for current affairs. His 24/7 presence on social media seems to be giving him an upper-hand in analyzing political situations. This is the reason why, even if he does not command the largest following, it is very difficult to ignore his political commentary.

Last week, president Msoni made very interesting observations about the newly-formed opposition alliance, which we think the leaders of this coalition must take interest in digesting. President Msoni's concern was that one of the alliance members, the UPND, has been undermining the relevance of the other partners, given that they are already saying they don't need the help of the coalition to win the 2021 elections.

His observation came shortly after Northern Province UPND chairperson Nathan Illunga declared that the opposition party would not allow any member of the alliance to become a

UPND, respect alliance partners

News Diggers! Ear to the ground

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running mate to Hakainde Hichilema because they already have their own Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba whom they are not willing to change.

"When it comes to going into an election, I don't think we are going into an election as an alliance because for us in the UPND, we have already adopted president Hakainde Hichilema as our presidential candidate and his running mate is GBM, and we are not prepared to change! In 2016, we were only beaten by a very small margin. So, we are capable of winning an election in 2021 as UPND alone," boasted Illunga.

Our Facebook president, Nason Msoni, says this kind of pomposity, disregard for others and demeaning attitude from the UPND defeats the very essence of forming a political

alliance. He doesn't think such careless statements can inspire those leaders that are willing to come together to offer proper checks and balances to the government.

"This is just a word of caution because such statements, which are being issued by our friends have got the effect of pushing away political parties and supporting the other faction to prove a point, which will be most unfortunate under the circumstances. So, when we talk about our fellow opposition parties, we have to be a little courteous. An election is almost two and half years away and in the life of politics, one day is a long time, dynamics change. So, to imagine that you are the only one who is an alternative, I think it's very dangerous," warned president Msoni.

We cannot agree more

with the observation from this political leader. Call him an armchair critic if you wish, but his point is accurate and valid. With this kind of approach from the UPND, we cannot blame president Msoni for refusing to follow the wind and staying away from this alliance.

The UPND has to be a little more considerate when it is talking about the relevance of other alliance partners in this coalition. Like we said in our previous editorial opinion on this topic; a vibrant opposition is as good as an efficient government. In supporting the formation of this alliance, we advised the members to have the interests of the people at heart and not front their desperate desire to govern at all costs.

"People want a government of leaders who are willing to sacrifice their personal interests,

leaders who genuinely love this country, take advice, tolerate criticism, respect the provisions of the Constitution and have the capacity to unite the country," we stated in our opinion.

"The responsibility of changing government is not bestowed on the opposition, but the people who desire to be governed differently. When citizens feel the existing government is too corrupt, oppressive and failing to uphold the rule of law, it becomes their duty to take it down. But in order to bring about positive change in government, the electorate needs to be convinced that the people who are seeking office are not motivated by greed."

Don't get us wrong. There is nothing wrong with the UPND campaigning as an individual party or seeking to form government

alone, and no one has the right to stop them from doing that. But when this political party is in an alliance with other partners, and these partners have adopted a position that they will be willing to support Hakainde Hichilema if he becomes the alliance candidate in 2021, then it is a clear lack of wisdom for the UPND to say they will not bend to support any other running mate other than GBM.

What this means in essence is that the UPND wants to use the alliance partners as a stepping stone to getting into power, without giving back anything in return. This type of greed is what is giving relevance to the attack that the alliance is receiving from PF media director Sunday Chanda.

In our view, the UPND needs to warn its members to behave if they need the respect of other alliance partners. Let them take a 'chill pill' and stop dreaming that their ascendance to power in 2021 is already guaranteed. They may be the biggest opposition political party, but they must not think their alliance partners are foolish. In fact, UPND must very carefully apply logical sense and realize that each of their alliance members is a potential enemy, should they frustrate them out of this union. It happened to them in 2011 and it can happen to them again. If this comes to pass, the UPND will have more than just the PF to deal with. #Imbwili.

Crossword puzzle 279 "Pursue what catches your heart, not what catches your eyes."

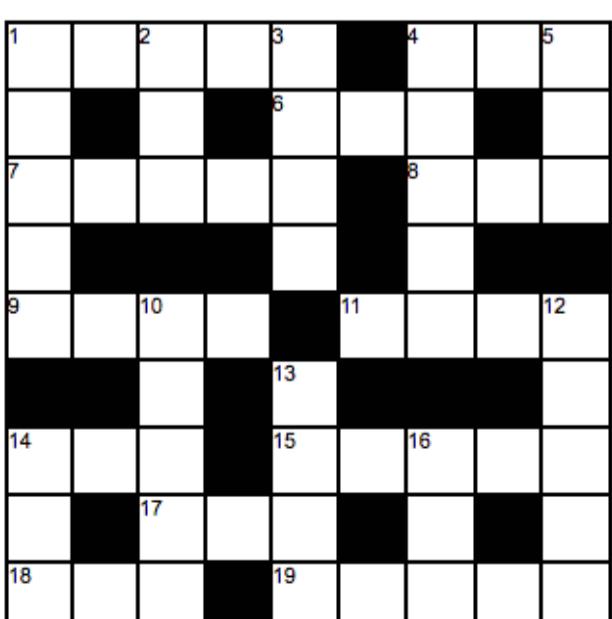
- Roy T. Bennett

Across

1. Initiate
4. Unopened flower
6. Earth's atmosphere
7. Written report
8. Drink cooler
9. Smooch
11. Conquer
14. Round green vegetable
15. Mountain chain
17. _____ de Janeiro
18. Skin blemish
19. Wonderful

Down

1. Urban dance
2. Vapor
3. Votes against
4. Groom's mate
5. Payable
10. Bright
12. Halloween option
13. Pond hopper
14. Dispenser candy
16. First called



Reader's feedback

'Congrats, Janny!'

Dear Editor,

"Good for Sikazwe and us the referee family. But he should very careful how he conducts himself. CAF says there was no 'sufficient' evidence, meaning there some kind of evidence..." - Kangumu Lifalalo

"Congratulations, Janny Sikazwe! And congratulations to those courageous Zambians who stood by you. Shame upon those who are naturally born critics!" - Gadiel Simpungwe Chipungu

"Great news, indeed. Now where are those Zambians who always rejoice when their fellow countrymen and women are in problems? Shame indeed. I hate this spirit of pulling each other down which we Zambians have, may

God deliver us. Go, Go Jan!" - Collins A Mphanza

"Good for JK, but let's wait and see if FIFA will use him again in important tournaments..." - Metson Miyoba

"Insufficient evidence does not necessarily mean that he could not have done what he was suspected to have done. Rhoda Chipengu

UPND's move to write ECZ over PF cadres' infiltration in Sesheke

Editor,

"ECZ, ZNBC and police are departments of PF; reporting them to who? This is a political problem

and

you are seeking to solve a political problem using a legal frame, this won't work! Political problems require political solutions; it's time to act!" - Moonga Moonga

"Tired of your cries! That's your bedroom.

If a snake enters into your bedroom what do you do? Stop crying like babies already. If you will allow being cheated there, you will see what Barotseland will do to you!" - Mukati Mui

"Just infiltrate Sesheke as well!" - Francis Sampa

"Waste of time! What will ECZ do?" - Stephen K. Manda

"This is conceding defeat even before voting! Come on UPND!" - Alfred Mhone

"Problems already arising, next it's petition!!! - Mumbi Mumbi J Mwenya

"UPND has lost the election already and this is the way they cry!" - Mateyo Banda



Diggers' OPINION: Congo, Zim crisis gives cause for saluting the tolerance of Zambians

"Injustice, oppression and greed is just too much among the leaders in Zambia. I totally agree with you, 'it will just take one extra foolish decision, for Zambians to say, we've been pushed for far too long.' Enough is enough and the earlier we realise and acknowledge this fact, the better for us." - Ackim Mwanamuzenge Neene

"It's the background of the two countries that makes them to easily revolt as for Zimbabwe, the struggle for independence was really brutal, rough and tough. DRC has never known peace at all; they are ever-fighting. While on the other hand, Zambia got their Independence on a silver platter, hence we have no document of how many people died during the struggle." - Josephine Ngulube

Church's insistence to push ahead with national dialogue

Editor,

"Very good response from the Church leaders! We have too many immature chaps heading some of these organisations, including party media chaps who depend on handouts!" - Sylvester Chongo

"Let the Catholic Church do everything because some of these, they are too excited and have been too sarcastic, even in public!" - Mumbi Mumbi J Mwenya

"The three Church mother bodies are our only hope. Please manage the reform programme to have sanity in the country!" - Wanasha Wanasha

"Only God knows the hearts & motivation of each stakeholder." - Henry Bwalya

"ZCID are just bringing confusion in this process!" - Chanda Emmanuel
"PF is just a problem!" - Noah Chizinga

EDITOR'S NOTE:

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Note that we block Facebook users who use abusive language.

Congo DR set for historic political transition

Felix Tshisekedi was to be sworn in on Thursday as president of Democratic Republic of Congo, marking the country's first-ever peaceful handover of power after chaotic and bitterly-disputed elections.

At 55, opposition leader Tshisekedi takes over from Joseph Kabila who is stepping aside after 18 years at the helm of sub-Saharan Africa's biggest country.

At least 2,000 Tshisekedi supporters, many of them dressed in white, gathered outside the Palace of the Nation, the seat of the presidency, to celebrate the historic event.

"We hope that this will be a real change, especially as he has taken power without bloodshed," said Saddam Kongolo, a member of Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS).

One of Tshisekedi's first tasks will be to appoint a prime minister in a move which will see him sharing power with Kabila's supporters, who hold an overwhelming majority in parliament.

The ceremony caps more than two years of turmoil sparked by Kabila's refusal to step down when he reached the constitutional limit on his term in office.

- Turbulence -

A country the size of continental western Europe, DR Congo has lived through two regional wars in 1996-97 and 1998-2003.

The last two presidential elections, in 2006 and 2011 -- both of which were won by Kabila -- were marred by bloody clashes.

The ballot, which took place on December 30 after being delayed three times, surprised many by the lack of violence, but a political storm swiftly brewed over the count.

Tshisekedi was declared winner with 38.5 percent of the vote, over his opposition rival Martin Fayulu, who was credited with 34.8 percent.

Fayulu branded the result a fix but lost a challenge to the Constitutional Court and foreign support for his position ebbed as countries took comfort in a peaceful transition.

Among foreign nations attending the ceremony, Kenya and Zambia were represented by their presidents and Tanzania by its vice presidents, according to the RTNC state television,

while China, France, Japan and the United States sent their ambassadors, AFP journalists saw.

"The opposition has run out of recourse to challenge the election results and the threat of widespread post-election violence is gradually subsiding," said Robert Besseling of EXX Africa, a business risk consultancy.

- Many challenges -
The UDPS is DR Congo's oldest and largest opposition party, which was founded and led by his father Etienne. Analysts say he faces a raft of pressing problems after

taking the oath of office.

He must defuse the anger of Fayulu's supporters, carry out his campaign pledge of ending the "gangrene" of corruption after the Kabila era, and forge a power-sharing arrangement with the outgoing president's bloc. The pro-Kabila Joint Front for Congo (FCC) controls 337 seats in the 500-member National Assembly against 102 for Fayulu's coalition, Lamuka, and 46 for his own coalition, Heading for Change (Cach). "Tshisekedi will have little

margin for manoeuvre," said Stephanie Wolters at South Africa's Institute for Security Studies (ISS) think tank.

According to a "political coalition agreement" seen by AFP which outlines an arrangement for "power-sharing" between the FCC and Cach, the position of prime minister "will be rotated every five years." The defence, foreign affairs and interior portfolios will go to "the president's political family". Kabila himself will become a senator for life, a position reserved for outgoing

presidents under the constitution. He is widely expected to wield influence through his supporters.

His family has acquired a wide range of assets during the many years in power.

- Conflict and poverty -
Beyond the politics, Tshisekedi also has to deal with the brutal militias who control parts of the country's strife-torn east where an Ebola epidemic is also unfolding.

He also has to meet the expectations of his supporters about easing poverty, which afflicts the

vast majority of the country's 80 million citizens.

Despite the poverty, DR Congo boasts a treasure trove of minerals, ranging from gold and diamonds to copper and coltan -- a mineral essential for the batteries used in hand-held electronic devices.

Yet, in a country where graft is entrenched, very little of the wealth trickles down to the poor. It ranks a mere 176th on the 189-nation Human Development Index compiled by the United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP). **AFP**

R Kelly insisted I have a sex trainer - Asante

For two years, Asante McGee was a girlfriend of the now-disgraced R&B superstar, R. Kelly, but in the summer of 2016 she went to live in his house in Georgia. There were other women there, she discovered - and very strict rules.

Whenever I was in my room alone, that was when I would call home to speak to my children, as when I was with Robert, he didn't want us to have our phones and have contact with the outside world. When I met Robert, or rather R. Kelly, it wasn't like meeting Prince Charming who swept me off my feet. He didn't wine and dine me, he was just a warm and funny guy. We did

enjoyed having dinners together.

But there was a moment during a text exchange in 2014 when I think I should have known things weren't what they seemed. It was really early on in our relationship and I texted him, addressing him as Rob and he said: "No, can you just call me Daddy." There was no discussion - he just told me his demand. When I look back at that moment, reading the text message in

my car, I should have questioned it. I should have seen his behaviour in that moment as a red flag. I was first introduced to R. Kelly in September 2013 by a member of his entourage, when he was performing in a club in Atlanta to promote his next tour. However, we had a proper introduction in January 2014.

A member of his entourage invited me to hang out with R. Kelly and some of his friends. We went to the mall and we laughed and talked. We just hung out like two old friends. Before I left, he



R Kelly's ex-girlfriend Asante McGee

was being held on February 13. After watching him perform on stage, he invited me back to his hotel room and we had our first sexual encounter.

After Valentine's Day, we kept in contact through text messages and he began inviting me to different concerts across America, and when he visited Atlanta, where I lived, I would stay with him from time to time.

While we were in a relationship together, he made it clear that I wasn't the only woman he was seeing. The fact that he told me he was dating and sleeping with other women, it made me feel like he was doing his best to be honest with me, so I accepted that and decided to stay in the relationship.

For the first two years of our relationship, everything was great. I would fly out and see

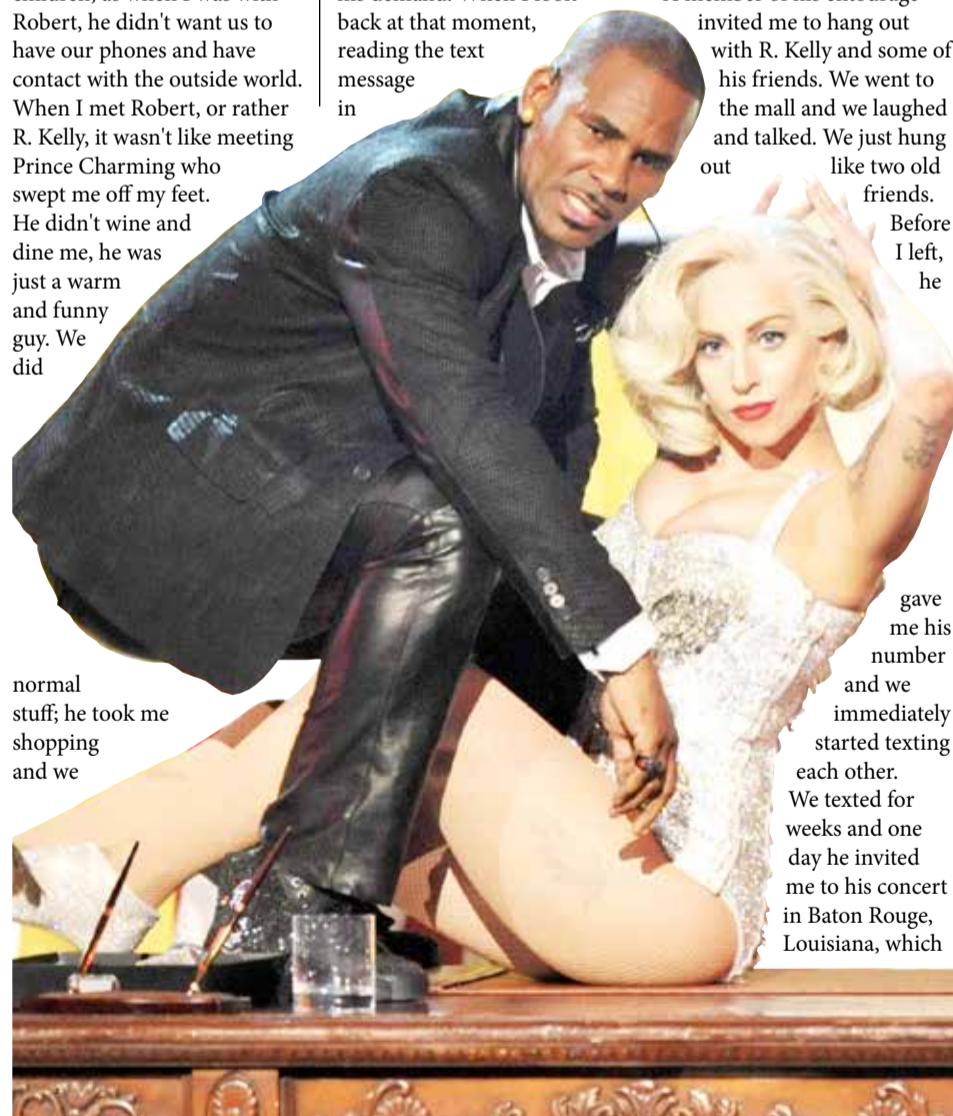
him perform, and we would spend time together - and it worked for both of us.

On the Easter weekend of March 2016, he flew me out to Chicago, but I didn't hear from him for two days and then when I finally heard from him, he had someone come and pick me up to take me to the studio where he was recording.

However, I ended up being locked in a van from 11 o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock at night. When I was let out of the van, by members of his entourage and nephew, I found R. Kelly partying in the studio as if nothing had happened. He acted completely normal, but months later, I found out that locking me in a van was a test. He was testing my boundaries and playing mind games.

Then in May 2016, I flew to watch him perform in Dallas. After the concert, one of his assistants said you need to hurry up and get your clothes from the hotel.

I got my clothes and got into the van which was supposed to take me to Oklahoma, so I could catch a flight home to Atlanta, but the bus never stopped. We ended up in a huge house in John's Creek, Georgia. When I got off the bus and walked into the house, Robert said: "Welcome home, baby." **BBC**



gave me his number and we immediately started texting each other. We texted for weeks and one day he invited me to his concert in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which

Angola decriminalises homosexuality

Parliament in Angola has abolished a law widely interpreted to be a ban on homosexuality.

The government has also prohibited discrimination

against people on the basis of sexual orientation; anyone refusing to employ or provide services to individuals based on their sexual orientation may face up to two years in

prison.

Angola is the latest former Portuguese colony to repeal laws outlawing same-sex conduct, following Sao Tome and Cape Verde.

There have been no known prosecutions under the now expunged law.

Many other African countries enforce strict legislation against homosexuality. **BBC**

By Abraham Kalito

ZANACO Football club coach Numba Mumamba says the death of former Chipolopolo team mate Hector Chilombo who died yesterday at the University teaching Hospital (UTH), is a tragedy to the country's football fraternity.

Chilombo who was former Nchanga Rangers and Under 20 national team coach collapsed on Saturday and was admitted at the Hospital's ICU section until his time of death.

His relatives confirmed with Goal Diggers that he died around 04 hours, Thursday.

Commenting on the development, former team mate Mumamba said the country had been robbed of one of the youngest coaches of the current generation. "I must say it's a very sad development losing of

the youngest coaches of this generation. Its really sad especially on my side because he is one person I played with in my playing career. I think it has come as a surprise to us, we never expected him to depart so soon. I think we will miss him in the football fraternity. I can only ask the family to just

put everything in the hands of God as we mourn our colleague," he said.

Chilombo held several coaching jobs at local clubs such as Napsa stars, Lumwana Radiants, Power Dynamos, City of Lusaka, Nchanga Rangers, Chilanga Heroes and Zanaco Football clubs.

His last appointment was

at Nchanga Rangers in May 2018 where he was relieved of his duties barely five months later following a poor run that left the club battling relegation. He also headed Zambia's Under 20 side between 2014 and 2015 and managed to qualify to the CAF Championship in 2015 without losing a

game. He however resigned that very year following a poor performance at the Championship.

Chilombo was a national team defender in the post Gabon Era, he won the COSAFA cup in 1997 and was part of the Chipolopolo squad that played the France 1998 world cup qualifiers.



Barcelona set De Jong's release clause at €400m

After beating Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City in the race to sign Frenkie de Jong, Barcelona are taking all necessary precautions to ensure they do not end up losing their incoming star for a cut price in the future.

The Catalan side struck a deal with Ajax that sees a long transfer saga come to an end as 21-year-old midfielder De Jong will head to Camp Nou in the summer for an initial €75 million (£65m/\$85m) which could rise to €86m (£75m/\$98m) depending on performances.

Speculation surrounding the Netherlands international's future had been circulating for over a year, with

PSG, City and Barca all seemingly determined to land him.

But he will complete a "dream move" to the Spanish champions at the end of the season after assessing all of his options. "The fact that they were so serious about getting me and that I have a good chance of getting playing time made the decision a bit easier," De Jong said.

"It's not like I'm going to Barcelona as a tourist to watch Messi in action. I am not going to say that I will bench Sergio Busquets or anything! But I think I have a good chance of getting plenty of minutes."

Just as De Jong is determined to make

the best of his time in La Liga, though, his new club are hoping to prevent the young star from being lured away by one of his many suitors.

Perhaps still feeling the sting of being forced into selling Neymar to PSG in 2016, Barca have handed De Jong a contract that will run for five years and Goal understands it comes complete with a €400m release clause.

Indeed, only a few Blaugrana players have bigger release clauses than that. Lionel Messi's is the biggest at €700m, while the likes of Gerard Pique, Busquets, Sergi Roberto and Samuel Umtiti have theirs set at €500m. **Goal**

Nadal did not expect' stunning run to Open final after injury

Rafael Nadal said he has surprised himself with his outstanding level of tennis at this year's Australian Open after crushing Stefanos Tsitsipas in the semi-final on Thursday.

The Spanish world number two handed the rising star a ruthless tennis lesson 6-2, 6-4, 6-0 in just 106 minutes. Greek 14th seed Tsitsipas had enjoyed a fairytale run to his first Grand Slam last four, including a win over Roger Federer, but found Nadal in ruthless form in the Spaniard's first tournament since the US Open in September.

"Is not easy to be back after four months, five months, and play the way I am playing," he said after undergoing ankle surgery in his extended off-season.

"Of course, I didn't expect that at all," Nadal told reporters after setting up a final Sunday against either top seed Novak Djokovic or Lucas Pouille.

"I believe that when you are older, you lose less the tennis

when you are playing less. "You don't need that many matches to play well. That's something that happened for the last two years for me."

The Spanish second seed has not dropped his serve for an astonishing 63 straight games and has not lost a set.

"I played well, of course. Have been playing well during the whole event. Every match more or less I think I did a lot of things well. Tonight was another one," he said after a breathtaking display of almost perfect tennis.

"Probably the backhand was better today than the rest of the days."

"That's important for me, too, because the forehand was working fantastic during the whole week, week-and-a-half, but the backhand was improving during the tournament."

"Tonight was even better than the previous rounds, no?"

Tsitsipas, 20, had been hailed as a new young Greek god of tennis after beating Federer, but his ascent to the summit of his personal Olympus was comprehensively halted by the colossus called Nadal.

- Shellshocked Tsitsipas -

"I have no idea what I can take from that match," said a despondent Tsitsipas. "I wasn't even close to getting something. I only got six games."

Nadal's win put him into his fifth Australian Open final and keeps him on course to become the first man to win all four Grand Slams twice in the Open era if he can add to his sole Melbourne Park crown in 2009.

Tsitsipas, in just his second Australian Open and seventh appearance at a Grand Slam, was looking to become the first Greek player -- man or woman -- to reach a final in a major. **AFP**

Neymar hopes for divine help after fresh injury

Paris Saint-Germain talisman Neymar suffered a fresh injury to his right metatarsal in the holders' French Cup win over Strasbourg, the club said Thursday.

A fractured metatarsal curtailed the Brazilian's campaign last season, and the recurrence comes just three weeks ahead of the first leg of PSG's crunch Champions League clash against Manchester United.

Neymar posted a photo of himself leaving the pitch on Instagram, with a caption saying: "Your will be done, my God."

The severity of the new injury is not yet known, although Neymar was able to walk off the field unsupported.

"Initial tests carried out revealed a painful reactivation of the injury to the fifth metatarsal," a club statement said Thursday.

"The treatment will depend on progress over the coming days," it said, adding all medical options would be considered.

Neymar initially tried to continue playing. But he covered his eyes -- in tears, according to witnesses -- as he was forced off to be replaced by Moussa Diaby just after the hour mark.

His early departure was a worrying moment for PSG, with the world's most expensive player having missed the final three months of last season after breaking the same bone.

Each season PSG are judged according to their Champions League results, with former coach Unai Emery sacked following a last-16 loss to eventual champions Real Madrid last term. Current boss Thomas Tuchel said after the game: "The doctor is worried, 'Ney' is worried, because it is the same foot, the same place."

"It was a situation where he was fouled three times, one after the other. The referee didn't give anything. He twisted his foot."

The PSG coach was also unhappy with suggestions from the Strasbourg players and coach that Neymar had provoked the injury by winding up his opponents.

"It's Neymar's style, but don't come and complain when you get kicked," Strasbourg's Anthony Goncalves told broadcaster Eurosport.

"He is a great player, I respect him. He can enjoy himself but don't come blubbering afterwards."

Neymar's compatriot and PSG teammate Dani Alves claimed that the referee was too passive, urging officials to "protect these kinds of players, because they're the ones who make people pay to come to the stadium".

PSG visit Old Trafford in the last-16 first leg on February 12, before hosting Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's rejuvenated Man United side in the return game on March 6. **AFP**



Neymar leaves the pitch with an apparent foot injury in PSG's win over Strasbourg in the French Cup. AFP - Story page 11

Nadal 'didn't expect' stunning run to Open final after injury

Story page 11



Sichone tells local players to work harder...

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ONE HAS TO FIGHT

Lionel Messi is set to make his Argentina comeback in the upcoming international friendly against Venezuela on March 22 after almost nine months away from the national team, Goal can reveal. The 31-year-old has not represented his country since Argentina's 4-3 loss at the hands of France in the round of 16 of the 2018 World Cup, focusing on his club duties with Barcelona so far in 2018-19.

There were doubts initially over whether he would retire from international duty altogether, but it soon emerged that the forward would likely wear the Albiceleste jersey again at some stage in 2019.

"I do not talk very often with Messi, but we have a relationship," national team coach Lionel Scaloni said in December.

"We are going to try for



Messi to make Argentina comeback this March

him to join us in 2019, we have pending talks and we are optimistic that it will be positive.

"For us it is something

important. Any coach would like to coach him, myself more than any."

Messi has yet to officially confirm when he will take to

the pitch for Argentina again, but Goal can now reveal he is due to make his comeback in the next international break in March. Goal.com

By Alex Chilumbwe

Former FAZ assistant technical director Moses Sichone has appealed to local players to fight for game time in the 2019 super league in order to heighten their chances of being recruited in the national team squad.

Sichone, who served as FAZ assistant director for 11 months before leaving the association on mutual grounds, noted that local players were being outplayed by foreign or international players in the elite league, and needed to be reminded that only Zambian players would represent the country at national team level.

In an interview with Goal Diggers! Sichone advised Zambian local players to fight for game time by working extra hard and convincing their coaches that they can compete on the pitch.

"We have local players in the league that can play for the national team but are being overshadowed by foreign players. This is because foreign players are on a mission to impress and make money so they work twice as hard. Our own should also be reminded that one has to fight for game time. Hard work is the only way to be spotted even in national team," he said.

The 41 year old that spent most of his football career with German clubs and was national team defender further applauded the newly-promoted clubs to the elite league in Circuit City, Prison Leopards, Mufulira Wanderers and Maestro Academy of Zambia (MUZA) adding that they all had the potential to last long and compete efficiently in the super league.

"I'm happy for the newly promoted clubs and they should be applauded. They are all good teams that have the potential to last long in the super league and even trouble bigger teams. They should be encouraged by their fans and just work hard," said Sichone.

