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(Above) Wusakile member of parliament Pavyuma Kalobo debates during the OSISA/News Diggers public discussion forum on mine taxes and job losses. Right is Mine Workers Union of Zambia president Joseph Chewe speaking, while Chamber of Mines president Goodwell Mateyo and his ZACCI counterpart Michael Nyirenda follow the proceedings

If mines find new tax regime unbearable, they must pack and go, says Pavyuma

By Mukosa Funga

If the mines find the new tax regime unbearable, they must pack and go, says Busakile independent member of parliament Pavumya Kalobo.

But the Zambia Chamber of Mines says it's

the mining tax policy inconsistency that is frustrating the investors, warning that even if the mining firms wholly comply with the new tax regime, government would still not realise the targeted revenue.

Meanwhile, the Zambia Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (ZACCI) says Africa's strategy of taxing itself to prosperity, is not logical.

And The Mine Workers Union of Zambia says the union supports government's stance that the mines must pay more taxes whilst keeping all the workers.

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PF WILL PAY - CK

My sweat in building the party will not be in vain

By Mirriam Chabala

Edgar Lungu and those who have come to join PF must know that the sweet that they are enjoying today is from our sweat, says Roan member of parliament Chishimba Kambwili. Kambwili who is also opposition NDC 2021 presidential candidate has saluted the Lusaka High court for dismissing the application in which PF Secretary General Davies Mwila was seeking to challenge the Speaker's refusal to declare the Roan Parliamentary seat vacant.

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Cavmont bank sues Muvi TV, 34 employees for failure to pay loans

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Cavmont Bank Limited has dragged Muvi Television Limited and 34 of its employees to Court, demanding immediate payment of over K500,000 in outstanding personal loans. The bank which is further seeking for damages and interest, has sued Paul Sinyangwe and Gershom Mwale on behalf of the other 32 Muvi TV employees.

In a statement of claim filed in the Lusaka High Court, Thursday, the bank stated that it entered into a Corporate Loan Scheme Agreement with Muvi TV in May 2015, where it was agreed that it would provide personal loans to Muvi TV employees.

The statement of claim indicated that Muvi TV would on a monthly basis deduct from its employees salaries in order to repay the personal loans to the bank.

"It was agreed that Muvi TV would use its best endeavour to deduct the monthly amounts payable by each employee in

order to redeem the personal loan and pay the same directly to the bank for the duration of the loan agreement on such date as shall be agreed by the parties," read the statement of claim.

The bank stated that it was further agreed that Muvi TV would remit such monies as each employee was entitled to including: net salaries, notice pay, leave benefits or separation benefits and that any surplus after the loan had been redeemed would be remitted to

the employee.

It observed that it was Muvi TV's responsibility to make deductions from its employees' salaries in order to settle the loans.

"For each of the 34 employees, Muvi TV issued irrevocable undertakings to send each employees net salary/ loan repayment instalment / separation and accrued benefits to the bank at its Kalingalinga Branch in Lusaka. It was therefore Muvi TV's

responsibility to ensure and make the deductions from the employees' salaries, notice pay, leave benefit and accrued benefits in order to settle the employees' obligation with the bank," read the statement of claim further.

The bank however stated that Muvi TV had defaulted to make certain payments to redeem its employees personal loans, adding that the same had accrued up to K554,628.41 as at November 29, 2018.

Cavmont Bank stated that it had made its best endeavours in contacting the employees concerned, to demand for payment of their outstanding debts but they had responded that Muvi TV had been deducting their salaries from their pay slips to pay their loans directly to the bank. The bank however alleged that the said deduction were never received.

Cavmont further stated that a number of the defaulting

employees confirmed upon further inquiry that they had in fact not received their separation dues and accrued benefits from Muvi TV, making it difficult for them to make good on their person loan repayments. The bank stated that despite several reminders, Muvi TV had failed or neglected to remit the outstanding monies to the bank. It is now claiming for immediate payment of K554,628.41 from Muvi TV, interest, damages, costs and any other reliefs.

Kampyongo calls for ceasefire in Lundazi, Sesheke

By Geofrey Zulu in Lusaka and Zindikilani Banda in Sinda

Minister of Home Affairs Stephen Kampyongo says government will not take kindly to anybody or any political party perpetrating violence in the areas where by-election campaigns are taking place.

Kampyongo appealed to all

political parties taking part in the ongoing campaigns in Sesheke constituency and Munkomba Ward in Lundazi District to refrain from any form of violence.

He was commenting on violent incidences in both parts of the country ahead of polling day on February 12, which involved both unruly PF and UPND cadres.

"The campaign period is the an opportunity accorded to all participating political parties to sell their party agenda to the people and not to begin attacking the same people you intend to serve and disrupting their businesses," Kampyongo told journalists at a briefing in Lusaka, Thursday.

He, however, warned that any attack on police officers on duty was a direct attack on the whole service and government as they were constitutionally-mandated to provide security to people and property regardless of one's political affiliation, ethnicity, colour or religion. "I'm aware of some political parties that are reported to be mounting illegal road blocks

and throwing stones at police officers...I'm directing the police command in these two provinces where by-election campaigns are taking place to intensify their operations and take note of all elements perpetrating violence and disrupting peace," said Kampyongo.

And Katete District Commissioner Joseph Makukula urged the PF and UPND political parties in Chindwale Ward to practice issue-based campaigns to enable people make informed decisions.

In an interview, Makukula said politics were not meant to divide people, but for one to express democratic rights in a way that does not injure the other.

He also urged politicians to realize that despite the elections, they were all one as Zambians.

"There is no need for us to create enmity. Elections are actually not meant to bring in barriers, no! So, it is ideal that we think and practice mature politics so that it is left to the people to choose, which best candidate to represent them. Elections are not meant to divide us," Makukula said. He urged the warring parties to desist from violence.

"In the case of Chindwale Ward, we have only two political parties, which is PF and UPND and my advice to them is let them practice issue-based campaigns, let them bear in mind that we are all related as we might belong to different political parties, but we are one, we eat together, we live in the same house. So, fighting won't achieve anything. It's not good for other people to laugh at us politically, but if we show political maturity, believe you me we will be somewhere. Let's avoid saying things that will divide us as a nation, said Makukula.

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By Mirriam Chabala
Government has procured about 4,166 litres of a recommended pesticide using the US\$500,000 grant provided by the African Development Bank (AfDB) to help fight the fall army worm epidemic that have engulfed maize fields in the country.

Fall army worms have consistently ravaged maize fields in the last few farming seasons in Zambia and other southern African countries, compelling the AfDB to come to Zambia's aid with funds granted to the Ministry of Agriculture on January 7, 2019.

In an interview, Agriculture Minister Michael Katambo disclosed that all districts in

Govt procures 4,166 litres of pesticides to fight army worms

Lusaka had been affected by the army worms, but assured that government had already distributed about 2,500 litres of the pesticide to all Lusaka farmers to combat the pests. Katambo said a team of scientists had been deployed to all affected districts to find out if there could be a lasting solution to fall army worms that had consistently infested maize fields in recent years.

"We've gotten a report that Chongwe is one of the districts that is affected by these ravaging fall army worms. But then Rufunsa, Chilanga, Neganega... in short, the whole Lusaka Province has been affected. But government is showing its commitment to find the pests and we have engaged our cooperating partners, the African Development Bank, who gave us about US \$500,000. Of course, in our

(own) budget, we have also set aside K18.6 million in the 2019-2020 budget for pests disease management and control this farming season. So, we have these funds and we procured about 4,166 litres of the recommended pesticide of which we have distributed about 2,500 litres to Lusaka Province and Chongwe District is a beneficiary," Katambo said. "Our field officers and extension officers with

the district agricultural officers within the districts are engaging farmers and those that are affected to receive these chemicals that His Excellency the President has managed to give our farmers. The break out of these pesticides has not been at the same time. Certain provinces indicated the pests started being noticed late in December last year and beginning of January this year. But when

it's raining, it is also helping to kill and suffocate the pests. But obviously, this hard working government of President Lungu has procured pesticides where all farmers can benefit."

He assured that a team of experts were working around the clock to find a permanent solution to the army worms.

"We have the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI), which is working with other agriculture organisations and other SADC countries within the region to carry out investigations and find a lasting solution to these fall army worms. What is worth noting is that climate change also contributes to such calamities. The weather patterns also, when it's too hot, that's a problem. But when it's raining like this, the army worms are suffocated but when there is sunlight and it's hot, they also multiply. So, the researches will give us a conclusive report on how we can eradicate these ravaging pests," said Katambo.

Sales Tax will kill Zambia's economy, warns tax expert

By Stuart Lisulo

Government's insistence to implement Sales Tax this April will kill Zambia's already stressed economy, a certified fraud examiner and tax expert has warned.

In a statement outlining the dangers of implementing the controversial Sales Tax in April, Cheleman Nshitima stated that government's insistence to replace Valued Added Tax (VAT) with Sales Tax would kill off Zambia's already stressed economy due to the cascading effect it would have on drastically increasing the cost of doing business in the country.

"The proposal to replace VAT with Sales Tax is tantamount to over-killing and can only be compared to the primitive fishing method whereby a herbal toxin called 'Ububaa' is used for purposes of catching fish, but one usually ends up poisoning the entire river killing not just fish, but every organism in the river. And in this particular case, a Sales Tax will unravel the entire Zambian economic ecosystem as a whole with unintended consequences," Nshitima warned.

"Unlike a VAT system, Sales Tax, and due to its regressive nature, does not encourage manufacturing and other budding entrepreneurs as it becomes costly for them to manage input costs, which in-turn, makes their goods and services expensive and uncompetitive both on the local and foreign markets. Should the government decide to go ahead with these proposals, then Zambians should prepare for a stormy cloud brewing over the economic horizon unnecessarily so, induced by Sales Tax and exacerbated by the rise on the cost of capital." He said an economic meltdown was likely to ensue arising from the Sales Tax's implementation.

"This storm will spell disaster not because the mining companies have threatened to take cover, but because of its domino reach on our fragile economic ecosystem. On the other hand, the mines may and can in fact weather out this storm by simply hibernating their activities, but not so other sectors. It is for this reason that government should reconsider its stand

mostly on its intention to introduce a Sales Tax," he said. Nshitima argued that the VAT system was more robust, but had been negatively affected in its administration.

"The VAT system on the other hand is a robust tax system, which is also quite versatile to adapt in varying economic conditions. Right now, the administration of VAT system is in a big, big mess and taxpayers have been saddled with unnecessary administrative cost burdens in addition to being owed huge sums in VAT refunds," he narrated.

He disputed the notion that the current VAT system was subsidizing exporters.

"It is pure nonsense to say that refunds under a VAT system are subsidies to companies, such as the mines. On the contrary, when managed properly, VAT refunds acts as a short-term source of borrowing by government from the private sector because unlike in other countries, VAT refunds in Zambia do not attract interest payments, however long it may take to make such refunds," explained Nshitima. VAT can broadly be defined

as a consumption-based tax, which is levied in the supply chain at each point where value is added to a good or service.

It was introduced in 1995 to replace Sales Tax at that time, which was not helping

government generate as much revenue.

Data shows that since VAT's introduction, government revenues have grown exponentially, but currently, government has to refund exporters, such as mining

companies whose exports are zero-rated, a situation the PF administration is attempting to erase. Sales Tax will, therefore, be reintroduced from April 1, 2019, despite stiff resistance from a broad range of stakeholders.



President Edgar Lungu (r) listens to Trade Kings Spokesperson Ernest Mande (l). On the middle is Trade Kings Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) Iqbal Patel at State House on Friday, January 25, 2019 when Trade Kings paid a courtesy call on the President to brief him him on the Trade Kings expansion projects. - Photo by Salim Henry

AVAP asks ECZ to suspend Sesheke by-election due to electoral violence

By Mirriam Chabala

Anti-Voter Apathy executive director Richwell Mulwani says the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) should not hesitate to defer the February 12, parliamentary by-election in Sesheke Constituency once an assessment shows that the electorate will not vote freely due to the on-going electoral violence in the campaigns.

And Mulwani has called on the Police Command in Sesheke and across the country to arrest all suspected Patriotic Front members who are gun-toting, saying illegal possession of firearms was a criminal offence.

Meanwhile, Mulwani has accused the PF of embracing violence by paying lip service to the national dialogue process.

"The violence that we are seeing in Sesheke and other parts where we have these by-elections should not be entertained. We know that the PF and

the UPND are in a serious political struggle because they want to win at all costs. Then also, the PF want to use violence as a way of doing their business, this is not good because this country needs to be at peace. Even when it came to the dialogue process, they (PF) were the ones who were not there. They were absent. And they kept on talking about this dialogue when actually they were not committed to the dialogue themselves. We challenge them as AVAP to seriously consider dialogue as a very important process which can help us deal with this violence," Mulwani said.

"This violence has been talked about for so many years, but now what we are hearing of guns in Sesheke and in Chililabombwe it's the same, a PF cadre was moving with a gun. Where is the police? The police should disarm those people who are moving with guns in the country because that is

a criminal offence which should be handled by the police. Let them take it up to go and disarm those people who are moving with guns in the campaigns because they may end up shooting innocent citizens. A bullet can stray and hit an innocent person. So we are really appealing to the police to control the situation in Sesheke, they should arrest those that are using guns, let them be taken to courts of law and charged."

Mulwani called on ECZ and other stakeholders to assess the extent of violence in Sesheke and suspend the elections if need be.

"The law is very clear, the electoral code of conduct is very clear, how can we endorse violence in our country when we are known to be peaceful people? Really this is becoming a problem and we are calling on the Electoral Commission of Zambia to make an assessment whether the environment

in Sesheke is conducive to hold a free and fair election. If the environment is not conducive, I think what is important is to defer the election to another date so that the situation can calm, or to suspend the campaigns so that the stakeholders are called and then talked to," said Mulwani.

"Political parties should not use violence as a way of winning an election. That is unacceptable. The international standard of a free and fair election proves that it's the citizens that are supposed to decide, the majority should decide the one who has won an elections and as AVAP, we want to call upon the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and the Zambia Police to jointly make an assessment and inform the nation as to the extent of violence in Sesheke. We don't want to see another life lost in Sesheke."

By Stuart Lisulo

First Quantum Minerals' (FQM) Sentinel Copper Mine in Kalumbila District was disrupted by a work stoppage on Friday and Saturday on suggestions that conditions of service had either been changed or reduced.

Kalumbila Minerals Limited (KML), the FQM subsidiary, however, warned that disciplinary action would be taken against employees who failed to resume work following the incident.

In a statement availed by KML Public Relations Coordinator Mirriam Harmon, Saturday, the illegal work stoppage was brought about by a change in the

FQM's Sentinel 'illegal work stoppage' ends

format of payslips, which resulted in some misunderstandings among aggrieved staff.

"Management at First Quantum Minerals' Sentinel Mine confirms that an illegal work stoppage took place on Friday evening (January 25, 2019) and Saturday morning (January 26, 2019). Mine management met with the Assistant Labour Commissioner and union representatives to discuss grievances, which stem from a change of format of payslips that resulted in some errors and misunderstandings," the

statement read.

The situation was, however, exacerbated by an unruly mob who tried to intimidate workers at the start of their shifts on one of the public roads in Kalumbila. "The company has warned that disciplinary action will be taken against employees who fail to resume work following the incident, during which police were called to disperse an unruly crowd assembled on a public road attempting to intimidate workers at the start of their shifts," it stated.

According to the statement,

Sentinel Mine general manager Morris Rowe explained that the pressing matters were in the process of being resolved.

"General manager Morris Rowe explained that all the matters raised by the workforce had already been tabled and are in process of being discussed and resolved with the unions. Regular updates on progress on these matters have been provided and management remained committed to dialogue in order to resolve the issues. First Quantum assures staff that conditions have not

been changed or reduced, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement signed in 2017 remains in effect," the statement read.

"The Assistant Labour Commissioner declared the work stoppage illegal based on the Industrial and Labour Relations Act, and called for swift dialogue and resolution of the concerns raised by the workforce. The Assistant Labour Commissioner condemned the unruly behaviour, and commended union representatives, and the Kalumbila Minerals Limited

management for the spirit in which they discussed and agreed to resolve the on-going matters of concern."

By press time, Sunday, workers had since resumed normal operational duties, according to a follow-up statement by the mining firm's PR agency, Langmead & Baker.

"First Quantum management is glad to have normal operations restored, and encourages the teams to focus on safety and production, and we look forward to a safe and productive year," read the statement.

If mines find new tax regime unbearable, they must pack and go, says Pavyuma

By Mukosha Funga

If the mines find the new tax regime unbearable, they must pack and go, says Busakile independent member of parliament Pavyuma Kalobo. But the Zambia Chamber of Mines says it's the mining tax policy inconsistency that is frustrating the investors, warning that even if the mining firms wholly comply with the new tax regime, government would still not realise the targeted revenue. Meanwhile, the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) says Africa's strategy of taxing itself to prosperity, is not logical. And The Mine Workers Union of Zambia says the union

supports government's stance that the mines must pay more taxes whilst keeping all the workers.

Speaking at a public discussion forum organised by News Diggers and OSISA in Kitwe, Thursday, Kalobo said the mines were just exhibiting corporate greed by fighting the new mine tax regime.

"Fair taxes are the ones which are going to lead to more medicines in our hospitals, they are the ones that are going to lead to the students in the public and private higher learning institutions benefit from students' loans. So where are we going as Zambians if we can't advocate for lower taxes?" asked Kalobo.

"In 2016, from this mining sector, we lost more than 15,000 jobs. Is that a benefit? When we demand for fair taxes, we don't need these mining companies to be stubborn or to show their corporate greed, it is just corporate greed that is at play. Because if you are talking about negotiation, that was the first thing that was supposed to come, not threatening or trying to arm twist government to say 'we are going to trim labour', I think me as a member of parliament, as a representative of the people, especially coming from Wusakile, a mining constituency, let them pack and go but they must leave the

assets. If there is someone here who works in the mines, don't be scared, no one is going to lose employment."

But the Zambia Chamber of Mines said it was the mining tax policy inconsistency that was frustrating the investors, adding that government had in the past demanded more taxes from the mines, but failed to yield its targets.

"Increasing the tax rate won't increase the amount of taxes we recover as a nation. This is not the first time government has tried to increase mining taxation. In fact, in 2014, the mineral royalty tax that was implemented was even higher than what's been implemented today. It was eight per cent for underground and 20 per cent for open pit mine. That regime was in place and what government realised was that they were not getting more taxes, in fact, it was merely reducing output. What we are saying is that increasing the rate of tax won't increase the taxes. If you want to get more out of the mines or the mining industry, you have to create circumstances and the right situations for the industry to grow. We are only producing 800 tonnes of copper metal at the moment, that is nothing. Chile has risen to 2.3 million tonnes per annum. There is no reason why we can also not get to 2.3 million tonnes. We can calculate how much income we can get from 2 million tonnes. We haven't even reached one million tonnes, what we need is to grow the industry. Issues of taxation and the tax rate, we shouldn't be talking about this after every budget," Zambia Chamber of Mines president Goodwell Mateyo said.

"We had a tax measure that was working 18 months ago, if that was maintained, we demonstrated and showed government that they would have received an extra \$280 billion in the Treasury by creating the right conditions for mines to increase production. Questions of the tax system should be standard and stable for five years. What the next discussion is supposed to be is what are the linkages between mining

and the rest of the sectors in the country? That is now where we will enhance the contribution and where we will see even more value and benefits in our society from the social and economic point of view."

Asked why the mines had u-turned on their decision to lay-off workers as a cost saving measure, Mateyo said investors had engaged government in negotiations. "It has always been the position of the Chamber of Mines to pursue engagement with government. In fact, from the time that the budget was announced, the first thing that the Chamber of Mines did was to seek appointment, to see the government officers and say, let's discuss this, this tax system is going to kill this country, we have seen it before, we saw it in 2014, it is what resulted in reduced production in the industry. In fact, the industry declined even worse than what we had anticipated. And even now, we have made efforts and said our willingness is to pursue a policy of engagement and dialogue with the government.

And at the moment, it has been the position of a number of our members to say 'once we are engaging in dialogue and having these discussions with government, it will not help anyone to proceed with the discussions and lay off jobs. It is a very painful decision to have to lay-off workers, even one worker. It is extremely disruptive to any operation to lay-off workers, which is why the first thing that most mines did was to look at the least productive areas of their operations and the first thing that went were exploration projects, those were cancelled,' said Mateyo.

Meanwhile, the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) said Africa's aim, to tax itself to prosperity, was not logical.

"There is a saying that Africa tries to tax itself into prosperity, which is not the correct way to go. Don't forget that when you tax, it's for delivery of service across all of us as a nation and as a people, talk about infrastructure,

roads, name it. We need to create more tax payers rather than just look at one tax payer who is the mines. We need to create people who will work for themselves," said ZACCI president Michael Nyirenda.

And The Mine Workers Union of Zambia said the union was in support of government's stance that the mines must pay more taxes whilst keeping all the workers.

"We have lost a lot of workers because of the taxes. From the workers' perspective sometimes we have been supporting the mines when there is issues of tax. But again, when there is a drop in price, the people that are affected are the workers. The mines always find it easy to reduce workers at the expense of other costs, including the expatriates. Because at times we say can we look at how much expatriates take in terms of the wages, compared to the Zambian workers. In most cases, you find that the wage bill is very much higher on the expatriates. Now why should we be the ones that are being sacrificed?" asked MUZ president Joseph Chewe.

"Now coming to the recent one on taxes, the stance that MUZ took is that can we also get enough taxes from the mines and at the same time can we keep the jobs. If you look at the jobs we have today, most of them are contracted, most of them are not decent. So now they (Chamber of Mines) have realized that the stance that government took, the stance that the workers took, we are moving in one direction and this is good for Zambians, the workers and the country. The rate at which we are mining is so high, we will have pits and nowhere we can point to say this is the money that we got from the mines."

Members of the audience, including mining engineering students from the Copperbelt University as well as a multitude from the National Democratic Congress party demanded that the mining companies pay fair taxes, but warned government that running an economy through taxes would be catastrophic.

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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

NDC national youth chairman Charles Kabwita says Copperbelt PF chairman Nathan Chanda is using his political influence to interfere with various investigations against his party members involved in mealie-meal smuggling.

But Chanda says he will be undermining himself if he responded to Kabwita's allegations, saying he is too senior to argue with the opposition youth leader.

Speaking in an interview, Kabwita charged that police on the Copperbelt were failing to professionally investigate some PF councillors involved in the smuggling of mealie-meal because of interference from Chanda's office.

"I have five allegations that have come forth to my office as national youth chairman for NDC. Number one is that councillor Ossward Himoonga of Kamba ward in Chifubu constituency was arrested on allegation that he was

NDC accuses Nathan Chanda of shielding PF mealie meal smugglers

smuggling mealie meal in Ndola and due to political influence from the provincial chairman for Copperbelt Nathan Chanda, the man was yesterday released. And the second allegation is that in Ndola, the district youth chairman his truck was impounded in Kitwe on allegations that he was smuggling mealie meal and the police in Kitwe are failing to adequately investigate these issue because of political interference from the office of Nathan Chanda," Kabwita alleged.

"We have another allegation leading to fraud in Chingola where it is allegedly that councillor Charles Musonda has a fake Grade 12 certificate

the residents have reported this matter to police and to the town clerk but nothing has been done. This is all because Nathan Chanda has been poking his nose in this investigation of fraud. The certificate of councillor Charles Musonda was certified by the Magistrate contrary to the procedure of having a Grade 12 certificate certified by the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ)." He further said Chanda, using his political influence, subcontracted himself to a named water utility company to be supplying sand, a job which he feels should have been given to the youths.

"The other allegation is that Nathan Chanda himself as

the provincial chairman for Copperbelt has been given a ten per cent sub contract in Kafulafuta. There is a project which is being undertaken by Kafubu Water and Sewerage dubbed "Kafulafuta project" he is supplying sand at the expense of the residents of Kafulafuta. The residents have appealed to my office that I speak for them and find out how Nathan Chanda was given this ten per cent contract at the expense of the poor residents of Kafulafuta who also tendered and followed all the laid down procedures of tender. So they feel Nathan Chanda is using his office to acquire anything that is government related," charged Kabwita.

"Last but not the least, we are also concerned as youths on the Copperbelt that Black Mountain is only benefiting these in the Patriotic Front (PF) who are on Patriotic Front structures. And this perceived to be opposition cannot even go near Black Mountain. We see trucks for ministers loading material and being sold, we see trucks connected with offices of district commissioners ferrying material to where we don't know, we see youths from various structures of the PF here in Kitwe going at Black Mountain to work and get a benefit at the expense of the majority poor youths on the Copperbelt."

But when contacted, Chanda

said he would be undermining himself if he responded to Kabwita's allegations.

"If I failed to respond to the consultant of the NDC honourable Chishimba Kambwili that only my ward chairman can respond to him, who is Charles Kabwita for me to respond to? Kabwita can only be responded to by a section chairman. So with that respect I may only be able to issue a statement which is comprehensive to deal with whoever maybe suspected to be masquerading as PF and doing anything illegal. But I cannot discuss Kabwita myself [because] I am too senior, I will be lowering my position," said Kabwita.

Govt isn't responsible for paying council salaries, explains Mwale

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Local Government Minister Vincent Mwale says it is not government's duty to pay council workers' salaries.

And Mwale says government is in the process of rolling out the electronic system of collecting revenue in markets and bus stations in order to get rid of cadres as well as increase revenues for councils.

In an interview, Mwale explained that it was the responsibility of councils to find ways and means of paying their workers' salaries.

"The long-term solution lies in councils finding means and ways of raising their revenue to be able to meet their own budgets. The monies we are giving them is not salaries' money, it is not salaries' grant. A salary doesn't come from government, it comes from themselves, but there is a grant, which we give them to help them meet

their obligations [and] it is known as Local Government Equalization Fund. Except that councils that cannot raise money solely depend on this [grant] for salaries. That is how the confusion comes in of saying government has delayed to release salaries. It is not salaries that we give them, [but] it is help [since] they are a grant-aided institution just like other grant-aided institutions that we have in agriculture, in some colleges, universities and so on. And so all councils receive some help on a monthly basis, but that is not [for] salaries no," Mwale said.

He said councils should find their own money to meet their obligations than solely depending on the Equalization Fund.

"Whether they use [that grant] on salaries or not that is really up to them. So, some depend solely on it for

salaries [whereas] some don't depend on it, they find their own money to pay their own salaries and so on. So, that is one thing I want to clarify and councils know this, even unions know this very well; [and] they will tell you that what we give them is not salaries' money, but just a grant to help them. In fact, they turn it to become salaries' money because they can't find monies elsewhere," he explained.

Mwale said as a way of helping councils raise funds, government had passed a Ratings Bill to allow councils collect rates even from properties that were not yet on title.

"What are we doing to make sure that councils find money that can enable them meet their obligations? We just

passed the Rating Act in Parliament in December. This Rating Act is now going to broaden their revenue base.

You see, currently, [it's] only those who have title pay rates. Those that don't have title, even though they own land and they are building and they have got houses, [but] because they have no title, they are not paying rates [and so] we have changed the law to include those. If I have a house myself [and] in fact I can tell you [that] I have a house in Chipata, a big house [which] I built a long time ago; [but] I haven't yet obtained title for that house. I am not paying rates just because I have no title. My neighbour has title [and] he even has a smaller than mine but he is paying rates just because he has got title," Mwale said.

"So, we [have been] punishing those that have got title and leaving out those that do not have title. But this law will enable councils to collect money even from me for as long as that land was offered

to me legally, as long as it was offered to me on an offer letter. If I don't want to obtain title so that I run away from paying rates, it won't happen now because the law has changed, and once this law takes effect, most councils, for example, Chongwe where you have more than 35,000 properties and only about 7,000 are paying rates because they are the only ones with title. Things will change, Chongwe will see a lot more money coming to them."

Mwale, who is also Chipangali PF member of parliament, revealed that increased revenues had been realised following the introduction of electronic payment systems for market levies.

"The other thing is that you have seen that we have started collecting market levy, for example at BH market using electronic means. I can tell you that BH market now is

one market, which provides more money to the council than any other market in Lusaka even though it hasn't got more traders compared to other markets, but in terms of efficiency in the collection of fees, it is giving more money than any other market because they are using electoral means of collecting money," he disclosed.

Mwale said his Ministry is in the process of rolling out the electronic payment system to all market and bus stations around the country.

"We want to see more of this in Lusaka, in Ndola and in the entire country. So, we want to roll this to all the markets; we want to make sure that we collect money from markets, from bus stations electronically and this will improve revenue for the councils. It will get rid of all those individuals who impose themselves whether they are cadres or just powerful people in the communities. All of them will not be part of the system because the marketer will just pay electronically and money just goes straight into the account of the council.

And if this happens, councils will have a lot more money that they will not have to depend on the grants," said Mwale.

"And I must say that Equalization Fund over the last three years has been increasing. In 2016 it was K960 million if am not mistaken, then in 2018, it increased to about K1.1 billion and now it has increased to about K1.2 billion. So, you divide that by the number of councils that we have, but not all councils are getting the same amount. It's Equalization, we have to equalize [as] some councils are more capable [of raising their own resources] and others are not."

Those enjoying my sweat in building PF will pay - CK

By Mirriam Chabala

Edgar Lungu and those who have come to join PF must know that the sweet that they are enjoying today is from our sweat, says Roan member of parliament Chishimba Kambwili.

Kambwili who is also opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) 2021 presidential candidate has saluted the Lusaka High court for dismissing the application in which PF Secretary General Davies Mwila was seeking to challenge the Speaker of the National Assembly's refusal to declare the Roan Parliamentary seat vacant.

In an interview with News Diggers, Kambwili sent a warning to those enjoying good life in the Patriotic Front through corruption and other criminal activities, saying his seat on building the ruling party would never go in vain. "I believe in the saying 'you shall know the truth and only the truth shall set

you free'. So for those who stand on the truth, they shall remain on the truth and they shall forever be free. Those who want shortcuts, those who want to be unfair to others, only God will judge them and God will deal with them. So what happened in that [court] case is God dealing with people. People should not think that Zambia is a lawless country where you can just come up with your own thinking and think your own thinking will be obeyed by every arm of the State," Kambwili said.

"There are people who mean well, who are genuine in their thinking and who follow the law. What the High court showed is that they just follow the law and not who is in government. Some people think when they are in government they can bulldoze anybody and push anybody and people will only take it the way they want to take it. But the High court has clearly showed PF

that Zambia is not lawless. It's a country government by the rule of law."

Asked if the High court ruling against the PF Secretary General had restored his confidence in the judiciary, Kambwili said he had always believed that the judiciary was an independent arm of government.

"I have never lost confidence in the judiciary. Have I ever said I have lost confidence in the judiciary? I have never said that before myself, all I am saying is that there are genuine people. I mean, not all systems can be perfect. There are those who want to be politically inclined and want to make decisions based on which person is in power. But I think what the High court showed is that Zambia is governed by a set of rules and laws and they only followed the law. So I can only wish [Davies] Mwila and the PF all the best in their endeavours to try and be unfair

to me," Kambwili explained. He further warned that those enjoying the fruits of his sweat in the PF would pay because God was watching them. "Lungu and those other people who have come to PF must know that the sweet that they are enjoying today, it is from our sweat. And God never sleeps, he knows exactly who has contributed what to PF. God knows who created PF, God knows who built PF. So if they think they can be unfair with the people that created PF, for which they are enjoying, let them know that God does not sleep. My efforts to create PF and build PF cannot go to waste and people should not pretend that they are the ones that built PF. By the way, they are even misusing PF by stealing and engaging in corruption, pilfering. But for us, we genuinely built PF and that's why God will protect us," said Kambwili.



PATRIOTIC FRONT



Why we deserve your vote

Leaving no one behind

PF ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME NUMBER 5: “IMPROVED ACCESS TO DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS”

By Hon Davies Mwila

Introduction

In the last write-up, we were privileged to carry an article on Economic Diplomacy by His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu wherein the Head of state discussed Africa's economic relationship with the European Union (EU). The President also spoke from the heart as he outlined his longing for our nation to harness the positives of global and regional integration in order to better the lives of ALL Zambians. This article continues on a theme related to Economic Diplomacy: Improved Access to Domestic, Regional and International Markets in conformity with the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). The (7NDP) has identified “improving access to domestic, regional and international markets” as one of several development outcomes which need to be achieved in order to bring about economic diversification. We discuss the achievements of the Patriotic Front (PF) Government concerning “improving access to domestic, regional and international markets” with the aim of diversifying the economy and attaining Zambia’s Vision 2030 objective of becoming a “prosperous middle-income country by 2030”.

To further emphasize the importance of “improved access to domestic, regional and international markets” (trade) for Zambia’s economic diversification as set out in the 7NDP; His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu revealed the following during his address to the Third Session of the Twelfth National Assembly on 14th September, 2018:

“(The PF) Government is committed to facilitating trade and industrialization as part of the diversification of the economy. In this regard, we are implementing the National Industrial and the National Trade Policies. The national trade policy aims at promoting and stimulating a competitive trade sector, while the national industrial policy aims at transforming Zambia from a producer and exporter of primary products to a net exporter of value-added goods. Further, the industrial policy encourages the utilization of local primary resources and increased citizen participation. This policy measure will encourage the uptake of our local innovations and home-grown solutions in the growth and development of enterprises, with the spin-off effect of enhanced job and income generation opportunities especially for our young people.”

In order to “improve access to domestic, regional and international markets” as well as effectively implement the National Industrial and the National Trade Policies towards the attainment of Vision 2030; the PF Government has successfully implemented various programmes and recorded notable successes which are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

IMPROVED TRADE FACILITATION THROUGH TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In line with the 7NDP, the PF Government is improving trade facilitation by implementing the transport infrastructure development programme, with projects such as the soon-to-be completed

Kazungula Bridge. The Kazungula Bridge is a key road and rail bridge crossing over the Zambezi River along the North – South Corridor, a key trade route linking the port of Durban in South Africa to the inland countries of Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, DRC, and up to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. The Kazungula Bridge comes to literally bridge the regional divide as well as address a gap where for years, ferries were used to cross the river.

Due to the use of ferries, it took transporters more than 8 days at times to navigate, thereby impacting negatively on trade including human lives which were lost from ferry accidents over the years. The Kazungula Bridge Project being championed by President Lungu is a perfect example of how a landlocked country like Zambia can strategically be interconnected domestically and regionally for the benefit of its citizens and the wider region in the hinterland – making economic diversification and achievement of Vision 2030 possible.

In implementing the transport infrastructure development programme for improved trade facilitation, the PF Government under President Lungu is also comprehensively rehabilitating Zambia Railways mainline (including inter-mine lines) and revitalizing the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) with the aim of: increasing operational efficiencies, reducing the cost of freight, and increasing the tonnage carried. In order to boost trade further, the PF Government is facilitating the migration of the rail gauge from the existing Cape Gauge to the Standard Gauge to bring about higher speeds and higher tonnage of freight for improved trade.

Furthermore, the PF Government is implementing the transport infrastructure development programme for improved trade facilitation by constructing the Chipata-Petauke-Serenje Railway Line, which when commissioned, will complete the link from the Port of Nacala (Mozambique’s most northerly port on the Indian Ocean) to the existing railway lines across Zambia.

In addition, the PF Government has identified several strategic railway routes for development, some of which include the following: the Chingola to Jimbe (Border with Angola) route linking the existing line in Chingola through Solwezi to the border town of Jimbe to enhance transportation of freight and passenger traffic to Lobito Bay Port in Angola; the Kafue to Zawi (Zimbabwe) route will link Zambia Railway lines to Ziwa in Zimbabwe, as the shortest route to the Port of Beira in Mozambique; TAZARA Nseluka to Mpulungu Port to link Mpulungu Port to the TAZARA line at Nseluka to facilitate imports and exports from the Great Lakes region to the sea ports on the Indian Ocean; and lastly, a railway link between Zambia and Namibia (Livingstone to Sesheke) which involves the partial rehabilitation of the Mulobezi line as well as feasibility studies for construction of a spur between Livingstone and Katima Mulilo via Kazungula that connects the Namibian Railway system as part of the Walvis Bay-Livingstone-Lusaka-Ndola-Lubumbashi Corridor.

In order to improve trade facilitation through transport infrastructure development as set out in the 7NDP, the PF Government is also upgrading

strategic airports at Livingstone and Mfuwe as well as secondary airports at Chipata, Kitwe, Kasama, Mongu, Solwezi, and Mansa. By so doing, the PF Government is increasingly enhancing the capacity of strategic and secondary airports to handle higher volumes of traffic, both passengers and cargo.

Related to the above, and on a larger scale; the PF Government is also currently implementing the International Airport Upgrading and Construction Programme for improved trade facilitation as espoused in the 7NDP. The full implementation of the International Airport Upgrading and Construction Programme will improve trade facilitation due to the resultant: significantly lower costs of doing business enhanced regional integration and trade, and increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to Zambia. In this regard, the PF Government is constructing the soon-to-be completed Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, and the Copperbelt Airport. Collectively, these two international airports shall enable Zambia to strengthen its economic integration and competitiveness at domestic, regional and global levels. This shall in turn lead to economic diversification, employment creation, and acceleration of the achievement of Vision 2030.

The 7NDP identifies the lack of a strong national carrier as one of the main challenges which Zambia is facing. As such, the 7NDP recommends that the PF Government should establish a national airline so as to: increase connectivity between Zambia and other African airports, bring down the airfares which few passengers can currently afford, and strengthen the diversification of the Zambian economy, for example, through exportation of agricultural produce. In response to this recommendation under the 7NDP, the PF Government is establishing the national airline with the Ethiopian Airways as a strategic partner. When established, the national airline will operate purely on commercial principles without government or political interference in its operations. In addition, Government, through the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), is in the process of appointing a board of directors for the national airline, which is currently being vetted by various Government wings to determine their suitability to serve on the board. More so, soon after the board is formally appointed, the board will in turn immediately appoint the Chief Executive Officer and other top management staff. In addition to numerous trade benefits which will accrue to Zambia as alluded to above, the establishment of the national airline by the PF Government will also create five hundred (500) direct jobs once launched.

Conclusion

The above undertakings and projects are some of the endeavors the Patriotic Front Government of President Edgar Chagwa Lungu has undertaken to improving access to domestic, regional and international markets with the aim of diversifying the economy and attaining Zambia’s Vision 2030 objective of becoming a “prosperous middle-income country by 2030”.

The Author is Patriotic Front Secretary General

Is Hichilema the lapdog of Zambia's mining companies?

By Sishuwa Sishuwa

In the 2019 national budget, the Minister of Finance proposed a few changes to Zambia's mining tax regime. As well as introducing a 1.5 per cent increase in mineral royalty rates, Margaret Mwanakatwe also imposed a 5 per cent import duty on copper concentrates and a 15 per cent export duty on precious metals. Mwanakatwe further abolished the Value Added Tax and replaced it with a non-refundable Sales tax. The response from mining companies was an immediate threat to lay off workers and scale down their operations. 'If the 2019 Budget proposals are enacted, Zambia will have by far the highest tax burden of mining countries [and] more than half of [the country's] copper mines will become loss making,' claimed Goodwell Mateyo, the president of the Chamber of Mines. 'The only operational response available', Mateyo added, 'will be to scale back certain operations, reduce capital expenditure, and mine only the highest grades available. The unwanted effect of these survival measures will be lost production, lost investment, lost employment, and less supplies and goods procured from other parts of the economy.'

The new mining tax proposals have attracted plaudits from most Zambians who have long sought a fair proportion of the revenue from the country's mineral wealth. Opposition United Party for National Development (UPND) leader Hakainde Hichilema is however not among them. Appearing on Radio Christian Voice's Chat Back programme on 18 January 2019, Hichilema refused to render his unambiguous support to the proposed tax measures and instead gave a series of vague and superficial replies to the interviewer's questions on mining policy. So disenchanted about the government's tax proposals are mining companies, Hichilema revealed, that they have told him they cannot wait for him to get elected to the presidency in order to sort out the mess in the sector. "The mining companies are saying 'HH [Hakainde Hichilema] we are waiting for you to come [into power]. We will pay the tax which you will introduce because we know it is a fair tax.'" What do we make of all this?

The first point to note is that Hichilema's comments on the proposed mining policy reveal his exceptional political ineptitude and raise serious questions about the nature of his relationship with mining companies. Is Hichilema the mines' man? I personally could not believe that anyone in his position would publicly claim that mining companies are lining up a particular political leader and expressing a wish for that leader to take power immediately. Moreover, the UPND leader had absolutely no need to say what he did, since the journalist did not ask him whether or not mining companies want him elected. All that the journalist sought was Hichilema's simple answer to a straightforward question: does he think mining taxes should be increased, decreased or stay the same? Hichilema struggled to provide a clear response and was frustratingly vague about what policies his government would implement in Zambia's crucial economic sector. Apart from promising to revert to a VAT tax mechanism, he failed to outline what exactly is wrong with the PF's approach to mining and what he would do differently. When News Diggers subsequently gave him an opportunity to clarify his position on the new mining taxes, Hichilema remained largely elusive and devoted much of his response to denying accusations from the governing Patriotic Front (PF) that he is in the deep pockets of mining companies, arguing that the ruling party deliberately twisted his comments in order to gain political mileage. It would be a costly mistake for Hichilema to think that it is only PF supporters who are extremely disappointed with his pronouncements on the mining issue.

Mining companies in Zambia are not looked upon favourably by much of the country's population. I know many Zambians who do not support the PF but who both back the new tax measures and have expressed grave disappointment with Hichilema's comments. Multinational mining companies are presently engaged in what can only be termed as an attempt to blackmail Zambia. They have threatened to sack thousands of workers unless the taxes are reduced. The PF has commendably, if perhaps only temporarily, stood up to the mines, who have had a sweet deal in Zambia in recent years. Hichilema however is choosing at this crucial juncture to identify himself with the mining companies. This will surely become a stone around his neck if he ever stands in another election. I know that division has become a characteristic of Zambia's politics, but there are certain sectors where it is in the best interest for everyone to pull together, particularly when it comes to guaranteeing the fundamental interests and security of citizens. For example, Zambia wins if there is a unified voice against: the low public earnings from the mining sector resulting from the ineffectiveness of the Zambia Revenue Authority, low taxes, transfer pricing and poorly negotiated development agreements between mining companies and the government; the exploitation of Zambian workers or the dispossession of rural residents of their land and livelihoods; the prevention of instability in the country by avoiding business deals and political arrangements that would plunge the country into conflict (i.e. uranium mining, nuclear energy, asylum for warmongers etc.), or the acquisition of more public debt. Hichilema would do well to consider this point.

The problem with the multinational mining companies in Africa is that they are the leaders of neo-colonial exploitation and expropriation. In real terms, Zambia gets far less from the mines today than it did in the early years of independence, particularly following the Mulungushi economic reforms of 1968 that increased the national stake in the sector. Zambian miners also get far less today (in purchasing power parity) and social benefits from the industry. The mining companies have devised various methods for ensuring that most of the value of the copper is collected by their shareholders and the company management, and very little goes to local workers or the Zambian government. There are various tricks for maintaining this system, such as giving kickbacks to government officials, employing foreign companies as contractors, using expensive expatriates for management positions (despite Zambia having had a School of Mines for about fifty years!), and by transfer pricing. But perhaps the main method for expropriation of value is to keep local taxation low, both as profits tax and mineral

royalty tax. The main strategy that mining companies deploy to maintain low taxes is to threaten government that they will reduce mining operations, or even move out of Zambia altogether if taxes are increased. These are credible threats for two main reasons. First, any pulling out, or even reduction of expansion programmes, will affect employment in Zambia and reduce tax revenue, thus the government may be 'cutting its nose to spite its face' if it tries to increase taxes. Secondly, the threats are credible because the mining giants are truly global multinational corporations, and they can fairly easily move their operations in the direction of a country where production costs are cheaper, taxation rates are lower, and bribing of government officials is even easier (the Democratic Republic Congo, for instance, would arguably fit all three of these criteria). In other words, a large rich multinational is in a strong position to bully a weak African state such as Zambia, and has a large influence over government policies to support the mines by tax holidays, lower taxation rates, providing subsidies (such as cheap electricity), degrading the trade unions, overlooking environmental degradation, and so on.

The attempts by President Edgar Lungu's administration to increase the mineral tax is therefore – on the face of it – a laudable effort to stand up to the mining companies and to make sure we Zambians are not bullied into complete poverty, but rather able to limit the levels of externalisation of profits so that the country can at least collect a decent proportion from its mineral wealth. Of course, with Lungu's corrupt regime, one has to wonder whether the threats of increased mining taxation are just a bluff, and the underlying demand is instead for higher kickbacks or even shareholdings for government officials. In addition, there is the question of whether, if the government ever succeeds with its demand for higher taxation of the mines, the proceeds will ever reach the poor people of Zambia – or will instead merely provide more revenue for government officials to steal. Bearing in mind the preceding situation analysis, one can only wonder what on Earth Hichilema is doing. What exactly is his interest in protecting the mines from increased taxation? Why is Hichilema siding with the interests of the predator and against the interests of Zambia? Is he looking for his own share in the mining companies? Does he have some longstanding business interests with the mines, which may have been obscured by his entry into active politics? What 'fair tax' has he told the mines that they will pay under his presidency? Given the present situation, his implied claim that the new mining policy is unfair can only be read to mean that he is supporting the unwillingness (or is it blank refusal?) by mining companies to pay an increase in taxes. If Hichilema claims that the mining companies are saying 'we are waiting for you to come', it is reasonable to suspect that they think he would offer them a better deal: lower taxes, lower mineral royalties and looser local content requirements. Does Hichilema advocate these things and if so, why not admit and publicly defend them? Is he reticent because he knows such a position will be unpopular with Zambian voters? His silence, if anything, suggests a secretive closed-door approach to policy not much better than the openly incompetent approach of President Lungu and the PF. It is worth noting that the basic economic position is that, for almost a hundred years, mining companies in Zambia have been milking our riches and engendering poverty and destitution. Our feet walk on copper, yet we remain absolutely poor, thanks to inept leadership from a succession of corruptible political leaders who pawn off the country for a few trinkets at a time, accumulate through brazen theft of public resources and the massive sale of Zambian assets to so-called investors, and strut around with self-importance when they are nothing but the disposable playthings of even bigger global kleptocrats. Our mineral wealth has been and continues to be taken from us, and when they have taken the whole lot, we shall remain with nothing and probably be the poorest country on Earth, with all our wealth transported to Geneva, Beijing, New Delhi, Ottawa, London and New York. From this point of view, Hichilema's apparent intention to continue with and to support unbridled exploitation by mines is nothing less than an act of treason. Whereas he failed to be convicted of treason for a traffic violation, he appears to have now invented a much more substantive reason to be successfully convicted on the same charge. If these really are his plans, the most fantastic aspect of such plans are that he should be so naive as to make them plain before he is elected, thereby ensuring that we shall never be so stupid as to elect him into office. For a man who has said little or nothing about what he is going to do about massive poverty and corruption in Zambia, he now opens his mouth to reveal that his one big idea is to support and encourage the continuing exploitation of Zambia by foreign commercial interests. The truth is that the benefit of keeping minerals in the ground, or banking them for the future, far exceeds the economic, environmental and social costs of a bad deal. So if mining companies threaten to leave because of the proposed small tax increments, Zambia would do well to pave the road for them. It is time we looked to longer-term strategies rather than short-term expediency. Banking our resources until such a time that we are in strong negotiating position or there is broader scarcity for metals that would enable us set better terms for ourselves is better than emptying our underground wealth to benefit foreign commercial interests. One of the major downsides of the current extractive industry ownership structure is that it is made for corruption and for as long as the State does not have a decisive ownership stake in the strategic mining industry, (i.e. more than 50% as is the case in countries like Botswana, Norway, Sweden, China etc.), Zambians will also have limited means to public accountability for stolen resources. This is because a limited ownership structure (even with greater taxation) gives leverage for the majority shareholders to hide profits and obscure minority shareholders. In effect, accountability is increased where a publicly owned state enterprise exists. This is a problem that extends beyond Lungu and his government; it is an issue that greatly benefited Frederick Chiluba and his corrupt friends and, unless changed, would in the unlikely event of a Hichilema presidency also shape his behaviour (given his possible business interests in the sector).

Another implication that emerges from Hichilema's bold claim

that the mines 'are waiting for [him] to come' is that the mines now seem to feel themselves to be in such a bold and commanding position that they can publicly intervene in Zambian politics. Perhaps the mines now feel powerful enough to act as king makers, and provide the necessary funds and support to put Hichilema into office. How exactly will they do this? By deliberately causing unemployment to be blamed on President Lungu and the PF? By funding Hichilema's election campaign ahead of Zambia's 2021 election? Moreover, his assertion that mining companies support him could easily encourage the ruling party to be publicly more hostile during negotiations and justifiably accuse them of undermining government. Mining companies may respond by distancing themselves from Hichilema and he may end up alienated from both their support and the support of Zambians. If this is the basis for Hichilema's strategy, then he has carefully planned his own downfall. By declaring that Zambia's mining companies are apparently so keen to place him in power, Hichilema has, in effect, put himself as the candidate of the mines and consequently cast Lungu as the candidate of the people (yes, Lungu, probably the most incompetent and divisive president that Zambia has ever had). In so doing, the UPND leader may have succeeded in extinguishing the little hope he may have had of winning the Copperbelt Province, without which it is almost impossible for any presidential candidate to win power.

Can Hichilema overcome popular perceptions that he is beholden to mining interests? I seriously doubt it. Hichilema's cozy relationship with the Brenthurst Foundation, a mining lobby established by the Oppenheimer family that favours a low mining tax regime in Africa, places him firmly within the bosom of the interests of mining capital. The UPND leader has consistently in public statements portrayed himself as more empathetic to the mining companies rather than the mining communities. I have personally never heard Hichilema speaking in defence of workers against mining companies. Neither have I heard him expressing outrage against what is happening in North-Western Province, where we have allowed the re-creation of spatial apartheid in the new mining areas. Much like during the colonial era, mining companies on 'the new Copperbelt' have replicated the notorious racial colour bar: white mineworkers are paid exceptionally high wages, live in segregated estates with lavish housing and social facilities, while their black counterparts who do much of the labour are paid significantly less, housed in distinctively less lavish settings, and effectively left to fend for themselves. Where is Hichilema in identifying what looks very much like a new wave of colonialism? His solution to the woes of mining communities, that he will bring back Anglo America Corporation, sounds very much like the promises of a mining CEO, not a potential Head of State. This position has never been obscured by him or hidden from Copperbelt residents. It is in most public pronouncements he makes, and this probably explains why most Copperbelt voters will never fully trust Hichilema, or seen him as a viable alternative.

On a recent trip to Chingola, I struck a conversation with a miner at Konkola Copper Mine, who told me why many of his colleagues do not support the UPND leader. His observations, which I have translated from Bemba language to English, are worth quoting at length:

'Hichilema does not speak for us. When he speaks on mining issues, it is to condemn the government or the PF, not the workings of mining companies or to draw attention to our low wages, poor working conditions and the general lack of safety standards. So many of my colleagues have died in Chingola and Chililabombwe mines owned by Vedanta's KCM. For example, between April and August 2018, my colleagues Kelvin Chongo, Ezekia Mwape, Benson Solochi and Frederick Musonda all died tragically due to KCM's lamentable safety record. They died from mining explosions or preventable accidents such as earth movements. Their deaths, like so many that happened before them, were never reported in the mainstream media. [Michael] Sata, when he was in opposition, used to speak for us. Now, we feel orphaned, as Hichilema appears to have no interest in highlighting our plight. Even Chishimba Kambwili, who is so vocal against AVIC, is silent on our plight because he is a supplier to the mines... Death trails us from the moment we enter the mine. Every time I leave my house for work, I say goodbye to my family because when you go underground, there is no guarantee that you will return home... Then you have the problem of suppliers and contractors not being paid on time. KCM is probably the worst on this score of all mining companies. On the Copperbelt, if you are not a miner, you are a contractor or supplier of goods and services to the mining companies. How do suppliers sustain their businesses and livelihoods if they are not paid? These are some of the issues that are important here, but we never hear Hichilema raise them.'

The question is: why? Between foreign commercial interests and Zambia, on whose side is Hichilema? If his few public pronouncements about mining are anything to go by, Hichilema's affinities lie with the mining companies he once advised rather than the miners who live, work and sometimes die bringing copper to the surface. This reveals his poor political judgement, as despite their diminished numbers, Zambia's miners remain politically important. All things considered, Hichilema is a very fortunate politician. The UPND leader is ridding the waves of favourable circumstances and mediocrity in Zambia's politics, weaknesses that have created favorable conditions for him to emerge as the leading political alternative. In truth, he is simply competing for 'government' among basically a lumpen middle class that exploits regional, ethnic and mass poverty in their politics. In fact, our leading political elites, both in the opposition and ruling party, are all cut from the same cloth – a parasitic and uninspiring lot that has no real desire for genuine radical emancipatory politics the country is so desperately in need of. My wish ahead of Zambia's 2021 election is that neither Lungu nor Hichilema appear on the presidential ballot. In some ways, the two need each other. Lungu's manifold failures encourage many Zambians to support Hichilema even though he offers little other than that he is not Lungu.

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Ba Sichalwe; mwashuleneni

The Nsenga people of Eastern Province say "mulandu uli nga nchishupu", meaning a crime is like a fart; you never know when it will pop out and when it does, you can't control its smell. Sometimes, we human beings try to hide our true character from the public, in the hope that as long as we misbehave in privacy, we are safe. But just like a fart, even the most silent one can be traced to the source - as Honourable Lawrence Sichalwe has come to learn.

Unlike many people who heard the news that the Minister of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs 'accidentally' posted a pornographic video in a WhatsApp group, we were not shocked at all. We understand that the minister is a human being like anyone of us. Away from public eyes, he indulges in any kinds of naughty behavior that gives him pleasure. What puzzled us instead was how the PF leaders in that WhatsApp group named "What government is doing" attempted to cover up the minister's violation.

When the youths demanded that the law

Diggers! Ear to the ground

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must take its course on the minister, they were harassed and told to have respect for elders. In short, what the PF leadership was asking the youths to do was to stop laughing because it was an elderly man who farted. This was very unfair because so many citizens in this country have been arrested and condemned to prison for doing exactly what the minister did. If it's considered a crime when an ordinary Zambian commits it, then how can it cease to be a crime just because the offender is a Cabinet minister?

This is exactly the reason why we say it is very important for those who are in power to make laws from a point of view of those who are outside government. The minister has not denied posting the obscene video in that WhatsApp group, he has already pleaded

guilty to the public and apologized. So, we don't see anything that is there for the police to investigate. Our point is that there are laws in this country which need to be revised, but if lawmakers like Honourable Sichalwe don't want to do that, then they must be prepared to face more and more public humiliation when such things happen.

Police spokesperson Esther Katongo is right when she says Honourable Sichalwe committed a crime regardless of the fact that he posted by mistake; and in all fairness, he deserves to be prosecuted and punished. But a little common sense is all that is required for anyone to see that the minister is just a sinner among sinners. The only difference is that his sin has crawled to the public.

It's like fornication in Church. So many youths engage in casual sex after choir practice, but it only becomes a punishable offence when the girl gets pregnant or the couple gets caught. Right now, it's Sichalwe who is on the hot seat, but there are several other ministers who are as guilty as Sichalwe. As we speak, God is looking down on them and they know themselves that what they were doing over the weekend is worse than what the Traditional Affairs minister is guilty of.

Let's be realistic and check if the minister is the only government official who saw and circulated that video. Honourable Sichalwe did not download that video from somewhere to post it. He received it from someone and he found it exciting enough to share with more viewers. The

video was clearly labeled "forwarded". So, who sent that pornography to the respected Honourable minister?

One thing for sure is that a michopo seller in Chawama would not dare send such obscene materials to a minister, knowing it would get them in trouble. It can only be someone who has a certain level of freedom, a person who knows the minister's taste in bed or what sexually humours him. Someone like a girlfriend. But since the Honourable Minister is from a marriage background, we would like to give him a benefit of doubt by assuming that he has been sticking one faithful partner.

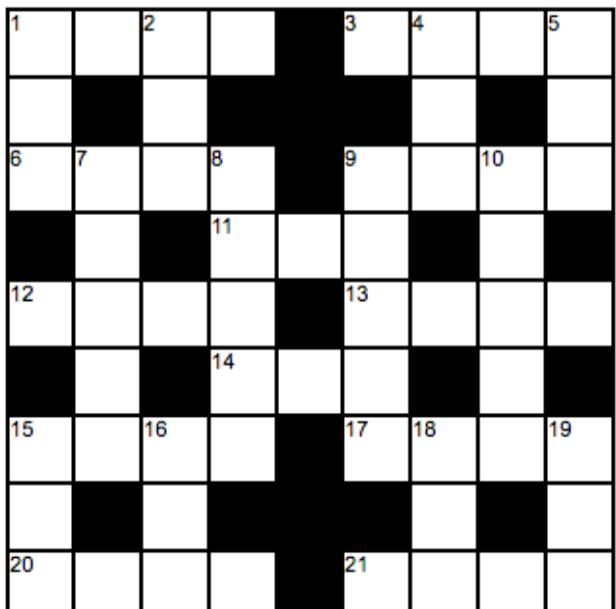
We can generously extend the benefit of doubt to his woman, by assuming that she has more decent ways of proposing adventurous

sexual pleasures from her Honourable lover, than sending him suggestive videos. So this leaves us the high possibility that a fellow Cabinet minister forwarded the video to the minister.

If the police think this is too far fetched, let them ask Honourable Sichalwe to name the person who sent him that video, that is when the whole country will know that those who are preaching morality have no morals whatsoever. Our calculated guess is that over 50 percent of our Cabinet minister watched and shared that video. They are as guilty as he is, but they are laughing at him because he has been exposed.

We are not here to judge Honourable Sichalwe, but we are interested in hearing what the minister in charge of morality and spiritual guidance has to say about this behavior? If it was upto her to judge, would she forgive the minister or not? If yes, what about the other Zambians who have been sentenced over the same crime? What a shameful government of hypocrites!

Crossword puzzle 280



"The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease for ever to be able to do it." - J. M. Barrie

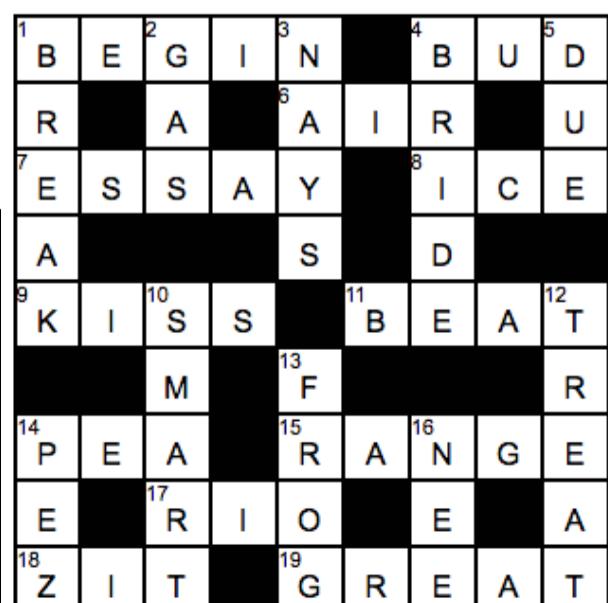
Across

- To gain from working
- Side dish
- Young fellows
- Monastery resident
- Deuce; even score
- Bart's sister
- Precipitation
- Coffee cup
- Quick fastener
- Adam and Eve's place
- Firm hold
- Unlikely, as a chance

Down

- Moray, e.g.
- Color of blood
- London lavatory
- Chinese cookware
- UFO pilot
- Official seal
- Combine
- Loud sounds
- Hang loosely
- Boxing legend
- Penn. neighbor
- Viet _____

Solutions to puzzle 279



Reader's feedback

EDITOR'S NOTE:

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

Note that we block Facebook users who use abusive language.

Sichalwe's porno post on WhatsApp group

Dear Editor,

"These PF ministers!! Just having a PF in government is a curse! And Chawama has a way of inflicting jokers for MPs!" - Hector Ndlovu

"Is there anything this govt is doing apart from stealing and watching porno?" - Nephias Mbewe

"That's why they struggle when asked to stand in Parliament..." - Nathan Kangwa

"In developed countries, this could have called for his resignation, but here in Zambia, it's business as usual like a joke!" - Chisa Sokoni

"If this was opposition leader, he would already be in jail for possession and circulation of seditious material! But here, police are quiet. Let's apply the law fairly when someone is caught!" - Wuselewa See

"Whether it was accidentally posted or not, the fact is he circulated obscene materials, which is against the law so he has to be arrested, otherwise, anyone who will circulate pornographic materials will just have to say that they just posted it accidentally since precedence would have been set and that will be the end of the story." - Nchimunyia Mazuba

"It's a crime to circulate pornography. Let him face justice. Ignorance is not a defence to law-breaking. Can his constituency see to it that this Minister takes his stand in the dock?" - Namasiku Likukela

"Let's see if the minister distributing pornographic material will be tried and jailed since it's a crime in Zambia to be in possession of such and to distribute such." - Regina Mwanza



PF cadres' attack on UPND camp in Lundazi campaigns

Editor,

"When you see the PF & its leaders shunning the Church-led dialogue, they want to continue inflicting pain & anguish on people." - Chanda Pochoko

"These attacks by cadres on other cadres and some members of opposition parties are always very predictable. Once there is a rally it's almost always bound to happen, so why are the police not vigilant enough to prevent them?" - Sidney Mvula

"No wonder they keep frustrating dialogue so that they can freely continue with their wicked schemes!" -

Lydia Ndandalika

"This is exactly why they refused to participate in the national dialogue because they knew they would be told to stop this madness! SADC chairman, my foot!!" - Robby LM

"Most of these attacks are possible organised by PF leaders to intimidate and stop voters from voting for the opposition. The police has failed!" - Mercy Miti

"The same MP will be the organising committee chairman for national prayer reconciliation and fasting on October 18 in that area." - Eli Soko

Msoni's view on alliance being dead due to UPND's continued bragging

Editor,

"The problem in the UPND is that the spokesperson is so mute and the media and quoted. If only the spokesperson or media team could do their work then all these misunderstandings would end because as it stands, the president says this, his vice says that...the deputy secretary general says this...it's all annoying!" - Sylvester Chongo

"The issue of an alliance must be a second option and that should only come in if there is a re-run otherwise you might be putting your eggs in one basket. Every member of the alliance must go in there as if they are the only opposition party first and foremost, but without underrating the capacity of other members of the alliance. And UPND has been very clear on that score. UPND does not fight other opposition alliance members, but treats them as equals, in my view." - Joseph Chisenga

"Mr Msoni has a choice: to be or not to be? After all, he has the constitutional right to associate with whoever he wants. So, why whine about this alliance? Let him get up and go or simply remain seated as an armchair critic, while doers go about their work!" - Kanyata Mubita

"In the first place, what made you think you could thrive on UPND's popularity without being well-established politically yourself?" - Alfred Kaunda

Public discussion forum: New mining tax and job loses



Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) president Michael Nyirenda (above) gestures to the audience during the OSISA/News Diggers Public discussion forum. Below Zambia Chamber of Mines president Goodwell Mateyo makes a point at the forum, as member is the audience make contributions.





Barcelona take care of business at Girona

Lionel Messi returned to crown Barcelona's 2-0 win over 10-man Girona – re-establishing the champions' five-point lead at LaLiga's summit.

Portugal right-back Nelson Semedo struck after nine minutes at Estadi Montilivi but, four days on from a 2-0 loss to Sevilla in the first leg of their Copa del Rey quarter-final, Ernesto Valverde's side were far from their fluent best.

Indeed, immediately after Bernardo Espinosa's red card for two bookable offences early in the second half, Girona continued to create the better chances and Barca were indebted to the heroics of goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Messi came off the bench with last weekend's 3-1 win over Leganes in the balance and sat out the trip to Sevilla, but was at the heart of most of Barcelona's best attacks against their fellow Catalans and sealed victory with a delightful 68th-minute goal. The opening goal came a touch against the run of play as Semedo swiped home a loose ball in the Girona box left-footed.

It should have been 2-0 in the 16th minute but Philippe Coutinho shot tamely at Yassine Bounou's boot on the end of a majestic Messi throughball.

Ter Stegen saved from Cristian Stuani before Pique

cleared Pere Pons' follow-up off the line three minutes before half-time.

The Ter Stegen-Stuani dual would be repeated either side of Espinosa's needless second booking for a 52nd-minute foul on Luis Suarez, with the Germany international coming out on top each time. Sergio Busquets – already booked and out of Barca's next LaLiga match against Valencia – made a goal-saving tackle on Aleix Garcia with no margin for error.

It was left to Messi to settle the nerves as he knocked Jordi Alba's pass out of his feet to draw Bounou and lift

a finish beyond the Girona keeper, who later restored some pride with a brilliant point-blank stop from the Argentine maestro.

What does it mean? Messidependencia stronger than ever

Scrutiny over Valverde's management of his star asset's workload has increased this week. Barcelona were almost entirely reliant on Messi's inspirational qualities as the rest of their attack largely failed to fire against Girona, which should allow a degree of sympathy for Valverde's predicament. An injury to rule Messi out for any prolonged

spell would be catastrophic for Barca's season. For their part, Girona looked far better than a team now winless since December 5.

Ter Stegen wins compelling battle

Stuani was one of a host of forwards linked to Barcelona earlier this month before the surprise signing of Kevin-Prince Boateng. On this evidence, he might not have enjoyed daily battles with Ter Stegen in training too much. The Blaugrana's victory would have been impossible without a commanding performance from their number one. *Goal.com*

Buffaloes take down UNZA Honeys to claim Championship

By Alex Chilumbwe

Green Buffaloes female team has dethroned 6 time consecutive league winner UNZA Honeys after an exhilarating 72-67 win on Saturday in their fourth and final serie of the Midlands Basketball league.

Honeys, loaded with approximately 5 international players from Zimbabwe and legendary local star Enala Pondani were favourites to win the league but fans cheered the loudest for Buffaloes, indicating thirsty for a change in the tired norm of Honeys winning everything in Basketball.

It was the unbreakable spirit of Buffaloes forward Besiya Katete that found the morale for the rest of her teammates. Katete made ten field points in 12 minutes while ever-energetic shooting guard Gift Mwamba utilized her lay-up skills and accurate three pointers to put the final nail in Honey's sinking boat.

In the fourth quarter of the game, Honeys regained composure and almost leveled up but Buffaloes' aggressive forward Ireen Mutale was excellent in defence. All the thrills were not without the well-timed finishes of barely five feet tall Katherine Mwachambo.

A teary and panting Buffaloes coach Pamela Mukonde could hardly speak in a post match interview with Goal Diggers! as she could not believe the victory. She murmured at how she had waited for more than seven years to retain the title that they last won in the early 2000s.

"This is a dream come true but it is somehow still unbelievable. We have always had issues of endurance in the league so I did not think we would beat Honeys. In series, we have beaten them 3-1 but this one was very tough. They are taller and heavier but at the end of the day, we are champions," said Mukonde.

And Honeys coach Cuthbert Kondwelani Tembo congratulated the army side for beating his side adding that they showcased the spirit of hard work and determination to dethrone his team.

"They deserve it and I'm really happy for them. They have showcased a winning spirit and a lot of hardwork and determination. I'm really happy for them because now my girls have learnt that it cannot always be them," said Tembo.

The battle in the masculine category is on-going with Matero Magic and UNZA Pacers being favourites and topping the table in that order.

Blackwell Siwale fires shots at Kamanga

By Alex Chilumbwe

Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) aspiring presidential candidate Blackwell Siwale has taken shots at the Andrew Kamanga led administration saying it has terribly failed in all departments and there is need to end its tenure.

Speaking when he featured on Radio Phoenix programme dubbed Luchi In The Morning, Siwale accused Kamanga of not having a national agenda, adding that he was only holding on to the president position

to settle scores with his enemies.

"The administration at FAZ has totally collapsed since Kamanga became president. He has not done any meaningful development one can point at and he's only there to settle scores with people like Simataa Simataa and other enemies. He must go so that I can take over and restore what he has ruined," he said.

Siwale who served as FAZ Executive Committee member in Kamanga's regime also said that any seemingly successful

project done by Kamanga should not be attributed to him as he was only riding on the 2022 vision projects that the Kalusha Bwalya regime set before leaving the association.

"Credit on any seemingly successful project should not be attributed to Kamanga alone because he's just a ride along on the projects of the 2022 vision that the previous regime left. If I were him, I would not even be proud of anything because he has failed the football family in all areas," Siwale said.

Siwale further accused FAZ

of lying when it announced that it had administration in all the ten provinces of the country. He said that there were only representatives in each province without traceable offices and were being paid K1, 800 per month.

He also attributed the closure of Nkana stadium to FAZ's failure to submit league reports to CAF thereby making it impossible for Nkana to use its stadia for CAF games.

"A task as simple as submitting league reports has forced Nkana to be

playing their CAF games outside their town. That isn't fair to fans at all and a clear case of the association's failure," he added.

Meanwhile, when queried on what he would improve if elected into office, one of the things Siwale stressed about was the creation of a National Arbitration Tribunal that would be dealing with local league cases as a way of reducing dependency on FIFA.

"This tribunal will be created and implemented so that serious simple cases are dealt within the country. We cannot always be writing to FIFA or even take too long to give rulings of simple club cases. You see while our game is going down, Kamanga is flying in and out of South Africa for TV interviews," he said.

Siwale also bemoaned the association's failure to appoint a Technical Director in three years. "We've not had a technical director for three years yet all technical directors in Africa are in a capacity building workshop in Cairo. Zambia has no representative at all. How then are we going to learn the knowledge shared right now in Cairo?" Siwale wondered.

Nkana president congratulates players for winning Charity Shield

By Alex Chilumbwe

Nkana football club president Evaristo Kabilo has congratulated his team for winning the Charity Shield Cup twice in a row, adding that Nkana are the 2019 league favourites to dethrone ZESCO United on the league title.

In an interview with Goal Diggers! Kabilo described his boys' performance on Saturday as an epic one that can still be improved and used to their advantage in the elite

league.

"It was such an epic performance especially that ZESCO scored first but they managed to not only equalize but also enjoy dominance. They can still improve it and use the result to win elite league games and finally the league title. I'm really happy with them and so is the entire executive," he said.

And Kabilo underscored the importance of ensuring that his team

stayed motivated in the quest to achieve football glory. He said that every victory attracted the executive's attention and the executive doing the needful, hinting at bonuses.

"We try by all means to motivate our players especially when they are consistently winning. The executive won't just sit and say we are glad you've won, we also look for ways of finding them a little something so that they keep soaring high. Every job

well done deserves attention," said Kabilo.

On Saturday, Nkana defended its Charity Shield Cup after beating ZESCO United 5-4 on penalties. ZESCO's Misheck Chaika failed to convert thereby giving Nkana an advantage. The game ended 1-1 in regulation time with goals coming from Maybin Kalengo in the 2nd minute and Ronald Kampamba in the 46th minute.

By Alex Chilumbwe

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SIWALE FIRES AT KAMANGA

...if I were him I would not be proud of anything



Djokovic wins magnificent seventh Australian Open

An imperious Novak Djokovic won a record magnificent seventh Australian Open title by routing Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 Sunday with a display of flawless tennis. The Serbian world number one dominated the Spanish second seed to win his 15th Grand Slam title in just 2hr 4min on Rod Laver Arena.

It put Djokovic, 31, out on his own ahead of Roger Federer and Roy Emerson, who both won six Australian Open men's singles titles. Djokovic dropped to the court and kissed the ground after vanquishing his greatest rival.

No two men have met more often in the

Open Era, this was their 53rd meeting, and no pair have pushed one another harder or further.

Their only previous final in Australia, in 2012, developed into a record-breaking 5hr 53min slugfest -- the longest in Grand Slam history.

A repeat of that epic never materialised with Nadal uncharacteristically nervous at the start and Djokovic taking immediate advantage.

The Spaniard had not had his service broken since the third set of his first round match but that streak ended in a flash as the Serb came sprinting out of the blocks. AFP



Keith Thurman knocks down Josesito Lopez on the way to a majority decision victory in their WBA welterweight title fight at the Barclays Center - Photo courtesy of AFP

