



By Julia Malunga
FORMER finance minister Alexander Chikwanda says the open letter to the President on the state of Zambia's economy written by six former government officials was nonsensical.
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Chikwanda defends Lungu, rubbishes ex-ministers' letter...

IT'S NONSENSE



New Luapula Province Police Chief Chilije Nyirenda salutes Lungu during swearing in at State House - Picture by Salim Henry

It breaks my heart to see sub-standard govt infrastructure projects - Lungu

By Julia Malunga
PRESIDENT Edgar Lungu says it breaks his heart when he sees sub-standard infrastructure projects, which have been constructed at the expense of Zambia's hard-earned money. Speaking during a signing ceremony at State House, Monday, President Lungu urged newly sworn-in State House Chief policy analyst for project implementation and monitoring, Pandwe Lubamba, not to fall prey to practices that promote sub-standard works on government projects.
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Don't listen to lunatics, cloth face masks prevent COVID - Chitalu

By Zondiwe Mbewe
HEALTH Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya has urged Zambians to avoid listening to lunatics who are discouraging them from using cloth face masks in the prevention of COVID-19, saying they are scientifically proved to work in the absence of surgical masks.
And Dr Chilufya says Zambia has recorded four new cases of COVID-19 as at yesterday, from 600 tests which were conducted, bringing the total number of cases to 65.
The Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia in an interview with Radio Phoenix News yesterday expressed concern that cloth face masks that people were making to protect themselves from COVID-19 had zero per cent protection.
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Zambia faces K14.8 billion budget deficit - Minister

By Stuart Lisulo
FINANCE MINISTER Dr Bwalya Ng'andu has estimated that Zambia's budgeted revenue will fall short of target by at least K14.8 billion, which is 19.7 per cent of the approved 2020 budget.
And Ng'andu says Zambia's economy has been revised downwards and projected to grow at -2.6 per cent on account of the COVID-19 impact.
The Minister has also revealed that higher learning institutions, such as UNZA and the Copperbelt University (CBU) will continue to experience a delay in receiving their grants due to the extremely stressed fiscal space.
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UNZA should not trivialize audit - TIZ

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By Stuart Lisulo

Finance Minister Dr Bwalya Ng'andu has estimated that Zambia's budgeted revenue will fall short of target by at least K14.8 billion, which is 19.7 per cent of the approved 2020 budget.

And Ng'andu says Zambia's economy has been revised downwards and projected to grow at -2.6 per cent on account of the COVID-19 impact.

The Minister has also revealed that higher learning institutions, such as UNZA and the Copperbelt University (CBU) will continue to experience a delay in receiving their grants due to the extremely stressed fiscal space.

Meanwhile, Dr Ng'andu says the country has so far failed to secure external emergency funding towards the COVID-19 outbreak, as the country has not qualified to receive resources from multilateral institutions.

Speaking at a media briefing in Lusaka, Monday, Dr Ng'andu, claimed the IMF projection, announced that Zambia's economy was revised downwards and was now projected to grow at -2.6 per cent from the earlier 3.6 per cent.

"In the case of Zambia, the IMF projects that the economy will grow by a negative 2.6 per cent in 2020 from the earlier projection of 3.6 per cent. The economic adjustments due to COVID-19 will result in a severe drop in revenue. It is estimated that the budgeted revenue will fall short of target by at least K14.8 billion or 19.7 per cent of the approved 2020 budget. The reduction by tax type, however, will be determined as more information unfolds," Dr Ng'andu said at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre.

Zambia faces K14.8 billion budget deficit - Finance Minister

But data availed by the IMF reveals that Zambia's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for this year is actually forecast to fall even further to -3.5 per cent on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other sub-Saharan African countries' economies were equally revised downwards into negative growth, such as Cameroon at -1.2 per cent and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at -2.2 per cent.

However, other countries in the region, such as Tanzania and Kenya, despite being engulfed by the disease, are forecast to post positive growth of around two and one per cent, respectively, this year.

And he warned that UNZA and the CBU would continue experiencing delays in receiving their grants due to Zambia's extremely stressed fiscal space.

He was responding to a question raised by Russian-trained economist Dr Lubinda Haabazoka, the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ) president, a renowned UNZA lecturer, who wanted to know when government was going to finally pay grants to universities.

"...Then, this one is coming from the Copperbelt University (CBU), when are you going to give grants to universities? Because, when you look, for example, Mopani (Copper Mines Plc), says they are winding up. The second major contributor of liquidity in Kitwe, for example, is

the CBU! But salaries are not paid regularly, including even at the University of Zambia. Now, if we paid salaries in those institutions, those people pay their tenants, the tenants buy food, we are going to enhance liquidity, I think that is one way of helping maintaining liquidity in the economy," Dr Haabazoka asked.

"You (Dr Haabazoka) were concerned about our delays in paying salaries to the universities, both the University of Zambia and Copperbelt University. I do realize that you will appreciate that we have had some challenges of meeting resources from time

to time, but we try to remain as current as we can. In fact, the grants to CBU and UNZA were paid or funded last week. So, for now, I think the problem is gone. But what this speaks to, when you see delays, is the challenges of liquidity that we tend to have. I did indicate in this presentation that my revenue base is shrinking so we will have slight challenges in meeting some these payments when they are due," he replied.

Meanwhile, Dr Ng'andu said that Zambia had so far failed to secure external emergency funding towards the COVID-19 outbreak, as the country did not

qualify to receive resources from multilateral institutions.

Last month, Dr Ng'andu said that government had commenced applications to multilateral partner organizations for COVID-19 support, which included the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank who have a combined total of US \$64 billion to aid IDA countries.

But he told journalists at that Zambia was still awaiting receipt of funds to help government tackle the virus, mainly because the country's per capita income did not meet the threshold required to access the external support under the Fund's Catastrophic Containment and Relief Facility (CCRT).

"A number of multilateral institutions have announced various windows under which

they will give emergency support facilities to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. The IMF which has four different windows has already disbursed support to 25 countries under the Catastrophic Containment and Relief Facility (CCRT). The eligibility criteria requires that a country's per capita income be below the International Development Association's operational cut off, which is currently at US \$1,175. Zambia, being a middle income country and with a per capita of US \$1,539, does not qualify for support under the Catastrophic Containment and Relief Trust. However, we are engaging the IMF with the view to benefit from other appropriate facilities to which Zambia qualifies,"

Dr Ng'andu said. **Story Continues on P10**

By Julia Malunga

President Edgar Lungu says it breaks his heart when he sees sub-standard infrastructure projects, which have been constructed at the expense of Zambians' hard-earned money.

Speaking during a signing ceremony at State House, Monday, President Lungu urged newly sworn-in State House Chief policy analyst for project implementation and monitoring, Pandwe Lubamba, not to fall prey to practices that promote sub-standard works on government projects.

"I wish to welcome you to State House. The task ahead of you is enormous as you will be required to provide expert and timely advice on how best government can efficiently identify, implement and monitor projects countrywide

It breaks my heart to see sub-standard govt infrastructure projects - Lungu

in the midst of austerity measures. You are taking up a mammoth task considering the number of projects currently being implemented across the country at a great cost to the Treasury. I expect that, together with your supervisor, you will work extremely hard to ensure that government realises value for money from these capital projects in our quest to improve the living standards of our people. I am certain that as an accomplished engineer, who has served the industry for 22 years, you will excel in your new position. I implore you to fully utilise and apply your expertise towards the successful implementation and monitoring of government projects," President Lungu said.

"I urge you not to fall prey to practices that promote sub-standard works on government projects. There is a tendency to simply maintain the status quo, and go by what everyone else deems right even when it is wrong. However, I expect that you will be exceptional, and will interrogate substandard works without fear. It breaks my heart to see sub-standard projects, which have been put up at the expense of the country's hard-earned money. This must not be allowed to continue. It is my desire that projects implemented in the country will stand the test of time."

Former ZNBC boss is new Ghana Envoy, as Kasosa replaces Muntamba

And President Lungu told Mwanza that his tour of duty in Ghana was a great opportunity for him to identify new areas of cooperation between Zambia and Ghana, as well as further strengthen already-existing cordial relations between the two countries.

"You are an accomplished public servant with vast experience spanning over 40 years in the telecommunications and media industry. Your experience dates back to 1973 when you joined the then Zambia Broadcasting Services as a technical assistant. You also served at the level of director, deputy director general and acting director general at the Communications Authority of Zambia, and later the Zambia Information And Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) between 1998 and 2010. Notable among

your initiatives at ZICTA was the introduction and implementation of the Sim Card Registration System, which provides user security, and it is still in force to-date," President Lungu said.

"Until recently, you worked at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) as Director-General where you successfully spearheaded the implementation of the digital television migration, among other progressive policy targets that you achieved. In this regard, I expect you to utilize your vast experience in the public service to re-engineer operations at the Zambian Mission in Ghana. I have no doubt that you are equal to the task, and will effectively represent the Republic of Zambia as High Commissioner. Your tour of duty in Ghana is a great opportunity for you to identify new areas of cooperation between Zambia and Ghana, as well as further strengthen already-existing cordial relations between the two countries. Relations between Zambia and Ghana date back to pre-Independence era, hence the need for you to work towards escalating cooperation in various sectors of our respective economies."

President Lungu also observed that Kasosa's good conduct earned her the appointment as Zambia's new Envoy to Kenya.

"Your appointment must be a lesson to others. The need for one to conduct himself or herself well cannot be over-emphasized if people conduct themselves well. Your good conduct, among other traits, has earned you this appointment. I am happy that you are going to represent Zambia in Kenya, replacing a gallant woman, the late Mrs Brenda Muntamba, who served Zambia in that mission diligently. Mrs Muntamba distinguished herself in her execution of duty and represented Zambia exceptionally well. May her soul continue to rest in peace. I have great passion to ensure that deserving women are appointed to decision-making positions. It is not simply a question of me appointing women to fill up various positions of authority, but that their track record must have proven their worth in their profession, and their general conduct," President Lungu said.

"Mrs Kasosa, you are now High Commissioner to the Republic of Kenya; I expect

you to go and build on from where your predecessor left. I am confident that you are equal to the task having worked in the police service for 20 years with the highest position you held as Commissioner of Police. During your work in the police service, you had the opportunity to work at the United Nations in New York, and Liberia under the Peacekeeping Operations Department. Arising from this exposure, you have a good understanding of the dynamics of international relations. Therefore, I have no doubt, that you will fully apply the knowledge you acquired from the United Nations to benefit Zambia as you take up your new position in Kenya, including cementing the relations that exist between Zambia and Kenya."

Meanwhile, President Lungu appointed Chilije Nyirenda as the new Luapula Province Police Commissioner and transferred Elias Chushi to North-Western Province in the same capacity.

"I am sending you to Luapula Province to take over the management of the region as Commissioner of Police. You are a well-seasoned police officer, and I am confident you are going to be in control of your new duty post. You have worked in the police service since 1984 having joined as a constable and rose through the ranks to Commanding Officer Paramilitary at Lilayi Police Training Centre, a position you have held to-date. I have no doubt that you will rise to the challenge. Let me express my disappointment over the poor performance of the police in North-Western Province. The people of Zambia are aware of the gold reserves in North-Western Province, and are expectant of a good return on it. Sadly, the police there have not provided the much-needed security to safeguard this precious resource," said President Lungu.

"In this regard, I have decided to transfer the Commissioner of Police in Luapula Province Elias Chushi to North-Western Province in the same capacity. Once again, I wish to congratulate all of you on your respective appointments and wish you God's blessings. Let me congratulate the four of you on your respective appointments in the public service. The decision to appoint you, from among many other equally qualified and deserving Zambians, was done on merit."

Findlay willfully ignored court orders, insists Kambwili

By Zondiwe Mbewe

NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili has insisted that businessman Harry Valden Findlay willfully failed to comply with the Lusaka High Court's orders for directions which were issued on the same day as the ruling which confirmed an order of injunction earlier granted to the latter.

This is a matter in which Findlay has sued Kambwili for accusing him of being a drug dealer and using the Presidential jet to traffic drugs.

Findlay who is seeking among other claims, damages for libel and slander, lamented that his reputation and character as a renowned businessman has been damaged as he has been labeled a drug dealer and trafficker.

In December last year, the Lusaka High Court confirmed an order of injunction earlier granted to Findlay, restraining Kambwili from defaming him through drug dealing accusations.

But Kambwili asked the court to dismiss the matter for want of prosecution, on account of Findlay's non-compliance with the court's orders for directions.

According to an affidavit in support of summons to dismiss Findlay's action for want of prosecution, Precious Mukwemba of Messrs C L Mundia and Company, explained that orders for directions in the matter were issued on the same day as the ruling which confirmed an order of injunction earlier granted to Findlay.

She stated that Findlay had failed to comply with the said orders for directions.

Mukwemba stated that this was after they conducted a search and found that to date Findlay had not filed in his bundles of documents and pleadings.

However, Findlay argued that he was still

extremely desirous of prosecuting the matter.

According to an affidavit in opposition to Kambwili's affidavit in support of summons to dismiss the action, Findlay through his lawyer Elijah Kaluba stated that his unfortunate non-compliance of the said orders for directions was not meant to disobey the court in any way.

Kaluba stated that the said non-compliance was caused due to the parties being on industrial break at the requisite time the list of documents, bundles of pleadings and documents were supposed to be filed.

He stated that Kambwili would not be prejudiced in any way if the court dismissed his application but conversely the best interest of the parties shall be served as the matter will be determined on its merits.

But, in an affidavit in opposition filed, April 9, Kambwili argued that Findlay was well aware of the orders for directions before going on industrial break as the same were issued on the same day as the ruling confirming his injunction.

Kambwili further stated that Findlay also failed to serve the same on him in good time knowing very well of the industrial break.

He added that the orders for directions were only served on him on January 10, 2020 when the dates had passed preventing him from complying with the same.

Kambwili argued that Findlay's advocate was not on industrial break on the date of filing bundles of documents and pleadings as they sent a letter to him with regards to costs for the the injunction application a day before the same were to be filed.

"On the premise the plaintiff should have at least complied with Order one and two of the Order for directions. This was however, not done. The plaintiff therefore willfully failed to comply with the Order for directions," stated Kambwili.

By Zondiwe Mbewe

PRESIDENT Edgar Lungu, please tame excited Bowman Lusambo, who is behaving like a hooligan, a bully and abusing citizens, before it is too late, says Gregory Chifire.

And Chifire says President Lungu should be in the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 like other Heads of State in other countries.

Lusambo, the Lusaka Province Minister, has been marauding through Lusaka to check if people were complying with the Presidential directive to wear masks.

But he suffered widespread criticism for ordering the police to whip people found abrogating the Presidential COVID-19 prevention measures.

Lusambo also declared that he would personally participate in whipping bar patrons.

But in an interview, Chifire, who is Southern Africa Network Against Corruption (SANAC) executive director, urged President Lungu to tame Lusambo before it was too late, saying the Provincial Minister was too excited

Tame Bowman, Chifire urges Lungu

and was overstepping his boundaries.

“Please, President Edgar Lungu, tame Bowman Lusambo before it’s too late! He is too excited, he is abusing citizens, he is overstepping his boundaries. We have in the recent past, seen Lusambo involved in beating up people he suspects were drinking beer in bars and night clubs against the provision of the law. This time around, the demon in him has taken him to harassing people, who are not wearing masks. He says he is doing that using the law within himself despite Zambia being a country of laws with a functioning Constitution,” Chifire said.

“President Lungu must show leadership and tame this guy because he is behaving like a hooligan, a bully and lumpen! He is lowering the integrity of the President’s office, who appointed him. In fact, he is dragging the name of the President in the mud because he is claiming that

he is using Presidential directives, he is boasting that he is getting instructions directly from the President himself. If Bowman’s thuggery behaviour mirrors the President’s wishes, then we are in deeper trouble as a country than we thought.”

And Chifire urged Lusambo, who is also Kabushi PF member of parliament, to take it easy and further reminded him that Zambia remained a country of laws.

“Bowman must be reminded that Zambia is a country of laws. Zambia is

not his house! He should take that behaviour to his house in Chamba Valley. Power has gotten into his head. He is drunk with power! But I wish to advise him that he must take it easy. Power is sweet; it is like a smell of sweet perfume. Just smell it, don’t drink because it’s poisonous,” he cautioned.

Meanwhile, Chifire urged President Lungu to be in the forefront of the fight against COVID-19.

“The President’s absence and silence during this trying moment is very worrying! We expect the

President to be in the forefront like presidents in other countries, showing leadership as opposed to allowing excited Ministers like Lusambo to harass citizens. We need the Head of State in the frontline of the fight against COVID-19, unless State House is not telling us the truth about the state of being of the President,” he said.

Chifire said State House should inform citizens so that men of God could start praying for President Lungu if the Head of State was unwell.

“Zambians have not forgotten how in the past, the State treated the health rumours surrounding presidents Mwanawasa and Sata. If the President is not well, let State House tell us so that the men of God start praying for him. And if the President is well, let him come out and lead the fight against COVID-19. Zambians

don’t want statements from Isaac Chipampe (President Lungu’s Press Aide) or any other because they did not elect Chipampe, but President Lungu. Zambians don’t want pre-recorded messages of the Presidential address. Zambians want to see their President fit; want to see their President in action! There is nothing political about someone’s health, including for the President. The President is as human as of all us. He can fall ill like any of us,” said Chifire.



Lungu with Bowman



Chifire

Police nab Maamba man for stabbing wife to death

By Julia Malunga

POLICE have arrested a 37-year-old man of Maamba in Southern Province for stabbing his wife to death after a domestic dispute.

In a statement, Monday, police spokesperson Esther Katongo said officers that visited the scene found the body of the deceased lying in a pool of blood.

“Police in Maamba of Southern Province have arrested a male adult identified as Paul Mayembe aged 37 for allegedly stabbing his wife to death with a kitchen knife. The deceased has been identified as Grace Mutale aged 36 of New township in Maamba District. This occurred in the early hours of today, 20th April, 2020 at about 01:00 hours at New township,” stated Katongo.

“Police who visited the scene found the body of the deceased lying on the bed facing upwards in a pool of blood with a deep cut on the left side of the neck. A blood stained kitchen knife was recovered from the scene and the suspect who did not run away has been apprehended. Preliminary investigations have revealed that the incident was as a result of a domestic dispute. The body of the deceased has been deposited in Maamba Hospital mortuary awaiting

postmortem. The suspect is in police custody.”

UNZA management hasn’t demonstrated how the “idiots” remarks incited industrial disharmony - UNZALARU

By Zondiwe Mbewe

UNZALARU general secretary Kelvin Mambwe has argued that there were no derogatory, disparaging, demeaning or spiteful insults that were hurled at the University of Zambia (UNZA) management warranting the termination of the Recognition Agreement.

And Mambwe has further argued that UNZA management has not demonstrated or provided any evidence of how his remarks that, “only idiots or those enjoying with PF would vote for them if elections were held today,” incited ‘industrial disharmony.’

In this matter, the University of Zambia Lecturers and Researchers Union (UNZALARU) is challenging the Acting Labour Commissioner’s decision to approve the University Council’s application to terminate the Recognition Agreement between the Union and the Council.

Mambwe, in his capacity as general secretary of UNZALARU, has sued the Attorney General and the University of Zambia Council

as first and second respondents, respectively.

Sitali Wamundila, a registrar at UNZA had argued in an affidavit in opposition to originating notice of motion for judicial review, that the complaint that the Council lodged to the Acting Labour Commissioner wherein section 65A was invoked to terminate the Recognition Agreement between UNZALARU and the Council, was within the parameters of the law.

He further submitted that the UNZALARU general secretary’s remarks that, ‘only idiots or those enjoying with PF would vote for them if elections were held today,’ were derogatory, disparaging, demeaning, spiteful and injurious to the University management.

Wamundila also argued that UNZALARU’s failure to show the illegality of the Acting Labour Commissioner’s decision to approve the termination of the Recognition Agreement between the Union and the University Council, did not warrant the application for judicial review.

But Mambwe in his reply argued that there were no derogatory, disparaging, demeaning or spiteful insults that were hurled at UNZA management warranting the termination of the Recognition Agreement.

He added that UNZA had not cited any examples of the alleged insults.

Mambwe also submitted that UNZA management had not highlighted the remarks that he allegedly made, which fell outside the objects and mandate of UNZALARU.

He added that the meeting of January 6, 2020, was within the mandate, objectives and functions of UNZALARU as a trade union, contrary to the allegations by the Council.

Mambwe further argued that UNZA management had not stated the alleged myriad of insults to it in its affidavit in opposition and did not do so in any of its letters to the Labour Commissioner.

“The view I had expressed was in the context of the issues that had prompted the meeting of January

6, 2020,” Mambwe stated.

He stated that the past decisions of UNZA management to invoke section 65A of the Industrial and Labour Relations Act, Chapter 269 of the Zambian laws should not have had a bearing on the Labour Commissioner’s determination of UNZA’s application for termination of the Recognition Agreement in January, 2020, as each application had to be dealt with on its own merits.

Mambwe further stated that UNZA management did not demonstrate to the Labour Commissioner that the relationship between the parties had broken down irretrievably and did not follow the provisions of clause 18 of the recognition agreement in relation to the termination of the same.

“The Labour Commissioner in fact stated, and wrongly so, that the applicant did violate section 6 of the Industrial and Labour Relations Act and breached Article 18 of the Recognition Agreement between UNZALARU and UNZA management,” stated Mambwe.

By Julia Malunga

FORMER finance minister Alexander Chikwanda says the open letter to the President on the state of Zambia's economy written by six former government officials was nonsensical.

And Chikwanda says he is not responsible for Zambia's debt crisis because he did his best to encourage fiscal discipline during his time.

Meanwhile, Chikwanda says people should not be in a hurry to call for President Lungu's removal, based on "little uninformed opinions".

Last week, former Bank of Zambia Governor Dr Caleb Fundanga, former finance ministers Ng'andu Magande, Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane and Felix Mutati, former Commerce minister Dipak Patel and former Economic Advisor to late President Levy Mwanawasa wrote a letter to President Lungu and Dr Ng'andu, expressing concern over Zambia's current debt position.

"It may be true that external factors (climate change and COVID-19) have damaged the Zambian economy. But the main cause is man-made policy mistakes. The most significant mistake is excessive borrowing by the government, as well as inefficient and/or low priority use of funds. The Government needs to act now. We believe that Government must rapidly conclude a programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This matter has been on the table for more than five years, without reaching a deal. We urge the government to take this matter with the seriousness that it deserves, and to come to an agreement before the end of this year. We believe that the most important matter in our economy is the debt problem. Excessive debt

Former finance ministers' letter to Lungu nonsensical – Chikwanda

drives many of the current problems – huge repayments already mean that Government cannot fund budgeted programmes, mounting arrears are accumulating on many government contracts, and the business climate is strangulated," read the letter in part.

But in an exclusive interview with News Diggers! Chikwanda said the former ministers should have sought an audience with Dr Ng'andu.

"We should never be seen to undermine the current minister especially ba Mutati who was only there for a year. I don't think they have a script for rating Zambia's news. It is beyond ministers of finance, it is a society issue. Just because the letter was signed by one Fundanga, Mutati and Musokotwane...I haven't seen it but the letter could be nonsensical if subjected to serious scrutiny. Any citizen has got a right to contribute, but there is way of doing it," Chikwanda said.

"I am chairman of the party's finance committee which makes all economic policies so I have my channel (of communication). There have been some unwritten rules where we gave the incumbent space. When I was Minister of Finance, I was very grateful to Honourable Musokotwane, you never heard him make an attack on me and on matters which I thought were of national gravity. I did consult him. My first effort was to invite all the previous ministers of finance and we had a very good lunch. And also people like Edith Nawakwi were in the habit of attacking me, but

I never bothered to reply to her. I read extensively and follow the financial media. I think the best thing for the ministers... why didn't they have an audience with the Minister of Finance?"

He urged citizens to examine certain people's motives behind their statements.

"And also if we can desist from personal agenda because a lot of people offer ideas but it is also a question of how they go about presenting that idea and the motive behind the ideas. All those things matter. They memorise a few slogans and then they dish out, they are not looking at the whole thing in depth. I wouldn't have signed the letter first of all because I am a member of the central committee of the ruling party and I wouldn't be part of that. I think my colleagues should cut their mind deeper and they can be a think tank but they should think more deeply other than just some small political gimmicks," he said.

Chikwanda said there was need for people to understand the depth of the COVID-19 effects on Zambia's economy.

"I would be confident that I am putting enough facts about this economy. You need to have a thorough understanding of the word economy because Zambia is very small part of the global economy. Our Gross Domestic Product as a country, however you measure it, is still a very small economy. Some of the big firms in the world it is not even 10 percent of the turnover of Microsoft or Amazon. And we have to put it in the context of the broader world economy.

One must also understand what is going on in the economy in the context of Zambia relating it to the misfortunes we have suffered in terms of commodity prices. Two weeks ago, prices of copper was as low as US\$4,100 per ton that is why foreign companies like Mopani are panicking to send the workers away because they are mining at costs which are unsustainable and our reaction as a country is emotional," he said.

And Chikwanda said he was not responsible for the debt situation in the country.

"I am not responsible for the debt crisis. I ran the economy

very well under the difficult circumstances. I made my own contribution. I tried to prevent financial irresponsibility and so on. I know how difficult it is to be a Minister of Finance, all these people who served as ministers what has been their contribution? I haven't seen the letter myself I don't even know what is there. I make submissions to government as chairman for the finance committee of the party. When my committee meets, we send proposal to the Central Committee which are quite significant. Economic issues are not a matter of a little common sense but you need

adequate knowledge and that is the problem in Zambia. You have your little opinions much uninformed about something that you don't understand," he said.

Meanwhile, Chikwanda said people should not be in a hurry to suggest that President Lungu must be voted out.

"And the people [and] parties should organise themselves and not inconvenience President Lungu. He is not going to go out because (Brebner) Changala wants him to go away. So the people who could be disappointed with him could be there. People should not be in a hurry to see certain people exit because that is a wish of a composite group of Zambians. The decision about going forward will be made by the wider Zambians," said Chikwanda

FPI hopes Siliya will reopen Prime TV

By Mirriam Chabala

FREE Press Initiative (FPI) Zambia says it is hopeful that Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services Dora Siliya will respond favorably to Prime Television's appeal against the cancellation of its broadcasting license.

In a statement, Monday, FPI Founder and Coordinator Joan Chirwa expressed confidence that Siliya, being a trained journalist herself who was working closely with another scribe, her Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga, would make an objective consideration of the matter.

Chirwa expressed shock at the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) for cancelling Prime TV's broadcasting license without following the due process as provided for by the law.

"FPI has taken keen interest in Prime TV's decision to appeal the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA)'s cancellation of the private television station's broadcasting licence. This is because of the fact that Prime TV's licence was cancelled without due process as provided for in Section 29(2) of the IBA Act which states that, 'Where a broadcasting licensee does not comply with this Act or with the conditions of the broadcasting licence, the Authority shall notify the broadcasting licensee of the measures that the broadcasting licensee should undertake, within a specified period to comply with the conditions of this Act or the broadcasting licence'. Additionally, Section 29 (7) of the IBA Act states that 'The Board shall, before cancelling or suspending a broadcasting licence under this section,

give the broadcasting licensee an opportunity to be heard,'" Chirwa stated.

"Why the IBA chose to disregard the provisions of the law in this particular matter and to illegally mete out the ultimate punishment on a private broadcaster without giving them an opportunity to be heard is something that is yet to be understood. The IBA stated in its statement that it reached the decision to cancel the licence in 'public interest', but did not disclose which public raised issues against the TV station that warranted withdrawal of the licence. It is alarming that institutions that are expected to follow the law to the letter are the first to breach the very laws that anchor their existence."

Meanwhile, Chirwa expressed optimism that Siliya and her team at the Ministry of Information would give a favourable response to the appeal.

"On the appeal to Hon Siliya, we are hopeful of a positive outcome and an objective consideration of the matter at hand. Ms Siliya is a journalist, her Permanent Secretary Mr Amos Malupenga is a journalist and President Edgar Lungu is a lawyer, and they collectively have a deep understanding of the importance of press freedom and the implications on a government of the closure of a media institution. The FPI will closely follow through the appeal process and ensure the law is respected and fairness is employed at this stage," she stated.

Chirwa regretted that the media in Zambia faced a lot of problems in the execution of its duties at the moment.

"The media in Zambia is at the moment faced with a catalogue of problems and adding pressures of government action against them for whatever misdeeds is like pronouncing extinction of the entire industry. The Zambian government must henceforth allow the press to exist freely, and Ms Siliya, having been part of the Global Media Freedom Conference co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Canada in July, 2019, will certainly not disappoint in upholding the commitments she made towards a free press at that high-level meeting in London," stated Chirwa.

UPND councilors ditching party because leadership is outdated -Tutwa

By Ulande Nkomesha

PF deputy chief whip Tutwa Ngulube says more UPND members of parliament and councilors will ditch the opposition party because the party has outdated leadership.

And the Kabwe law maker says he is in talks with the Ministry of Health to have Kabwe on lock down to ensure that mass screening is done.

On Saturday, UPND chairperson for elections Garry Nkombo said that the party had dissolved the Western Province Provincial committee and accused the PF of bribing its councilors to resign from the party.

Nkombo said the party established an interim committee headed by Nkeyema Mbangweta in a bid to stop the PF from buying and targeting councilors in that province.

"For this purpose, we have observed that Western Province has become a hype of activities of the PF buying councilors and causing unnecessary by elections. Consequent to that, our journey for intra party elections will begin with Western Province. Though the authority that has been designated to me by the secretary general of the party, I am here by announcing pursuant to the requirement of the law that we should have elections; I am announcing the dissolution of Western Province provincial committee in order to pave way for election activities that will culminate countrywide. Once we are done with Western Province, we will go

to other provinces," said Nkombo.

"In view of the misbehavior of the PF buying councilors and targeting that province, we have decided that we are going to put a care taker committee which will be strictly there for administrative purposes only. Having said so, the dissolved committee will be at liberty to re-contest their positions as dictated by our own party constitution of the UPND. We want to make an appeal to foster unity as we go through this process of revitalizing ourselves in readiness for the upcoming general election in 2021."

But commenting on this in an interview, Ngulube said people were defecting because the UPND leadership was outdated.

"The UPND has been losing councilors since time immemorial and you see they have this cry of actually claiming their people are being bribed we want to know who is bribing these people and how much is he paying them? You see, the UPND should realise that their leadership is outdated; starting from the President he has overstayed; he has actually failed to provide a succession structure at all levels. He has even failed to appoint a vice-president so he should not say or they should not accuse anybody of bribing the councilors," Ngulube said.

"The councilors are just fed up and tired! You can imagine being a councilor not getting any help from anyone. When you want to work with government which can bring

development, they are suspending you. They have frustrated a lot of government projects even places where government wants to bring development, they are actually threatening their councilors with expulsion. So those councilors that are actually resigning from UPND are actually waking them up they must realise that their leadership is outdated and that time is up let them just fold up and continue working with government"

He predicted that more UPND MPs and councilors would ditch the party.

"We anticipate that even most members of parliament will ditch the UPND, most councilors will ditch the UPND and more council chairpersons because they failed to provide leadership. You cannot have a leadership that is always insulting government; you cannot have a leadership that is always wanting to fight when it is not necessary. The people are sick and tired of an opposition that has failed to criticize government based on policies they should be saying 'we as an alternative government we are going to do this', they should be in a position to show what will do as an alternative as opposed to just embarrassing government and accusing government of corruption. Other than that, there is nothing, they have nothing to offer even today even if they came into power the UPND will not offer any solutions to the people of Zambia," he said.

"The Patriotic Front has actually done everything the people wanted to be anticipating to be done, how the

President himself has actually dealt with most of these challenges that he has faced. In a short period of time the President has actually been tested by droughts, by floods and gassing and everything. He has shown spirited leadership. The UPND has not shown how they could have dealt with the gassing if they were in power. They have not shown as how they could have dealt with the load shedding when they in power. They have not shown us how they could have dealt with all these other challenges that the country is facing. So to us an opposition that has no vision is as good as a dead opposition!"

And Ngulube said he was negotiating a Kabwe lockdown with the the Ministry of Health.

"We have spoken to the Minister of Health and we are calling for a lock down of all those areas where the virus came from. We are just not calling for a lockdown, we are also going to make sure that we distribute food and the necessary requirements. For instance, I have organised through DMMU 4,000 bags of mealie meal which I intend to distribute to all those people who will be affected by the lockdown. We are just waiting for clearance from the Ministry of Health then we can quickly move in and shut down Kamushanga and all those other compounds and allow the Ministry to conduct mass screening and contact tracing while people are in their homes. We won't allow anyone to leave until the Ministry has done their job," said Ngulube.

Talking Business with Chibamba Kanyama
 Chibamba Kanyama is founding partner of Bridges Limited; Corporate Leader; public speaker; communication specialist and strategist
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 Ear to the ground

Free press critical for Business Growth

I am not only a strong believer in free press but an ardent proponent of free press. I have dedicated the most part of my working career training journalists from Sub Saharan Africa in business and economic reporting. There are critical underlying principles for this training, and I seek, through this article, to show the private sector, why press freedom is about freedom to do business.

As a country, we have made significant strides in the promotion of free enterprise. Most of the earlier policies that restricted business ownership, cross-border trading, property rights, for example, have been dismantled in the past 30 years. Even the most enterprising Zambians could not thrive because they had to declare the nature of their businesses or run the risk of spending time in jail. I recently met a woman whose parents spent years in prison in the 1980s on suspicion they were involved in unscrupulous business activities.

The changes of economic (and political) liberalisation which came in the 1990s have paused serious challenges to all aspects of our society. Consonant with these changes, journalists in these countries have also been experiencing new freedoms: more news organisations are becoming independent of political controls; in addition, there are many new sources of information, some arriving via Internet, others through the process of opening to new ideas and new partnerships.

In addition, the media once directly received increased funding from the donors under the new democratic environment than at any time in history. This has unfortunately dried up now, leaving most private sector media houses at the mercy of advertisers who will not come forth unless you toe the line of government. With the COVID-19 challenge, private media is threatened with extinction and it is unlikely to access a penny from the K10 billion Bank of Zambia fund. (If there was anything about prioritisation, I would provide soft credit loans to private media houses. This is for good reason).

The media in Zambia, like elsewhere, is more than a paid chronicler of change. It is not a passive element that helps researchers study the different components that make up for liberalisation. The media itself is an active player; it is a necessary facilitator in the new political economy. The transition to market economics, and to open societies and to accountable government, will be difficult to sustain, if there aren't functioning organs of the press. The growth in negative perception through social

media is primarily because mainstream media is finding it very hard to operate due to financial constraints. It is, in fact, correct to assume that there is a very strong relationship between private sector growth and press freedom.

On two separate occasions, I met two serving heads of state, President Rupiah Banda in July 2010 at the State House residence and President Michael Stata, when I was Director General of the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation. On both occasions, we touched on press freedom, seizing those rare moments to explain to the national leaders why press freedom was at the centre of good governance. President Banda could not conceal his misgivings about The Post owner Fred Mmembe. He was also careful about doing anything punitive against the paper because he understood, despite not liking its editorial policy, it played a huge role in promoting democracy. He also did not want to do anything that would harm advertising for the paper.

A free press helps citizens understand and participate in changing economic structures. The post COVID-19 period will be very crucial for all economic agents and that transition will squarely be the responsibility of the media. We should appreciate that a free economy is made up of people; free citizens who effectively participate at a micro-economic level to contribute to the general welfare of the country. Economic growth is not only measured by how many people find formal jobs, but how

many individuals will make a cautious choice to participate in an economy as producers and distributors.

Economic transformation in the post COVID-19 period will not be favourable, especially in the short run. Some of the measures may, to a large extent, reduce economic activity, force companies to close, lead to loss of jobs and general loss of the standard of living. Political upheavals have occurred in countries where citizens did not understand this kind of change. This is where the media plays a critical role by educating and helping citizens understand the changing economic climate. A good press will re-orient people to existing alternatives to gainful economic participation and employment.

Free press also helps governments gauge the consequences of their actions and inactions. Most of the countries that adopted democratic principles considered press freedom as the best measurement of democracy at work. Most of these governments today are back-peddling on this score. All this goes to show that newly democratic governments are not too sure of how government economic policy will be affected by an outspoken press. This defines the essence of the media: to keep the government on its toes. It should be realised that even democratic governments can slumber and disappear into oblivion. There is a general saying that 'a sleeping press is a sleeping government'.

Finally, and very importantly, free press exposes corruption that undercuts economic growth. Corruption is said to be a cancer that fights its way under any form of government. The private sector thrives in an environment where corruption is nearly zero. You want

to operate in an economy where you can be assured that a tender does not require oiling anyone to get it. Only a free press sets this tone where a fair platform of competitiveness is created. Creating a

transparent market place is the reason why the private support importantly all manner because a thriving thriving business environment.

Creating a transparent market place is the reason why the private sector should support all media, more importantly private media, with all manner of advertising because a thriving free press is a thriving business environment.





Supporting Businesses and Protecting Jobs in a time of Crisis

**By Hakainde Hichilema
UPND President**

LIFE favours the prepared. This statement is particularly relevant today as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause massive disruptions to economic activities across the World. It is increasingly becoming clear that the global economy is at the cusp of a very deep recession. Early economic data show that both advanced and emerging market economies alike are registering severe contractions that could surpass the downturn of the global financial crisis. These external events will have significant effects on the Zambian economy.

There is much that we can do, as a country, to mitigate the full economic impact of this deadly virus and protect jobs and the poorest amongst us. In addition to the macroeconomic measures announced by the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Zambia, we call for direct support for priority businesses to minimize the disruption of commerce and avoid significant job losses.

To address this unprecedented economic challenge and in national interest, we, therefore, call for an urgent national virtual conference of stakeholders to agree on measures to keep the wheels of commerce turning whilst protecting the health of our people. We urge participants to focus these exceptional discussions on, among other things, the formation of initiatives in the following cluster areas: (i) supporting access to capital; (ii) addressing inventory and supply chain disruptions;

(iii) managing costs; (iv) supporting taxpayers; and (v) leveraging external assistance.

The following are some specifics on these fronts:

1. **Supporting Access to Capital:** Establish an Economic Disaster Loan Program that will provide low-interest loans to businesses that have been severely impacted by COVID-19. Working through registered lenders and integrated with the Bank of Zambia's Targeted Medium-Term Refinancing Facility, support should be provided in the form of term loans, overdrafts as well as invoice and asset financing. For firms deemed to be operating in priority sectors, Government should consider covering the first three months of interest payments. This must be accompanied by the settlement of outstanding Government remittances to the banking sector.

2. **Addressing Inventory and Supply Chain Disruptions:** The Government and business should urgently work together to put in place a secure Business Continuity Financing and Logistics Program to facilitate the delivery of goods and services, particularly exports. Part of this program should aid firms develop business continuity plans and financing (e.g. revolving lines of credit or transaction-based financing) to enable firms fulfil their export orders.

3. **Managing Costs:** The Government and business

should work together to address difficulties firms will face in covering key operating expenses, particularly utilities. We call for the suspension of some utility bills and the discontinuation of service disconnections for 2-3 months for firms in priority sectors. This suspension should also take into consideration the financial position of utility firms and should be configured accordingly. By the same token, a similar approach could be applied to commercial rent for shops supplying essential goods under a Rent Relief Initiative. We also propose a targeted three-month interest payment moratorium supported by the Targeted Medium-Term Refinancing Facility.

4. **Supporting Taxpayers:** The Government should consider giving taxpayers additional time for dealing with tax affairs. Extension of filing and tax payment deadlines, deferral of tax payments, easier access to debt payment plans, extension of plan duration/time to pay agreements and suspension of penalties, interest and debt recoveries should form part of this relief plan. Further, Zambia Revenue Authority should quicken refunds to taxpayers, temporarily change the audit policy, provide quicker tax certainty and enhance taxpayer services and communication initiatives. As part of this support, a program to re-schedule filing and payment of taxes should be considered for priority sectors and businesses

that will be hardest hit by the pandemic.

5. **Leveraging External Assistance:** The Government and the business community should work together to access external programs that have been announced to support businesses secure affordable working capital and better manage risks. We call on Government to advance its engagements for pandemic support from the World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund and G20 rescue packages that have been announced, especially the US\$8 billion support program by the International Finance Corporation to assist businesses overcome liquidity and solvency risks.

The rapid global rise in the infection rate calls for urgent action by key stakeholders in Zambia to mitigate the health and economic impact of this pandemic that will affect our people. We must move fast and be well-coordinated in our national response. We must also establish well-designed programs that safeguard human life and economic well-being. We must all work together – business associations, financial institutions, regulators, political parties, labour representatives, Government, development partners and think tanks – in finding solutions in our collective fight against COVID-19.

Together we shall get through this.



By Mukosha Funga

TRANSPARENCY International Zambia (TIZ) says the University of Zambia (UNZA) should not trivialize audits like the one conducted by the Auditor General if the institution is to be brought back in the league of eminent, leading African universities.

And TIZ says UNZA management needs to improve its adherence to financial regulations.

Meanwhile, TIZ says the Ministry of Higher Education should, as a matter of priority, ensure that substantive councils are appointed for the three public universities; UNZA, CBU and Mulungushi University.

Commenting on an audit which was carried out by the Auditor General for the year ended 2018 in a statement sent to News Diggers, TIZ president Rueben Lifuka said it was uncalled for that UNZA management had labeled media reports arising from the audit as malicious instead of finding ways to fix the shortcomings highlighted in the report.

“Transparency International Zambia, has read with dismay and great concern some of the findings of the Auditor General, submitted in the management letter to the University of Zambia, following the statutory audit conducted for the year ended 31st December 2018...First and foremost, we want to welcome this development where the Auditor General has undertaken a statutory audit of the University of Zambia, which is a public institution and one which is a beneficiary of public funds appropriated through the National Budget, among several of its funding sources. We have no cause to question or label as malicious the audit conducted as this is in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution, as well as the Public Audit Act and the Public Finance Management

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UNZA shouldn't trivialize audit – TIZ

Act No 1 of 2018. We would in fact recommend that a similar audit is conducted for the Copperbelt University. It is our understanding that the 2018 Audit has since been concluded and what was reported by the media is the management letter in which the Auditor General shared his findings on matters his office came across during the course of conducting this exercise,” Lifuka stated.

“The management letter is important in this context as the Auditor General is essentially communicating to the owners of the institution—the Zambian people including the University Council and the Government of the Republic of Zambia; the extent of the performance of management with regard to control and compliance functions. The management letter aptly points to areas where controls are weak or non-existent as well as the failures in compliance with both internal and external regulations. The Auditor General points to the risks which may arise if necessary remedial actions are not taken. It is our understanding that the Auditor General followed standard procedures and provided management an opportunity to respond to the findings and the management letter reflects these responses. It is therefore uncalled for to label the media reports as malicious as the UNZA Head of Public Relations has tried to do. Instead of taking on a defensive position, it is our expectation that both Management and the University Council will reflect on these findings and remedy the areas of weakness and shortcomings, where this is possible.”

He asked UNZA management not to trivialize the report if they were serious about restoring the institution.

“UNZA needs a medium to long term turnaround strategy and we would like Government and cooperating partners to consider supporting this. However, it is



Reuben Lifuka

our considered view that the 2018 statutory audit should urgently be supplemented by a detailed evaluation of systems and procedures at the institution in order to identify all areas of significant systems weaknesses and propose remedial actions. UNZA is an important institution and we dare to say, a national asset that should bring pride to all Zambians but certainly not in its current state. This institution has been limping in its operations for a while and it is time that bold decisions are taken to bring it back into the league of eminent and leading African universities. This is only possible if audits like the one conducted by the Auditor General, are not trivialised but taken seriously by all and especially UNZA Management,” he stated.

And Lifuka said it was unacceptable to read about UNZA management's failure to adhere to financial regulations.

“UNZA Management, in the context of the Management letter, has a number of areas of improvement in the discharge of its functions. It is unacceptable to read of inadequate adherence to UNZA Financial Regulations with incidents cited of unretired accountable imprest, inadequately supported payments, failure to prepare bank reconciliations,

lack of activity reports etc. It is even further worrying that inadequacies in procurement management were identified and specifically one would not expect that UNZA through the School of Education would purchase a property in 2012 to serve as a Computer laboratory and 7 years later, this remains unused. Other procurement shortcomings include the procurement of an air conditioning unit at the School of Medicine which was only delivered 11 months later,” Lifuka stated.

“Going forward, we do recommend that the National Assembly of Zambia and particularly the Public Accounts Committee should take keen interest in the happenings at UNZA as outlined in the audited financial statement for 2018. We would like to see greater scrutiny and accountability in public institutions and UNZA should not be an exception. We further recommend that the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Council should publicly communicate the policy decisions made to address the findings of this audit and previous audits.”

Meanwhile, Lifuka said the three public universities needed substantive councils which could improve the manner in which they were being run.

“The management letter, in our view, points to a serious lack of oversight from the University Council as a governing body in the administration of the institution. It is our expectation that the University Council should have identified the absence of critical institutional policies like the Assets Management Policy, ICT Policy and Credit Management Policy, which have been highlighted by the Auditor General. The Council should have also noted the various inadequacies in internal controls and lack of compliance. For instance, it does not bode well for UNZA to have had no Annual Reports for the years 2016-2018 and no audited financial statements for 2016, 2017 and 2018. These are accountability documents which the public should ideally access in order to assess the performance of this public institution,” he stated.

“The University Council or in this case the Caretaker Committee, owes a duty of care to UNZA employees and they should have ensured that the social security of employees is guaranteed through regular payments of statutory dues for NAPSAs. The pension and other social protection schemes that should help retirees who have served the university diligently for many years, should not be compromised. The Council should have taken keen interest in ensuring that there is prudent utilisation of public resources and that these are not only going to satisfy the service conditions of a few. The management letter points to several issues which the governing body

should have picked up in the fulfilment of its mandate. It is in this regard that we express our concern that UNZA has since 2016 been operating with a Caretaker Committee as opposed to a full Council. The Ministry of Higher Education should as a matter of priority ensure that substantive councils are appointed for the three public universities- UNZA, CBU and Mulungushi University. A substantive Council should be mandated to strengthen the oversight of UNZA management.”

Lifuka insisted that unless UNZA's historical challenges were addressed, management's inadequacies would continue being amplified.

“The findings in the management letter confirm what is definitely common knowledge that the running of public universities and especially UNZA and the Copperbelt University, remains sub-optimal and there is need for urgent remedial action. We are aware that this is not the first time that some of the inadequacies in operations, control and compliance have been pointed out and we recall that in April 1997 the MMD Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry led by Justice Bobby Bwalya, and 10 years later, in 2007, the MMD Government under the late President Levy Mwanawasa convened a consultative forum for all public universities to identify issues of concern. In September 2012, the Parliamentary portfolio Committee on Education, Science and Technology, presented a report to the House which addressed pertinent issues affecting public universities,” stated Lifuka.

“Clearly, the issues are common cause and what is missing is tangible and long term actions from all relevant authorities, particularly the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Council. UNZA is saddled with a number of historical challenges and unless these are addressed urgently, the inadequacies of management will continue to be amplified. We are aware of the Cabinet Memo on Public Universities New Financing Strategy but this will remain as mere statement of intent if it is not backed with consistent actions including the release of funds particularly to address historical debts. While funding is important, it is our considered view that this is not sufficient in the absence of strong leadership, experienced and capable management, and robust systems and procedures.”

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The stupidity of closing media houses that you'll need when out of power

“I run this institution, and when I make a decision, it's final! You are not supposed to be here! When I do a press briefing, they are not supposed to be here. That's a decision I have made because they don't cover us. Chapwa! You can leave. I have made a decision, they can leave. Tamuleumfwa, mulefwaya ndande muchibemba? Go!” This was PF Secretary General Davies Mwila chasing away Prime TV journalists Njenje Chizu and Toliwe Chanda from the ruling party secretariat where they went to cover a press conference in January, 2019.

Many people have forgotten about this. When Prime TV was closed down this month, some members of the public bought into the government's narrative that this was to do with the station's refusal to televise free Coronavirus awareness campaign adverts. The truth is that this agenda to close down the private television station has always been there. PF hated Prime TV with a passion. It was a pain in their flesh, as could be seen from

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Davies Mwila's outburst. The closure of Prime is about 2021 elections. PF don't want to go to the next elections with a robust private media. They want to ride on a campaign of misinformation.

This is not new. In 2016, two months before the general election, the PF closed down the country's biggest private newspaper on claims that the company was owing irreconcilable debt to the Zambia Revenue Authority in unpaid tax. The truth was that PF did not want The Post to be alive at the next election, they feared that their rigging schemes would be exposed and they would lose.

This is how the PF defines democracy and they will not stop at Prime TV. They will hunt down all critical

media one by one. In fact, they will not stop at private media. After they are done with us, they will go for civil society organisations that are vocal. After CSOs, they will target the Church and the vocal clergy. They want to silence everyone!

If a miracle happens and Prime TV manages to get back its licence, the station will never be the same. The terror that their staff are currently undergoing will make it difficult for them to remain fearless. Their editorial independence will be compromised. We saw this with Muvi TV when they were temporarily closed down in 2016. Look at Muvi today, are they the same? Are they as fearless as they used to be prior to the 2016 elections? We don't think so. This is the PF strategy; they want to remain with ZNBC, Daily Mail, Times of Zambia

and a selected few private praise singers.

But we need to remind those in power that the positions they hold are not permanent. They will need the same private media houses that they are harassing today. Mr Davies Mwila will look for Nyenje and Toliwe's phone numbers when the bells come tolling on him! When Mr Lungu leaves State House and the new regime turns against him, the Zambia Daily Mail and ZNBC will not be there to give fair coverage to his ministers and aides who will be heavily persecuted. Those who will be toiling to court will not get any fair coverage from State-controlled media. It's happening already, those who worked in State House not long ago have lost control of State media, they can't issue any instructions to the editors at Daily Mail

or ZNBC.

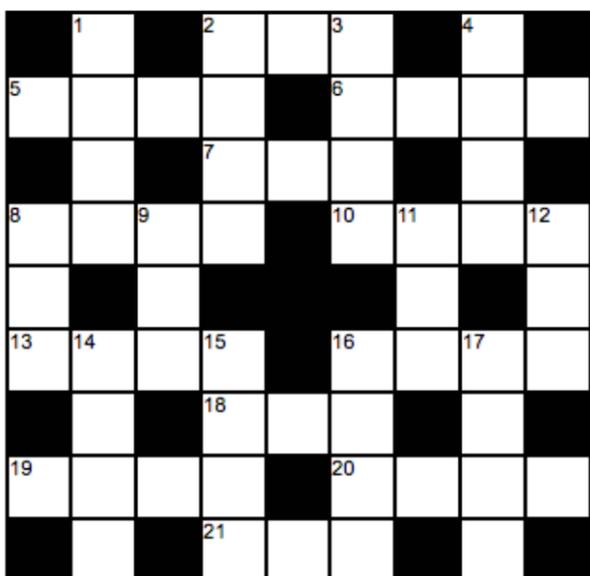
We know that to those who are in power today, we, journalists, are nothing but stupid little irritating idiots who are living at their mercy! Well, it doesn't make us lose sleep. They closed The Post, we are here! They tamed Muvi, Prime was born. Bembas say, "pafwa abantu, pashala abantu". More fearless journalists will be born long after we are gone. Even if they kill us, their victory won't prevent them from joining us in the grave. All the money they want to steal from government without anyone questioning them will remain behind. Only one suit, one pair of shoes will accompany them. A time will come soon when State House and the PF secretariat will be taken over by new bosses. This sounds mythical right now, but it is a reality waiting to happen. They will remember the

private media they are closing today.

There used to be a man in government called Chishimba Kambwili. He was such a powerful man. As Chief Government Spokesperson at his last posting, his everyday-job was to threaten private media journalists who were not willing to sing praises. He celebrated when The Post was closed down. But karma taught Kambwili that the world is round, the private media journalists he was threatening are the ones wiping his tears. Today, he wishes The Post Newspaper was still around so that he could ride on its aggression and financial muscle to fight the bad governance in this PF administration.

A wise man learns from the mistakes of others, knowing he can't live long enough to make all the mistakes by himself'. Repeating a mistake that someone else near you already made is nothing less than stupid. The PF leadership is acting stupid because it can't learn from its own mistakes.

Crossword puzzle No 587



“All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason.”
- immanuel kant

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|--|--|
| <p>Across</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Assist 5. Tiny branch 6. Not common 7. Australian bird 8. In the center of 10. Kind of student 13. Fibbed 16. Prescribed quantity 18. Before dos 19. Small cut 20. Finished 21. Hearing organ | <p>Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoy the pool 2. Got older 3. Medication 4. Neighborhood 8. Not just some 9. Summer cooler 11. Carnival city 12. Expire 14. "___ it obvious?" 15. Trick 16. Way in, or out 17. Plant starter |
|--|--|

Crossword puzzle No 586



Readers' Feedback

"I agree with Bob Sichinga, It is Dora Siliya who CLOSED Prime Tv"

Editor,

"I agree with Bob Sichinga, It is Dora Siliya who CLOSED Prime Tv, to quote Hon Lusambo "from within himself". This has left the "Independent" Broadcasting Authority in a legal dilemma. The people who crafted the IBA law did have lawless individuals in mind like Dora and Company so they put measures to protect the innocent citizens. These are the cases that "never rot". When it boomerangs Dora will have forgotten who she was trying to please but everything to remember about how irrationally she made her judgement to hurt the people whose law she was supposed to protect and uphold". - Christopher Kalima

"Well spoken uncle Bob. Very strong voice indeed, this is a voice of purpose that seeks to speak for the poor people who've suffered at the hands of the dictator govmt whose interest is just to enrich themselves with the loot and continue to grow big tummies. They create problems for us deliberately then come in pretence to be our savior, messiah or whatever they call themselves. We're ready to shove them out 2021 together with the problems they've created for Zambians!" - Ephraim Sakati Phiri

"Closing private media towards the election is very dangerous to our democracy, people need to be well informed to make the choice! No independent court can allow what happened to Prime TV, Prime TV educated the masses about bill 10 and illegibility, hence the closure! Which media will help expose corruption at the moment? ZNBC and Daily Mail?" - George Bwalya

"If Bill 10 will decampaign UPND why is PF forcing it on citizens?"

Editor,

"Bill 10 seeks to give PF due advantage in the 2021 elections they know if bill10 won't pass, firstly Lungu will have it difficult to stand in the general elections. Secondly, parliament will be dissolved, all MPs will go back in their constituencies as mere candidates and not minister. This, in some way will create a level playing field as their will not be anyone to command the police to do anything crazy. Bill10 is evil and we can't await its complete burial". - Mundia Bwalya

"Now we know, it was a trap, and not really serious or bettering our constitution, that's the problem with the PF, whatever they do, it is attached to elections, look at the use of masks on covid19, they use political material, the food for the victims of floods/drought, branded president ECL and PF. Why can't they just do things right?!" - Baldwin Michael

"Really?! That sounds good. Why waste all this time, money, and resources for nothing? Just withdraw it, and it will be a walkover. Come on! Decampaign them! Go ahead! It's that simple! We better now concentrate on the more important and urgent covid19. Thank you". - Martin Nyanjagha

"I like your thinking Honorable Minister. Tell your colleague Honorable Given Lubinda to withdraw the toxic Constitutional amendment Bill No 10". - Leslie Mwape Chibuye

"PF think they can fool everybody, if Bill 10 will decampaign UPND why is PF forcing it on citizens and when did PF have UPNDs interest at heart? When Tutwa Ngulube thought Bill 10 had passed he ran to his Facebook page, and wrote it's done and it's over for someone!" - Mutinta Mulonda

Lungu feels happy when Bowman acts, ask Kambwili

Editor,

"Be reminded that even Lungu is not above the law. He swore to defend the constitution. What Hon Kampyongo has said is right under the law. Remember Bowman has no immunity, he can be prosecuted for assault and Lungu will not be there to protect him. Let's not behave as if there is no tomorrow". - Simon Chinyama

"Kampyongo might have some semblance of truth in his rantings, but that does not mean he means it. Underrate Bowman at your own peril, this PF has no respect for the law, actually Lungu feels happy when Bowman acts, ask Kambwili". - Mpundu Mulenga

"He has been in the forefront abusing the police, I hope and pray he has come back to his senses for him to see the wrongs the police and Lusamb have done to the people in last few days". - David Simbayi

"It only takes leadership and boldness to speak against lawlessness, and I applaud the Minister of Home Affairs Honourable Mr Kampyongo. The Rule of Law is important". - Winston Chola

"Don't give the guy too much credit. He is right, but not sincere. The fact is that under PF even his PF cadres are above the law. Bowman

has not been tamed by Kampyongo because Bowman is currently above the law. Learn to call a spade a spade!" - Richard Waga

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Why do they have to be branded PF?

Dear editor,

"That's why IMF didn't even consider Zambia when they were issuing relief for countries with debt! Any money they would have give us would have gone straight to campaign material! Just look at this? The same masks were even made using Tax Payers Money! Why should they be branded PF?" - Henrietta Buwalda

"I now believe that Dora siliya is irresponsible and desperate to keep power on the expense of the pandemic. Return all the

donations and do it yourself as PF!" - Felix Andrew Bwalya

"Were the PF branded face masks made by the PF government or the PF party? If it's the government then that's gross abuse of Public resources for political mileage. That you don't do. No wonder guy Scott had to ban PF from using government resources in their political campaigns". - Geoffrey Chiyumbe

"If the opposition political parties start branding those facemasks and donate them to all govt department workers such as the police,the army,nurses, teachers,will Hon.Siliya or govt be comfortable with that?" - Hon Makungu Mulenga

From P2

He added that talks with other lenders to access external assistance remained in progress.

"Zambia has applied to the World Bank, the African Development Bank and Afreximbank to be considered for support under their various COVID-19 Emergency Funds. Bilateral discussions have also commenced with a number of G-20 countries on the postponement or rescheduling of debt service payments over a period to be agreed. Engagement with the bilateral partners centre around the possibility of them meeting the financing gap arising from the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the fiscus. I will provide an update as and when we reach agreements," he added.

On progress made for Zambia to get on a IMF-backed economic bailout programme for balance of payments support, Dr

Zambia faces K14.8 billion budget deficit - Finance Minister

Ng'andu said that talks with the Fund were ongoing.

"With respect to an economic programme, Zambia has just completed a two-week virtual mission with the IMF at which an assessment of the macroeconomic and fiscal situation was undertaken. This follows Zambia's request for an economic programme with the IMF which was made at the end of 2019. On the basis of the Mission's outcome, Zambia will now discuss with the fund on an appropriate macroeconomic framework that may lead to a programme," he said.

He also projected that mining tax revenues will drop this year, as mining companies battle the effects

of reduced copper prices on the international market, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Projections suggest that the reduction in the price of copper on the London Metal Exchange (LME) will continue until June resulting in a drop in mineral royalty and income tax payments from mining companies. Pay as You Earn (PAYE) from the mining sector is also expected to fall as some contractors may lose their contracts going forward. The scaling down of mining sector activities will lead to reduced engagement of foreign providers of management services, hence affecting Withholding tax receipts on management fees

and consultancy," he said.

"The scaling down of economic activity is expected to cut across all sectors including manufacturing, transport, power generation and transmission, wholesale and retail trade, tourism and the hospitality industry in general. This will basically translate into a reduction in all tax and non-tax revenues among them PAYE, VAT,

customs duty, excise duty, fuel levy, export duty, road user charges, fees and fines."

He, however, added that government had decided to waive tax penalties and interest on outstanding tax liabilities resulting from the impact of COVID-19 to help cushion local businesses.

"To assist companies and businesses manage their cash flows during this period when

they are faced with reduced revenues, government has decided to waive tax penalties and interest on outstanding tax liabilities resulting from the impact of COVID-19. The Zambia Revenue Authority will soon issue guidelines on the criteria on who qualifies, the period of relief and other related modalities," he announced.

He further urged lending institutions in the country to consider halting loan repayments during the Coronavirus pandemic in a bid to help cushion businesses that were struggling from the devastating economic impact brought about by the disease.

"Many businesses will fail to make their payments as and when they fall due not because they do not want to, but because they cannot. To avert unnecessary business failures, foreclosures, liquidations and receivership, I would like to urge all lending institutions to exercise forbearance and where appropriate to consider giving moratorium on loan repayments for a prescribed period of time, capitalise interest repayments or even extend the period loan repayments periods," urged Dr Ng'andu.

The economic adjustments due to COVID-19 will result in a severe drop in revenue.

It is estimated that this year's budgeted revenue will fall short of target by at least K14.8 billion or 19.7 per cent of the approved 2020 budget, according to Ministry of Finance data.



Dr Bwalya Ng'andu

Don't listen to lunatics, cloth face masks prevent COVID - Chitalu

By Zondiwe Mbewe

HEALTH Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya has urged Zambians to avoid listening to lunatics who are discouraging them from using cloth face masks in the prevention of COVID-19, saying they are scientifically proved to work in the absence of surgical masks.

And Dr Chilufya says Zambia has recorded four new cases of COVID-19 as at yesterday, from 600 tests which were conducted, bringing the total number of cases to 65.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia in an interview with Radio Phoenix News yesterday expressed concern that cloth face masks that people were making to protect themselves from COVID-19 had zero per cent protection.

Society president, Jerome Kanyika argued that there was no scientific evidence to show that cloth face masks could prevent COVID-19 and that different research conducted indicated that the masks had zero per cent protection against the virus.

But at a briefing yesterday, Dr Chilufya charged that people should avoid listening to lunatics.

"I want to use this opportunity to assure those of you who may have read toxic articles like an article from Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia about face masks. Ordinarily, I wouldn't have glorified that comment with a response but due to the gravity of the situation, I will say, if you read a beautiful article done by the America Centre for Disease Control that talks about the efficacy of a mask made of cloth, then you will know that this is evidence based, it's science based and just mask up and avoid listening to lunatics. Make sure that you use a cloth mask, and make sure that you use a mask which is surgical," Dr Chilufya said.

"A responsible citizen who wants to contribute to the fight against COVID and has any scientific contribution will engage and will not go and vuvuzela in the media, mislead the people and put them at risk. Listen to science based evidence, use a cloth made mask or use a surgical mask. For the home face mask made of cloth, wash it, iron it and you can use it daily. For the surgical mask, you can use it for six to eight hours daily, dispose of it"

And Dr Chitalu said three of the four new COVID-19 cases that were recorded yesterday were out of mass screening in Kafue, while the other case involved a 22-year-old male who was a primary contact to the lady that passed on at Chilenje Hospital.

He added that so far, 35 had recovered while 27 were under care but stable, whereas mortality remained at three.

"We tested 600 cases in the last 24 hours [and] out of these 600 cases, four new positives were picked. Three are out of the mass screening in Kafue and one as a primary contact to the deceased lady in Chilenje. In the last 24 hours, two have fully recovered. Therefore, the number of people that have recovered and sent home is 35. The number of people that have remained under our care is 27. These 27 are all stable and are being managed at three," Dr Chilufya said.

"We have constituted teams to continue mass screening in Kafue, to do contact tracing for the Chilenje case and for the new positives in Kafue. The number of cumulative tests done has risen to 3,186. Kafue continues to be a hotspot [and] that's why the mass screening will continue."

Dr Chilufya further observed that if people did not

stop unnecessary movements or visiting other people, there would be COVID-19 cases all over.

He reiterated President Edgar Lungu's call to stay home and stay safe, saying COVID-19 was a phase which would come to pass.

And Dr Chilufya said Zambia would not win the Covid-19 war if people thought it was the Ministry of Health's burden to distribute face masks and other PPEs.

"We will not win this war if we think it's the burden of the Ministry of Health to distribute face masks and to procure these. Remember that whatever has been distributed has been due to the kindness [and] the generosity of somebody out there. So it is our responsibility to participate. The association of the Indian Community in Zambia have pledged a million face masks. The Lusaka Health Association did some face masks. We have seen a number of partners; Trade Kings, public service unions, banks, businessmen all come to donate. And these donations are not being stored in the ministry. They are various members of parliament that have taken these PPEs to distribute in their various constituencies, more-so in Lusaka where the epicentre is," said Chilufya.

"The Ministry of Health does not have adequate masks to give to every individual and is anchoring on the partnership with the private sector, with few in the community, to ensure that we work together to mobilise resources for masks so that as masks come in they will be distributed to the needy. I want to appreciate members of the community, as we went out in the morning [yesterday] a lot of them had masks which they just made from home using cloth. That is responsibility."

Mabumba confident majority pupils will use e-learning because "Lungu has enhanced internet connectivity"

By Ulande Nkomesha

GOVERNMENT, through the Ministry of General Education, and Zamtel has launched an E-learning portal and Smart Revision which will enable pupils and teachers access education material through the internet.

Speaking during the launch in Kasama, Monday, General Education Minister David Mabumba said the launch of the E-learning portal was meant to supplement all the stakeholders in the education sector now that schools were closed.

He said although the portal will not be accessed by some pupils, it would be accessed by many in all parts of the country due to the installation of mobile towers which had enhanced internet accessibility.

"Today in the journey of Ministry of General Education, we are launching two important platforms that is the e-learning portal and Smart Revision. As it has been reported, the e-learning portal will provide a digital platform where pupils, teachers, education providers will be able to access e-content; they will be able to access electronic books and other teaching learning materials. For those who might not be aware, we started talking about this even before COVID-19, it became a reality and today we are witnessing this important launch here in Kasama. So to the pupils and the teachers, here is a digital platform where we can access material and I did it deliberately to put it here in a rural province because I wanted to test accessibility or internet availability," Mabumba said.

"I traveled from Lunga all the way to Nsama to Mporokoso and Lunte through to Kasama because I was trying to check on my phone if there was internet connectivity; because if we launch it in Lusaka, we could have been saying that these are platforms only for the rich. But I went round checking on my phone and I discovered that through President Edgar Lungu, so many mobile towers have been installed in

this country and, therefore, yes, not each and every pupil will be able to access this but I am sure that in terms of internet coverage, we are at a very high percentage because I proved it when I traveled at that particular road were internet connectivity could have been very poor."

He said his Ministry was engaging other stakeholders to ensure that the education channel that was launched would be effective to the masses.

"This is a very excellent platform that why we believe that education is going to be provided and the traditional means is have teachers and pupils sit in a classroom [but] COVID-19 has challenged the provision of education in the world. This is why we had to launch the Zambia National Broadcasting Education Channel to begin a journey of providing education using ICT platforms. The channel is up and running but there will be other engagements that the Ministry will be holding with DSTV, GOTV and ZNBC itself to ensure that...not everybody has Topstar in their homes. We need to find a win win situation to see how this education channel that has been launched will continue to provide education. There will be also a radio channel because we recognize that not every home has an opportunity to access televisions," Mabumba said.

Mabumba urged stakeholders in the Ministry to establish a monitoring mechanism for all the programs dealing with electronic education.

"To PS (Jobbicks) Kalumba, yes we have launched the education channel, yes today we are launching the E-learning portal; the question to you as PS Education for Technical Services would be to ensure that we begin to devise a mechanism to monitor the usability and effectiveness of these processes that we are launching. Because they will be able to provide feedback in terms of how sufficient and effective they are to our Zambian pupils, to our parents as well as our teachers," said Mabumba.

By Abraham Kalito

ZAMBIA did not take the right approach in the first two AfCON qualifying matches, says gaffer Milutin Sredojevic.

He said this during an interview on Diamonds TV 'sports cafe' program, Sunday.

"I have directed those failures into two categories and I have seen and watched those matches five times. And I would tell the players and players would not like sugar-coating. They would like to hear the truth, and the truth. And the truth is that in the body language of the players, in their reactions I have not seen their right approach to the 17 million people and to carry their jersey. So those results in the two matches were the repercussions of the approach taken. Second thing I wanted to know the feedback because I have high respect to my predecessor, I have been analysing and planning and I have seen and I have asked the players

Zambia didn't take right approach in first 2 AfCON qualifiers - Micho

and I'm not allowing them to make excuses and be blame shifters towards the coach because players usually try to be excuse makers and fault finders," he said.

"And through the search I tried to go into the deepest issues why things happened because from the tactical point and execution, players in Zambia have been missing those aspects. We are looking to analyse tactically what went wrong, how to put all the puzzles in the right mosaic and improve because only doing so will get us to where we want to go and we want to go to the Africa Cup of nations. In every match

we have to take care of the deepest part of the game. I have recognised that in those two matches for example let us talk about the last match, the way the team is conceding from set pieces, from the sharpest player on the field, Kharma Biliat and second goal where two players are challenging while Kharma Biliat is alone inside the box, those are the things that we need to analyse."

Micho said if Zambia is to qualify to the AfCON 2021, every single detail from the selection of players, players' concentration, reaction and body languages will have to be given serious attention.

"Whatever was wrong needs to be corrected and given total attention because now every moment of the game will be like a surgical operation and we really need to focus on that. Their blink of eyes, concentration and body language need to change. You cannot get better if you cannot change the platform where you were standing from previously. A national team is not the necessarily the best part of individuals to call. But the best individuals that could fit in the team. Football

is not an ambush were you are taken from nowhere to go and play, everything is seen. And with the highest level of responsibility we shall try to correct whatever was wrong," he said.

"And we are trying to avoid the three mistakes that can happen and make a match go wrong and those are number one, the mistake of selecting a wrong player. The players that are not enough mentally strong, to carry the call and represent 17 million people. You also need to

analyse between the lines and by between the lines I mean the way a player is talking, the way they are thinking. So, when we analyse this then we can determine whether we want to continue with the same people and we still want to achieve something. There are certain areas in the team where you need to have balance. You cannot put all the young lads in the team and then take all the risk, you need to have balance including the maturity and seniority of the Older players."

Sancho heading for Man Utd over Liverpool - Redknapp



JADON Sancho looks like he is "going to end up" at Manchester United, says Jamie Redknapp, who had been hoping that Liverpool could do a deal for the Borussia Dortmund winger.

Sancho has starred for the German giants, with 20 goals and 28 assists recorded across the last two seasons. Those exploits have seen him register on the recruitment radar of leading sides across Europe, with heavyweight outfits in the Premier League leading the charge.

Arch-rivals United and Liverpool have both been heavily linked with moves to secure Sancho's signature. Both believe the youngster would be a good fit for the present and future, with Jurgen Klopp and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer forever in the market for proven performers in the final third of the field.

Redknapp had been hoping to see those at Anfield leap to the front of the queue, but concedes that Old Trafford appears to be a more likely landing spot.

The former Reds midfielder told Sky Sports: "I think it is a matter of time with Jadon Sancho coming to the Premier League. We are talking about a genuine superstar. A player that can do incredible things with the ball. Played 70 odd games in the Bundesliga, scored 27 goals from a wide area which is very good.

"We have missed out on the likes of the Neymars in the Premier League but he can come and really light it up. Personally I would call it. He will be a great signing for whoever he goes to.

"I would like to see him at Liverpool, but I think he is going to end up at United though." **GOAL**

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Mulenga seeks solution to FAZ wrangles

By Daniel Chansa

Sports Minister Emmanuel Mulenga has met four football veterans to seek counsel on how to end the FAZ wrangles.

Among those Mulenga met include Aaron Milner, former National Sports Council of Zambia president Julius Sakala, former FAZ president Michael Chiti and former FAZ president Tom Mtine.

Mtine says football should be recognised and administered in line with FAZ statutes.

This was at a meeting held at Mtine's house in Ndola Monday afternoon.

"It is not easy to be a minister of

sport, whatever is happening, we have the duty to talk to the Minister to see how best we can address football in the country. Soccer is very important in the country and if it is not going well, it is sad. We need to follow the regulations in football. But we seem to have serious misunderstandings. The answer is to follow the constitution of FAZ and FIFA. We hope Zambia will be able to go ahead again," Mtine said.

"When you play football, it is played as a team and so even when you administer football, administer as a team. We hope that Zambia will organise, recognise itself so that we can watch football happy again."

He said the good name of

Zambian football should not be destroyed by wrangles.

"Zambia has made a good name in football which should not be destroyed. We wish to see Zambian football moving forward to the best of the nation. When you talk about soccer, it has regulations. FAZ has a mandate to follow its own constitution. If you don't follow the regulations, then you will fail," said Mtine.

And Mulenga said he decided to seek counsel from football veterans.

"I thought it wise that I get the counsel from the elders in football. These are the parents that made sure that Zambia qualifies to each Africa

Cup every two years. They have opened the doors to me as minister. At the end of the day, football should win. My duty is to make Zambia wins. We know what is happening in the football in Zambia. At the end, it should be football that wins and not an individual," Mulenga said.

"Those that have succeeded in hosting football. Like the life member has said, it is important that FAZ follow the constitution and the statues of FIFA. Operate according to the constitution. As a ministry we have a lot of things to do. I will pass it on to the national sports council to ensure that all associations follow their constitutions."



FAZ ORDERS NKANA

TO PAY WALTER

By Abraham Kalito

THE Players status and Transfer Committee of the Football Association of Zambia has ordered super league giant Nkana FC to pay former player Walter Bwalya \$32,000.

According to a verdict delivered Sunday, Nkana owes \$20,000 in sign on fees and \$12,000 in salary arrears.

Nkana has been directed to pay the money within sixty calendar days.

“The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) Players Status and Transfer Committee has ordered Nkana Football Club to pay their former star Walter Bwalya USD 32,000 in salary arrears and default on the sign-on fee. According to a judgment by the Player Status Committee the 12-time Zambian champions offered Bwalya a 24-month contract from July 3, 2019 to July 2, 2021 and committed to pay USD 70,000 sign on fee and a USD 4,500 monthly salary. Bwalya signed a pre-contract on 5th November, 2018 with the

club pledging to start paying revised wages upwards upon the signing of the pre-

contract. The club paid the player a USD 50,000 towards the sign on fee but neglected

to pay the balance. Nkana sold Bwalya to Egyptian side El Gouna Sporting Club on a

permanent deal in July 2019. The club has been ordered to pay the USD 20,000 balance

on the sign on fee and USD 12,000 in salary arrears,” read a FAZ statement.

La Liga agrees to training return

LA LIGA teams have been told they will be able to return to training provided they comply with protocols laid out by the Spanish government.

The decision was made following a meeting on Sunday between Spain's National Sports Council (CSD), the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) and La Liga.

The intention is to permit players to resume training subject to the progress of the coronavirus pandemic “and the decisions adopted by the Ministry of Health”, the CSD said in a statement.

Training sessions will be held under strict protocols and only for as long as circumstances allow, the CSD said.

It has been suggested the 2019-20 season is on track to restart in June, although the CSD did not confirm any specifics on a return date for either training sessions or matches.

In addition, the RFEF and La Liga have agreed to set aside income from TV rights in order to create a rescue fund for federal, Olympic and Paralympic sports whose

income has been severely damaged by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Luis Rubiales and Javier Tebas, presidents of the RFEF and La Liga, also signed a commitment to create a contingency fund of €10 million (£8.7m) to help vulnerable athletes.

The meeting between Rubiales, Tebas and CSD president Irene Lozano, which lasted for more than eight hours at the Palacio de Viana, also saw Spain's top football governing bodies commit to a new code of conduct. *AFP*



la liga president Javier Tebas

Sports Minister seeks solution to FAZ wrangles

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