



Wining and dining with govt contractors

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

MORE pictures have emerged showing President Edgar Lungu dining and wining with influential Lusaka based businessman Valden Findlay and Belarusian oligarch Aleksandr Zingman.

In June, 2020, News Diggers published images showing President Lungu interacting with Zingman and Russian businessman Alexander Mikheev, who is the president of Rosoboronexport, a Russian state intermediary agency for the exports of defense-related products and services. *Story page 5*



THE LUNGU, FINDLAY, ZINGMAN AFFAIR

Zambia records 6 more COVID deaths

By Ulande Nkomesha

ZAMBIA has recorded six new COVID-19 deaths, bringing the total number of fatalities to 30.

And the country has, as at July 1, 2020, recorded 38 new COVID-19 cases out of 1,935 tests conducted in the last 24 hours.

According to statistics issued by the Ministry of Health, Wednesday, all the deaths recorded were brought in dead at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH).

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Eden gets two COVID-19 research grants

By Tim Zulu

THE National Science Technology Council (NSTC) has awarded Eden University two grants worth K100,000 each under the School of Medicine and Health Sciences to conduct research into effective prevention of COVID-19.

Eden University Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Fackson Goma has commended the team of researchers from the University for coming up with unique research proposals in COVID-19 prevention which were submitted to NSTC and landed the private institution two grants.

"This is indeed a huge milestone in the history of Eden University in that our dream of becoming a serious, formidable research institution has gotten us on a rare good footing and set us on the recognition path of the national table of respected scientific friends and researchers," said Prof Goma.

"We are so glad that as Eden, we have gotten started not only in a big way but we got a grant we can call our own, and another collaborative grant with one of the new universities (Levy Mwanawasa Medical). So really, this is the culture as Eden University we want to develop and as an institution. If we develop a culture of research, then we will enjoy research, then we will enjoy academia and enjoy the academia's... research outputs and those are what we will be looking out for and without doubt, that will bring a lot more life to Eden and our academic sphere, so the future of Eden is truly bright."

And Dean in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Dr Flavien Bumbangi said the hard work of sleepless nights by his team had paid off in "a big way ever imagined".

"You can imagine that out of 57 institutions that submitted their proposals to the National Science Technology Council... five Universities were selected and of the three proposals we submitted as Eden, we got two grants, that is really overwhelming," Dr Bumbangi said.

"And the other driving force we had was that if others have been there before, then we, too, can be there and true to that, team spirit was at the centre of play. Here we are today with two grants in our hands! Admittedly, it was not easy and I salute the team for their selflessness. Certainly this is a great moment for Eden and the game has just started."

The Eden University projects that NSTC has approved are on Environmental Risk Factors Contributing to the Transmission of COVID-19 in Zambia and the other on Social-Cultural Dynamics Influencing Transmission of Coronavirus in Zambia working in collaboration with Levy Medical University.

The award ceremony was graced by Minister of Higher Education Dr Brian Mushimba at Radisson Blu Hotel in Lusaka on Tuesday.

The emergency research grants are meant to contribute to the generation of critical knowledge and solutions that will help in the prevention and containment of the current outbreak of COVID-19 in Zambia.

Other recipients were University of Zambia, Copperbelt University, Mulungushi University, among others.

By Mirriam Chabala

BRITISH High Commissioner to Zambia Nicholas Woolley says over K16.2 million has been given to the Ministry of Health through the World Health Organisation (WHO) for Zambia's COVID-19 preparedness.

Speaking when he met President Edgar Lungu to discuss a range of matters relevant to the UK-Zambia relationship, Wednesday, High Commissioner Woolley said the support given so far only constituted one strand of the UK's strategy for supporting Zambia to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 in the short term.

High Commissioner Woolley, who was accompanied by the High Commission's Head of Governance and Human Development Wilf Mwamba and Head of COVID Health Response Dr Sarah Goldsmith, said the UK

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According to statistics issued by the Ministry of Health, Wednesday, all the deaths recorded were brought in dead at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH).

And out of the 38 new cases recorded, 28 are from Lusaka, seven from Nakonde and three from Chirundu.

The cumulative number of cases now stands at 1,632 cases with 254 active cases.

The country further recorded 19 recoveries with 8 from Lusaka, seven from Muchinga and four from the Copperbelt.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 1,348.

UK has given Zambia K16.2m for COVID-19 fight – Woolley



government was also helping to improve hygiene practices and facilities in seven districts across in the country, including Lusaka, Monze, Kazungula, Livingstone, Mwanzi, Mwanse and Samfya districts.

"Over £720k or 16.2m Kwacha of support via the World Health Organisation (WHO) to the Ministry of Health and other organisations in Zambia for preparedness in the face of COVID-19. This is part of an ongoing health system strengthening partnership between the UK and Zambia and has included provision of expert training to over 200 health workers, strengthening health surveillance practices at 16 points of entry, provision of essential medical supplies, and preparation of a range of communication materials to support awareness raising amongst health professionals and the general public," Woolley said.

High Commissioner Woolley said a new partnership between DFID and Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company, to repair existing boreholes to improve the water supply to high density urban areas in Lusaka, had also been created.

"A £450k (10.1m Kwacha) initiative co-funded by DFID and Unilever and delivered by WaterAid in Zambia, to improve hygiene practices and facilities in seven districts across Zambia, including Lusaka, Monze, Kazungula,

Livingstone, Mwanzi, Mwanse and Samfya districts; provision of equipment and logistics capacity worth over £2.7m (60m kwacha) to the Ministry of Health to support the country's National Action Plan in tackling anti-microbial resistance through reinforcing existing surveillance systems, strengthening laboratory infrastructure, developing human capacity and technical skills and using protocols for appropriate antimicrobial use. The equipment provided includes specialist laboratory instruments and consumables used in the testing of Anti-Microbial Resistance," he said.

"Following a direct request by the Ministry of Health, provision of an expert medical team that is providing support to: rapid response teams and health facilities with mass screening, clinical care and infection and prevention practices; training and mentoring local staff in the correct use of medical equipment; assessing supply chain and logistics to ensure supplies reach the most affected areas of the outbreak; and further provision by DFID of four vehicles to the Zambia National Public Health Institute to help surveillance teams do monitoring and transport COVID tests."

High Commissioner Woolley assured President Lungu that this support constituted just one strand of the UK's strategy for supporting

Zambia to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 in the short term.

"We are supporting Zambia with its health system resilience and immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are supporting systems that support the most vulnerable people and small businesses with access to cash to support livelihoods and incomes. We are also enabling a functioning food system that ensures all Zambians' have access to nutritious and affordable food supply. We are also working with the international community, other partners and the Zambian Government to enable Zambia to move towards a sustainable debt trajectory and access emergency international financing support," he said.

In the longer term, the High Commissioner reaffirmed the UK's commitment to working with Zambia in areas including climate change, human development such as social protection and education, growing the economy and job creation.

High Commissioner Woolley also noted the critical role played by UK NGOs, such as WaterAid, SolarAid, PEAS Schools, Build-It International and School Club Zambia, all of whom he had had the opportunity to engage with recently on their COVID-19 responses in Zambia and were providing vital support to vulnerable communities across the country.

Meanwhile, High Commissioner Woolley observed that Covid-19 was a once-in-a-generation threat to the global community which required countries, governments and individuals to all come together to defeat it.

"That is why the UK Government's response is both global and local. We are pleased to support the Zambian people at a time when His Excellency the President Edgar Lungu has acknowledged the country is going through severe financial circumstances. But we urge all Zambians to remain vigilant and follow health advice of the authorities. It is only through our collective awareness and action that COVID-19 can be defeated," said High Commissioner Woolley.

And in relation to DFID's funding support in response to COVID-19, DFID Country Director for Zambia, Steve Beel said the UK's partnership with Zambia would always remain a broad one.

"In responding to COVID-19, not only do we look to the funding and expertise provided by DFID in areas such as health, financial inclusion and economic development, but we also recognise the key roles played by UK NGOs, by the Zambian diaspora in the UK, and UK businesses and investors. We see a core part of our role to help bring together all these UK-connected resources and players to contribute to Zambia's immediate response and future development," said Beel.

ACC infringed on Mitelo's right to debate, rules Speaker

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

SPEAKER of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini says the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) infringed on a member's right and freedom to debate when it questioned the manner in which Mitete UPND member of parliament Misheck Mitelo debated on the floor of the House.

And Dr Matibini has ruled that the matter be resolved administratively since it involves two institutions that both enjoy immunity.

On December 4, 2019, Mitelo had raised a point of order asking the Speaker on whether or not the ACC was in order to question him over matters debated in Parliament.

"Madam, way back on Tuesday, 24th September 2019, I contributed to the debate which was on the floor of this House and the following day on 25th September 2019, the Anti-Corruption officials called and sent text messages wanting to meet with me. Being a national representative of the people, I agreed. On the same day around 19:00 hours to 20:00 hours, they found me right in the Parliament motel restaurant. I welcomed them and said 'I am here'.

Then they started questioning me concerning my debate for the previous day and yet this is totally against the laws that we have set for ourselves," Mitelo said in his point of order.

He said the law was clear that members of parliament have powers, privileges and immunity to debate in the House without being liable or questioned in the courts of law.

"The Constitution of Zambia in Article 76 (1) and paragraph 2 [states that] 'a member of parliament has freedom of speech and debate in the National Assembly and that freedom shall not be ousted or questioned in a court or tribunal'. A member of parliament shall have the powers, privileges and immunities as prescribed in Section 3 Cap 12 of the Laws of Zambia says 'there shall be freedom of speech and debate in the Assembly. Such freedom of speech and debate shall not be liable to be questioned in a court or tribunal. A member of parliament shall have the powers, privileges and immunities as prescribed.' Were the two ACC officers in order to come and question me over matters that were debated in this House?" Mitelo asked.

In his ruling, Dr Matibini said the ACC infringed on a member of parliament's freedom of speech and right to debate in the House.

"The point of order by Mr Mutelo MP raises the issue of parliamentary privilege and contempt of the House vis a vis a person harassing a member of parliament for a statement he made on the floor of the House and thereby infringing on the members freedom of speech and debate in the House," Dr Matibini said.

He said he then referred the matter to his committee on Privileges, Absences and Support Services which then wrote to the ACC.

"Honorable members, I referred the matter to the Committee on Privileges, Absences and Support Services for their consideration. And in line with parliamentary practice and procedure, and in accordance with the rules of natural justice, the office of the Clerk of the National Assembly wrote to the Anti-Corruption Commission as well as officials that were alleged to have met Mr Mutelo MP. In addition, the office wrote to a Mr Njamba who was allegedly with Mr Mutelo, MP, when the

ACC officers met him. All the witnesses made written submissions," Dr Matibini said.

He advised that the matter be resolved administratively and that it had already been closed.

"The committee subsequently met and deliberated on the matter. During its deliberation, the committee had recourse to the written submissions of all the witnesses. After considering all the submissions from the witnesses, the committee established that the matter concerned two institutions that both enjoyed immunity as prescribed in the national assembly, Powers and Privileges Act 12 of the Laws of Zambia and the Anti-Corruption Act 3 of 2012. In view of this, the committee recommended that the issue be resolved administratively. Honourable members, I applied my mind to this matter and I have endorsed the committee's recommendation that the matter be handled administratively. I wish further to inform the House that the committee met both parties and concluded the matter as pointed above. Therefore, this matter is for all intents and purposes closed," ruled Dr Matibini.

By Mukosha Funga

NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili says the opposition must unite and field one 2021 presidential candidate in order to kick out the Patriotic Front.

And Kambwili says the just ended Malawi presidential elections must be a lesson to Zambia and all other African countries that there is power in the vote.

Speaking when he was called in during a Radio Phoenix programme, Wednesday, Kambwili appealed to opposition political party leaders to unite and consider fielding one candidate for 2021.

"Imagine a situation where a minister is charged and arrested for corruption at 12:00 hours [and then] at 14:00 hours he is in Parliament answering questions and giving a ministerial statement. What a way to insult the Zambian people. Even himself the minister could have just said 'let me take a break from the public domain for a few days'. But these people have taken us for a ride. They think Zambians are stupid," Kambwili said.

"That is why I am advocating that in the coming elections in 2021, the opposition must seriously think of fielding only one person and come out like the Malawi way, so that we can remove the mediocrity, corruption and this unreasonableness being exhibited by President Edgar Lungu and his administration. Some of us are determined to make it work, some of us have a genuine passion and love

Opposition must field one candidate to beat PF in 2021 – Kambwili

for Zambia because our call is not for me to be president at all costs, my call is that we should have a Zambia where every Zambian has to share in the goodness of a country. The country must be governed based on the rule of law with fairness to one another."

Kambwili said the opposition is determined to unseat the ruling PF for the good of the nation.

"Look, they are not allowing the opposition to campaign, but they are all over. When the opposition goes to campaign, they are arrested, when civil societies want to protest, they are arrested. Their own people are protesting every time through solidarity matches and so on and you think that if you go it one on one, you can beat them, people need to listen to only one voice. Let the people realize that the opposition is serious to unseat this unreasonable government which has got nothing to show. Governance is very poor, the economy is very poor, the social sector is very poor, what can you say about PF today?" Kambwili asked.

He warned his fellow opposition leaders to put their personal ego aside and avoid being led by the PF for another five years.

"So, if you want to be selfish and have your ego that 'it's me to be president' even the next five years you will be under this same leadership and

the people of Zambia are the ones who are going to suffer. My earnest call to reasonable opposition is that let's unite and he who wants to lead must be prepared to be led. What is important is that we must be genuine in making sure that this country is well-governed. When you are coming to work together, you have to sit down and harmonize your manifestos, agree to disagree so that you only pick the best manifesto that can lead this country out of this quagmire that we are in," Kambwili said.

Kambwili insisted that it would be easy to remove the PF from power once the opposition united.

"It is going to be possible. Already the UPND, the NDC, ADD, RPP, and other political parties have already started the process. I can assure you that this is what the Zambians want and it is going to work. Those who will not want to join the alliance, it's up to them, but my earnest appeal to them is that please, let's put aside our egos and for once protect mother Zambia from this quagmire. Everybody is uniting to remove one person because of corruption. And that Kaizer Zulu should be the last person to talk about that because he is a corrupt chap and he



National Democratic Congress (NDC) leader Chishimba Kambwili at Lusaka's Magistrates Court on Tuesday - Picture by: Tenson Mkhala

knows where he is going after elections. So we are not trying to remove one man because he is powerful but we are trying to remove this government because it has failed to rule, it is unreasonable and it is a scared government. And I can tell Kaizer Zulu that 'you have 14 months to answer to where you got all this money even going to establish some manufacturing companies in Dubai when you were a pauper. We shall follow you,' he said.

Meanwhile, Kambwili said the just ended elections in Malawi should be a lesson to all those in leadership positions that the interest of the people

must come first.

"Excellent Malawi elections, driven by the people who have passion and love for their country, people who don't have personal egos, people who decided that the people come first than themselves. And that is the way it should be in Africa. The problem in Africa is that everybody wants to be president but there can only be one president at a given time. And that is why there is dictatorship because people know that if you split the votes, there will be power in perpetuity. What is happening in Zambia today is nothing to write home and talk about.

In fact, we have stooped so low to the extent that Zambia has become a laughing stock throughout the world," Kambwili said.

Kambwili said he lacked confidence in the judiciary because some judges were refusing to recuse themselves from certain cases.

"What confidence can you have in the judiciary when a magistrate refuses with impunity to recuse themselves and the Chief Justice is watching, all the High Court Judges are watching, all the Supreme Court Justices are watching. What confidence can you have?" asked Kambwili.



PF a dictatorship - HH

By Ulande Nkomesha

UPND president Hakainde Hichilema says PF is a dictatorial party which is already using the National Registrations Office to disadvantage citizens in certain regions of the country.

And National Democratic Congress (NDC) vice-president Josephs Akafumba says the PF can only hang on to power if they rig the 2021 elections.

Speaking to journalists after visiting the National Registrations Office, Wednesday, Hichilema lamented that people in Monze were being made to wait for long periods before obtaining NRCs.

"My message is to the people of Zambia, We have seen such behavior from

parties in office before. We saw it during the one party state. We saw it during 2001. We are seeing again but in all cases the people of Zambia won. This is a third attempt of a party in office to try and manipulate institutions such as the National Registration Office, deliberately manipulate it so that they can behave the way they are behaving. When you are from Monze something is wrong you are not supposed to be an equal citizen to get an NRC within five minutes. If you are from Chiengi, you can get an NRC within five minutes. So they are creating

a duality among the citizens," Hichilema said.

"In Malawi we saw it, there was dominance of branding Malawi from the Southern region, the central region was discriminated, the northern region was discriminated. What the Northern and Central region did, they came together, they said all those who are being discriminated, let us come together, we will see who has more numbers. Mutharika is out! If we are united, the one who is denying citizens NRCs would be defeated. NRCS must be issued to everybody who is

16 years old, that is what the Constitution says. We went to the office, they refused to see us. Our own institutions refused to see us the owners of the institutions that is what dictators do!"

Hichilema insisted that Bill 10 was targeted at keeping PF in office.

"We must see Bill 10 in the eyes of an autocrat that wants to stay in office, so is the issuance of the NRCs, so that we as the opposition parties cannot conduct intra party elections, when PF are doing it, we cannot do it, our people are arrested. That is what autocrats

do!" Hichilema said.

"They stay in office to continue stealing to do all these things that they are doing. We have to reject this autocracy of staying in office with all these manipulations. I want to give hope to all of you, don't lose hope because help is on the way. All of us who are being called disgruntled are in the majority. The reason why they have continued to manipulate us is because we are fragmented. If we unite, we will defeat them. Once we come together, the one who wants Bill 10 to amend the constitution to protect themselves will be defeated. Bill 10 goes nowhere. I put it to you that PF is a dictatorship!"

Hichilema wondered how the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) would manage to register nine million voters

in 30 days.

"Can we have a dialogue platform to deal with all these issues, NRCs is one of them, Bill 10 being the other and the voter registration which they want to reduce to 30 days. How can they register nine million voters in the 30 days?" asked Hichilema.

And Akafumba said the only way PF can retain power in 2021 is through rigging.

"The appetite of the PF to hang on to power, I am using the word hang on because they have already lost the vote. What dictators do all over the world to hang on to power is to destroy all institutions of governance. That is what PF has managed to do from 2015 to date. What we have seen in Chiengi is just a tip of an iceberg. Lungu knows very well that he can no longer hang on to power without rigging. We are on guard as opposition partners and we are keeping on check. We cannot allow what is happening in Chiengi," said Akafumba.

ConCourt shouldn't gag Matibini - Tutwa

By Ulande Nkomesha

THE Constitutional Court's ruling that Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini cannot interpret the Constitution can spur dictatorship in the governance of the country arising from possible conflict between the two arms of government, says government Deputy Chief Whip Tutwa Ngulube.

In an interview, Ngulube argued that the ConCourt's judgement might create a battle between the Legislature and Judiciary.

"Being a member of the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ), being a member of parliament, you see, I foresee a situation where we might have a silent battle between the Legislature and the courts. We want to urge our judicators, the ConCourt, we also want to urge any other judicial functionaries that as far as we are concerned, it was not even necessary at the time they were delivering that judgement to include Mr Speaker's power to interpret the Constitution. That argument was not advanced by any of the parties before the Court," Ngulube said.

"We need to avoid the tyranny that the Judiciary has had for many years; the Judiciary must allow other organs of government to function within their spheres of operation without necessarily gagging. The Judiciary should not gag Parliament. Parliament should have independence to even make mistakes, they should make laws. The ConCourt should only come in when they are called upon where the law has been broken; where there is an alleged infringement of law. You cannot stop someone automatically to say, 'from now on, don't do this, that,' no! That is not how we operate. Otherwise, the wheels of justice will be on stand-still."

He insisted that there was need for the ConCourt to revisit their ruling on the Speaker's powers.

"The ConCourt needed to revisit that comment, it wasn't even a judgement, it was a comment. So, they need to revisit that comment in order to allow Parliament to conduct its business without fear from the ConCourt. The ConCourt should also

operate in their own boundary without fear from Mr Speaker. That tyranny, that dictatorship that is trying to grow in the ConCourt of trying to stop Mr Speaker from doing whatever, no! Courts, yes, can change the law, they can interpret the law, but we want to say it will not be necessary at this point to create a rift between the ConCourt and the Legislature because there is no need," he argued.

"No Zambian will benefit from such division. That amount of division should not even be entertained; we should actually make sure both organs, which are created by the Constitution, operate in their own spheres. Let the ConCourt continue operating as a ConCourt within the mandate given to them by the law; let Mr Speaker also operate within the spheres given to him by the law so that at the end of the day, we do not have a situation where everything that goes to Parliament, or everything that goes to the ConCourt, will include Mr Speaker in the judgement; this is not what we want to see. The Court must be mindful that every comment they make is binding; every comment they make, even if it is not needed by anyone, the moment it comes out in a

judgement, it becomes part of a judgement."

Ngulube, who is also Kabwe Central PF member of parliament, added that Dr Matibini had the power to interpret the Constitution regarding parliamentary business in the National Assembly.

"Mr Speaker cannot run Parliament without interpreting the law. You can imagine we can end up having an unnecessary constitutional crisis where when the Speaker wants to deal with any matter in Parliament, he must refer to the ConCourt. How many times will the Speaker rule? How many times will Parliament function? So, we want to make it very clear that in the internal affairs of Parliament, and as regards to parliamentary business, there is nothing that stops Mr Speaker from interpreting the Constitution. If they are saying, 'outside Parliament,' yes, it is the ConCourt, inside Parliament, it is the Speaker. If somebody has an issue and then he takes it to court, yes, the Court can interpret, but in the internal affairs of Parliament, and the internal governance structure of Parliament, in the day-to-day running affairs of Parliament, the Speaker has power to

interpret the Constitution," argued Ngulube.

"Who is the Speaker, right now, as we are speaking? The Speaker is a High Court Judge. The Speaker is a State Counsel, qualified judge; he is competent to interpret the Constitution. In fact, Dr Matibini is one of Zambia's very few fine brains! If you look at his CV, it cannot be compared to some of these people, who are making all these arguments. We want to say even without being Speaker, Dr Matibini is competent to interpret the Constitution because he is a judge and, secondly, Dr Matibini is State Counsel; also, Dr Matibini is an academician. He is an author, he is everything else; you cannot even compare him to some of these people who are trying to shoot in the dark! If we say Mr Speaker should not interpret the Constitution, we will be creating an unnecessary constitutional crisis, which is not even needed as at now. For now, we do not need that type of crisis."

Last week, Dr Matibini argued that the ConCourt was wrong to state that he had no power to interpret both the law and the Constitution when he declared Chishimba Kambwili's Roan Parliamentary seat vacant.

Lungu won't fire Chitalu, he's innocent until proven guilty - State House

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

STATE House says President Edgar Lungu will not fire Health Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya just because he has been accused of corruption.

According to a statement issued by Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Isaac Chipampe, President Lungu said the minister is still innocent until proven otherwise.

"Despite being charged with criminal offenses, in this case, corruption allegations, Hon Chitalu is currently innocent until proven otherwise by the courts of law. This assumption is predicated on the principle of presumption of innocence which is enshrined in the Constitution of Zambia and is consistent with according to an accused fair trial. According to Article 18 (2) of the Zambia Constitution, every person who is charged with a criminal offense shall be presumed to be innocent until he or she is proved or pleads guilty. And since the Zambia Constitution, as stated in Article (1) overrides any other written law, or customary law, or customary practice, everyone must respect the presumption of innocence," Chipampe stated.

Chipampe said the burden of proof was not on Dr Chilufya.

"Therefore, a mere allegation is not a conviction and it is not the duty of the accused to prove his innocence. The principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty by the courts of law is also enshrined in the African Charter on Human and people's Rights and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights," stated Chipampe.

He stated that the Head of State respected the independence of the judiciary and would not interfere in its operations.

All bars will be closed even if owners are connected to power, vows Miles

By Ulande Nkomesha

LUSAKA Mayor Miles Sampa has vowed that any bars masquerading as restaurants will be closed down, even though the owners are connected to some powerful people.

On Tuesday, President Edgar Lungu's former political advisor Kaizer Zulu said he would have breakfast, lunch and dinner at Chicago's Reloaded on Wednesday.

"By powers and freedoms vested in me as a citizen of the republic of Zambia, I wish to inform friends and relatives that I will be having breakfast, lunch and supper at Chicago's reloaded tomorrow Wednesday 1st Of July 2020. I wish to further appeal to Chicago's management to abide by the rules of engagement vis a vis COVID-19 guidelines as per Presidential Directives," Zulu wrote on his Facebook post.

Earlier, Chicago's proprietor Savvas Christofi announced on his Facebook page that his restaurant would reopen on Wednesday as normal.

When one of his followers

reminded him that Sampa warned that anyone who would go there would do so at their own risk, Christofi replied; "the mayor doesn't pay my rent, I do, and my rent".

And in response to both Zulu and Christofi, Sampa he warned that he would not allow anyone not elected anywhere in Lusaka to interfere with his work.

"Well as Mayor I don't pay salaries or rent either for the many restaurants and bars owned by generally economically struggling Zambians in the city but have shut their bar doors in respect of the Presidential COVID-19 guidelines. Even in Greece elected Mayors are respected when they enforce Covid 19 guidelines. Worse off a Zambian bar owner there would not dare answer the Mayor of Athens," Sampa wrote on his Facebook page.

"Lusaka shall not be abused as an exception to COVID-19 compliance by any so called investor. It's either all bars Re-open or none is and more so just because it's owned by a foreigner. LCC gives licenses to all restaurants or

bars to conduct business in the City. Chicago's Reloaded has for now been suspended by LCC until further notice. Abash Neo-Colonialism putting foreign owned Bars first and Zambian owned bars second. As for anyone not elected anywhere in Lusaka and interfering with our work, please 'Sela Tubombeko'. We only take orders from other elected Citizens in the City. We are not here for publicity stunts. Ukokwine! We have a constitutional job to do and we shall do so without Fear or Favour."

And in an interview, Sampa said he only respected President Edgar Lungu, Local Government Minister Charles Banda and Lusaka Province Minister Bowman Lusambo, whom he reported to.

"There is no sacred cow. Anyone contravening the Presidential guidelines, you own a restaurant and you start masquerading as a bar late in the night, we will pounce on you whether you are owned by a foreigner or Zambian, we don't care! Whether you are linked to some powerful people, we don't care. Whether you

host Ministers in your restaurants or bars, we don't care, we will pounce on you and close you indiscriminately. We are very impartial in this process and we will not be intimidated by anybody," said Sampa.

"The Constitution entails me to do these things, I don't know about their procedure, they can get enslaved by procedures. The thing is that I want the job done. We want bars not to open, how I do that is my business. That is how I work, if they don't like it, they should apply to be mayor next year. That is how I work. They should get used to it. There is no law that I have broken, my job is to ensure compliance by bars, how I get it done that is my job, that is me. If anyone has a problem, he should go to court. I only respect the President of Zambia Edgar Chagwa Lungu, my Minister of Local Government Charles Banda and my other Minister Lusaka Province Bowman Lusambo, that is where I report and the Bible tells me to respect the authority given to me abashala ba sele tubombeko (the rest shouldn't interfere with my duties)."

Chella denies libel charges

By Zondiwe Mbewe

LUSAKA-based photographer Cornelius Chella Tukuta has appeared before the Lusaka Magistrates' Court and denied issuing defamatory remarks against Information and Broadcasting Minister Dora Siliya and Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) Commissioner-General Kingsley Chanda.

Tukuta, 34, has been charged with two counts of libel in connection with some alleged defamatory remarks he posted on his social media page against Siliya and Chanda.

In count one, it is alleged that Tukuta on May 26, this year in Lusaka, published defamatory matter affecting Dora Siliya in the form of a video on Facebook that: "Dora Siliya is a pimp, she hooks up girls for high-profile people like ministers and permanent secretaries.

In the second count, it is alleged that on May 2, this year in Lusaka, Tukuta published defamatory matter affecting Kingsley Chanda in the form of a video on Facebook to the effect that: "Kingsley Chanda was taking pecuniary advantage of his position at the Zambia Revenue Authority by arm-twisting various businesses to give his companies Ciltax and Nishati business."

When the matter came up for plea before Lusaka Chief Resident Magistrate Lameck Mwale, Tukuta, who was represented by lawyer Meamande Wamukwamba, said he understood the charges after they were read to him.

He then took a plea of not guilty.

Magistrate Mwale adjourned the case to August 25 and 31, this year, for trial.

Tukuta, who is on police bond, is also facing other charges before the Ndola Magistrates' Court.

By Natasha Sakala

UNITED States Embassy in Zambia interim Chargé d'Affaire David Young says it is unacceptable to use freedom of expression to invite violence and spread hate speech.

And Chief Government Spokesperson Dora Siliya says there is need for government to re-strategise the COVID-19 public campaign messages in order to yield desired results as the current perception that the disease is not real is worrying.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services public relations department, the duo were speaking during a meeting with Siliya, Livestock and Fisheries Minister Professor Nkandu Luo and General Education Permanent Secretary for Administration Jabbin Mulwanda.

"US, Zambia value freedom of expression Chargé d'Affaire ad interim at the United States Embassy in Zambia David Young says his Government, like Zambia, shares in the value of freedom of Assembly, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Expression as critical rights in a democracy. He, however, said these freedoms must be exercised in a respectful and peaceful manner. Mr. Young said it is unacceptable to use such freedoms to incite violence and spread hate speech," read the statement.

"Mr. Young who was accompanied by officials from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), said it is possible for one to express their disagreement through television, radio or social media with respect and in a peaceful manner."

Young said it was key for people to express themselves respectfully.

"The key issue is for people to express themselves peacefully and respectfully. The problem is when they go on social media, television and radio to incite

More puzzling pictures emerge of Lungu's association with Zingman, Findlay

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

MORE pictures have emerged showing President Edgar Lungu dining and wining with influential Lusaka based businessman Valden Findlay and Belarusian oligarch Aleksandr Zingman.

In June, 2020, News Diggers published images showing President Lungu interacting with Zingman and Russian businessman Alexander Mikheev, who is the president of Rosoboronexport, a Russian state intermediary agency for the exports of defense-related products and services.

The photographs also showed Defence Permanent Secretary Sturdy Mwale, Zambia Air Force Commander Lt Gen David Muma and Military Attaché at the Zambian Embassy in Moscow,

Robert Kampeshi, with the said Belarusian businessman.

Although he operates under the radar, Zingman is reported to be a valuable chain in the relations between Zambia and East Europe, and is believed to have brokered the procurement of helicopters from Russia and the contract for the supply of Sukhoi Superjet 100 aircraft.

But Zingman's UK-based lawyer Daniel Delnero has told News Diggers that there was nothing sinister about the photos as it was a coincident that President Lungu, Zingman and Mikheev were found in one place.

"Consistent with his broader business activities, Mr. Zingman was in Zambia to discuss Zambia business prospects with Belarus in the area of agriculture, mining,

road construction, transport infrastructure, and logistics. During these many meetings, the parties discussed the construction of the tractor assembling plant Chipata, Zambia, which will produce about 2000 tractors per year, other agriculture machinery, and farming implements... We further note that these discussions are consistent with Mr. Zingman's role in creating opportunities for Belarussian investment in Zambia and other African nations in the fields of agriculture, mining, and transportation infrastructure," Zingman's lawyer explained.

"The photograph prompting these claims occurred by pure happenstance. Mr. Zingman indeed had a meeting with The President. There was no meeting between

Mr. Zingman, Mr. Mikheev, and the President of Zambia, nor was there a meeting between Mr. Zingman and Mr. Mikheev. Mr. Zingman and Mr. Mikheev happened to have met at State House of Zambia at the same time and, because they are from neighboring countries (Mr. Zingman is from Belarus and Mr. Mikheev is from Russia) and share a common language, Mr. Mikheev requested a photo with The President and Mr. Zingman. The tractor assembling plant to be constructed under a contract under Zamcapitol of the Ministry of Defence of Zambia. Mr. Sturdy Mwale, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of Zambia, travelled in 2018 with the military attaché and other senior government officials from Zambia to tour one of the world's largest, if not number one, tractor manufacturing plants in Minsk, Belarus. During the same period, an MOU was signed to cooperate in this area for tractor production. It was as a result of this cooperation that Mr. Zingman travelled to Zambia for a follow up meeting with The President of Zambia. After the meeting, Mr. Zingman requested that Mr. Sturdy Mwale and the military attaché, who happened also to be in Zambia, to meet at a resort in Lusaka and have a dinner. It was during this time that Mr. Zingman first met General Muma, who came with military attaché at the resort. During the dinner, Mr. Zingman requested Mr. Sturdy Mwale and General Muma to join him for another dinner on the following day. Mr. Zingman and Mr. Findlay have been friends for long time; hence, Mr. Zingman asked Mr. Findlay to join him for dinner. Zingman, through his lawyer then gave News Diggers an ultimatum in which to disclose the source of the images, apologise for publishing and delete them from the newspaper's online and social media platforms, or face legal action. News Diggers Managing Director Joseph Mwenda said the newspaper would not do any of the actions demanded by Zingman, saying the matter was of public interest in Zambia and dared Zingman to sue if his dealings with the Zambians government and the Head of State were clean.

Freedom of expression shouldn't be abused – Young

violence and hate speech," said Young.

And Young appealed to members of the Public to heed President Edgar Lungu's call for strict observance of coronavirus preventative measures.

"Mr. Young said measures such as wearing of masks in public places, observing social distance as well as regular washing of hands

with soap are effective ways of protecting oneself especially people with underlining health conditions and the aged. He also commended President Lungu's cautious approach in reopening different sectors of the economy such as airports, schools among others. Mr. Young said his Government together with Center for Disease Control and (USAID) is determined to work

with the Zambian Government to promote the health the sector," the statement read.

And Siliya, who is also Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, noted that the perception among citizens that the coronavirus is not real is worrying.

"Ms. Siliya says Government still has a lot of work to do to convince members of the public

that the disease is real so as to save lives. She says most citizens have abandoned COVID-19 preventive measures prescribed by the Ministry of Health claiming that the virus does not exist in the country. Ms. Siliya said there is need for government to re-strategise the COVID-19 public campaign messages in order to yield desired results," read the statement.

Siliya lamented that people had dropped their guard.

"His Excellency the President of Zambia said his last address to the nation reemphasized that the disease is real. A lot of people have dropped their guard they think it's been here since March and that Zambia has been spared of the worst but clearly we are not an island and we are seeing what is happening in countries around us," she said.

Siliya, however, assured the US envoy that Government would continue to uphold values and protect citizens' rights of freedom of expression.

"I know that our partners think that we are out to get the youths because they have freely expressed themselves. But is important that we appreciate that we live in a country with real politics, social context and Christian values," said Siliya.

Magistrate commits Chinese murder case to High Court for trial

By Zondiwe Mbewe

THE Lusaka Magistrates' Court has committed two men accused of murdering three Chinese nationals and setting ablaze a warehouse in Makeni area to the High Court for trial.

Victor Kabaso, 22 and Henry Mudenda, 18, both of Garden House appeared before the Lusaka Magistrates' Court yesterday.

They have been charged with one count of aggravated robbery, three counts of murder and another count of arson.

In count one, Kabaso and Mudenda are alleged to have on May 24, 2020 in Lusaka, jointly and whilst acting together with other persons unknown, stolen from Guifang Cao, one Asus laptop and K23,750 cash altogether valued at K36,750.00, property of Gu Hao.

It is alleged that at or immediately before or after such stealing, the two used or threatened to use actual violence to the said Guifang Cao in order to obtain or retain or prevent or overcome resistance of it being stolen or retained.

In counts two, three and four, Kabaso and Mudenda are alleged to have on the same dates jointly and whilst acting

together murdered Fan Ming Jie, Jubing Bao and Guifang Cao.

And in the last count, the two on the same day jointly and whilst acting together with other persons unknown willfully and unlawfully set on fire a warehouse at Blue Star Company valued at K1 million, the property of Gu Hao.

When Kabaso and Mudenda appeared before Lusaka Principal Resident Magistrate, Mwaka Mikalile yesterday, she explained the charges to them to which they said they understood.

Magistrate Mikalile then explained to the accused persons that they could not

take plea before her court as the charges were tried in the High Court.

At this point, State prosecutor Juvenalis Kamutondole informed Magistrate Mikalile that he was in receipt of a certificate from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) committing the two to the High Court for trial.

Magistrate Mikalile then committed the accused persons to the High Court.

However, before she could rise, Kabaso and the juvenile applied that the court directs that they be allowed to seek medical attention, which she granted.

Cop gets 6 years for stealing AK47

By Daniel Chansa

A 29-YEAR-OLD police officer has been sentenced to six years imprisonment for stealing an AK47 rifle valued at K105,995.00.

This is in a matter where Haggai Namauna, 29, a police officer in Chingola was facing one count of theft of a fire arm.

Particulars of the offence were that on dates unknown but between March 2019 and August 2019, Namauna stole

an AK47 assault rifle contrary to the laws of Zambia.

When the matter came up for judgement, Chingola Magistrate Stephen Maona said the state had proved the case beyond reasonable doubt and he convicted Namauna accordingly.

"The state has proved this case beyond reasonable doubt. It has proved that you had the intention of stealing and selling the gun. The fact that you removed the serial number of the gun

shows that you had intentions of selling the gun," magistrate Maona said.

"This should serve as a warning to other officers who are in the habit of abusing their authorities that the law will take its course. I therefore sentence you to six years imprisonment with hard labour."

Court records have also shown that Namauna is also facing a charge of abduction in another court before magistrate Shadrack Chanda.



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TOURISM SECTOR REFORMS

ZAMBIA'S massive potential in the tourism sector has the potential to create employment, reduce poverty levels and contribute to the growth of the economy. Zambia's economic sector is facing a lot of challenges that are undermining the development and flourishing of this sector. These hitches are largely due to mal-administration, and the lack of political will. The issues that need to be addressed in Zambia's tourism sector include; High taxes, poor infrastructure to support access to the countries tourist destination sites and the Lack of a marketing strategy. Tourism in Zambia is very expensive and rated as being for the rich and foreigners. Local tourism helps in the equitable distribution of resources around the country, especially from urban areas to rural areas.

To promote tourism in Zambia, the national democratic congress party shall;

Identify and list economic activities that shall be branded and identified as tourism activities for easy marketing.

We shall reduce red-tape and bureaucracy associated with opening up business start-ups and entrepreneur ventures in the tourism industries. By doing so we shall encourage entrepreneur ventures into local tourism and also strategies to enable Zambians venture into local tourism.

We shall streamline taxation and registration in tourism industry and revise downwards visa fees for visitors who come into our country for tourism purposes

NDC Government shall also identify areas and zones whose tourism potential has not been exploited due to them being inaccessible because of bad infrastructure. Businesses that set up tourism facilities in these areas shall be given tax incentive to promote their businesses and encourage other businesses to venture into these areas.

We shall open up our water-ways for tourism, such as: The Zambezi river from North- Western Province to Livingstone and allow ferries to move along the rivers. This shall enable various sites along the river to be developed into Tourism sites.

We shall revisit all laws governing water fronts in favour of protecting locals living in those areas and enable access by both foreign and local tourists

To improve local tourism;

We shall remove sales tax whenever a local tourist accesses tourism services or pays for lodging, game drive, boat cruises and other activities identified as tourism activities in areas identified as tourism zones.

We shall also reduce taxes for new entrepreneurs entering the tourism industry upon registration.

Encourage the tourism industry to create special rates for locals, SADCC region, COMESA and international visitors.

We shall also give tax incentives on company tax for registered tourist firms that reserve, attract, market and provide not less than 35% of identified and classified tourism services to local residents.

To alleviate and do away with the bottle necks in accessing tourism destination sites, we shall ensure that we improve infrastructure by constructing Air strips, roads and telecommunication infrastructure in areas designated as tourism zones.

Zambia marketing strategy of our tourism sector has largely been misplaced, with the focus on the Victoria Falls only, neglecting other areas with equal tourism potential.

Our marketing strategy as NDC government shall be to ensure that we have tourism attaches in all our foreign missions who shall be marketing Zambia's tourism in those regions.

We shall restructure the Zambia National Tourism Board and adequately fund it to ensure that our tourism potential is sufficiently marketed.

We shall strengthen the National Heritage and Conservation Institutions in

all tourism centres and attractions across the country.

For a long time, our nation has not benefitted sufficiently from our wildlife, especially the local people who live near or in national parks. In order to preserve our wild life, conserve nature and enhance community benefits for people living in game areas, NDC government shall do the following:

National parks and wild life authority shall be transformed into a research and marketing institute to manage hunting licenses and market itself in a way that shall bring in foreign exchange into the country and protect our endangered species.

We shall cut red tape and bureaucracy that hinders Zambians and locals from obtaining hunting licenses and participating in game cropping.

Game cropping and hunting licenses shall be a preserve of Zambians and locals who shall in turn sale to foreigners and investors.

The locals shall be given 75% of the value of all hunting concessions. This shall go towards building schools, hospitals and social amenities in the local area.

We shall train and deploy people living in national parks and game reserve areas as game scouts. We shall empower and employ them as the first line of defence against marauding poachers.

Give rewards to locals who help and curb down illegal poaching. Proceeds of all illegal poaching shall be given to the localscommunities.



By Mirriam Chabala

RAINBOW Party general secretary Wynter Kabimba says it is too late for those opposed to the Constitution Amendment Bill Number 10 of 2019 to demand a referendum because the document is already before Parliament for possible enactment.

In an interview, Kabimba said those rejecting Bill 10 should have stated earlier if they wanted the Bill to be voted for through a referendum by advising their members of parliament against walking out of the House whenever it came up for debate.

"If those who are opposed to Bill 10 wanted us to take that route, they should have expressed that view right from the beginning. The National Dialogue Forum (NDF) was governed by an Act of Parliament, the National Dialogue Act and I remember even at that time, there was opposition to that Act and the arguments were 'why do you want an Act of Parliament to govern this process? You want to deprive people of exercising their freedom of expression'. Those of us who supported the Act again at that time took the view that like was the case with the National Constitution Conference (NCC), having an Act to govern the process would prevent arbitrariness in implementing the process by the Patriotic Front government. Now those that are talking about a referendum now, if they had come to attend the NDF or at a time when the Act was being debated, they should have then said that they wanted the process to end up in a referendum," Kabimba said.

"Then it would have been a provision in the Act to ensure that the NDF, after passing the bill by way of a resolution of that forum, that bill should have been subjected to a referendum. Now it is too late in the day because they are shifting goal posts and they are changing

It's too late for Bill 10 opposers to demand referendum - Kabimba

arguments every day and that is the only problem that I have with our colleagues on the other side. It is too late now in the day for them to demand a referendum because the Bill now is before Parliament for enactment. If they had wanted it to go that, they should have from the beginning canvassed that issue or the members of parliament that are opposed to the Bill instead of walking out, they should have been saying 'we want a referendum'. So this idea of thinking from the top of your head cannot help matters. So when you hear an argument, you try to find a convenient way of avoiding the argument, no! That's not how you argue."

He explained that he had no problem with people opposing Bill 10 because everyone was entitled to their own opinion but that he had issues with those claiming that Zambians had rejected Bill 10 because they could not prove it.

"I didn't say that those of us in support of the Bill are in the majority and we have never claimed to be in the majority. It is them that you hear saying 'the people of Zambia are against this Bill'. I have never used that argument myself. All that I have said is 'this is a good Bill and if passed into law, it will move us forward'. So I have never claimed majoritarianism on the part of the proponents of the Bill. Instead, what we hear from their side is that they are the only ones who are speaking in the name of the majority of Zambians. But that's a different argument; if they just said 'we don't support the Bill because it's bad', I would have no problem with that because then, they are entitled to their opinion. But I was reacting to the point that they consistently raise that the Zambian people have rejected this bill," Kabimba said.

"I have featured on radio programmes where callers have said 'it is not true that all of us Zambians are against Bill 10'. So, going by this 'your word against mine', you can't determine who is in the majority. So you can't speak

in the name of NDC and say that 'I speak in the name of the majority of Zambians', it's a very difficult argument to prove.

He insisted that those opposed to Bill 10 could not prove that they are in the majority because there was no poll.

"We don't have a pollster system in Zambia. There is no poll that has been taken, and what you read on social media is not tantamount to a poll. In fact, even on social media, you can't prove that those that are against Bill 10 are more than those that are for Bill 10. So I hope I

haven't been misunderstood, all that I have said is that you can't purport to speak in the name of the majority as being opposed to Bill 10 because you can't prove it," said Kabimba. "However, you have the right to oppose Bill 10 because that's your Constitutional right and I would respect that view that you take. I am not even saying my view is better than those that are opposed to Bill 10, that I will leave to posterity to judge. So I am pursuing a very political/intellectual argument, I am not being simplistic. I am just saying that they should prove that they are in the majority."



World Bank approves \$415m infrastructure facility to TDB

By Natasha Sakala

THE World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) has announced the approval of a US \$415 million Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility (RIFF) project to the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB).

And Trade and Development Fund (TDF) chairman of the board of directors Professor Oliver Saasa called on regional member countries, Zambia inclusive, to take full advantage of the facility to access available funds to expand infrastructure development and trade expansion.

According to the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB), the facility comprises a 19-year Scale-Up Facility (SUF) credit line of US \$400 million, and a 38-year US \$15 million concessional technical assistance credit.

"The TDB is delighted to announce the approval of a ground-breaking US \$415 million RIFF project by the World Bank's IDA. The facility comprises a 19-year SUF credit line of US \$400 million, and a 38-year US \$15 million concessional technical assistance credit. This is the first time the World Bank's IDA is extending such a facility to a regional development bank, alongside another debut MIGA-backed trade finance facility that was also just concluded with TDB. Thanks to the facility, TDB will scale-up its financing of long-term infrastructure projects, particularly in the area of renewable energy, including among other

targets, renewable generation and mini grids for industrial and commercial enterprises pursuing the electrification of nearby communities. Likewise, access to debt financing will be provided to SMEs, the backbone of the region's economies, primarily targeting renewable energy SMEs, which have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic," the statement read.

"The facility will especially focus on projects which can create jobs, as well as increase cross-border trade and investment, and new technologies. Furthermore, the technical assistance credit will serve to enhance TDB's capacity in areas including environmental and social management, project preparation and portfolio management. As well, it will support the institutional strengthening of the Trade and Development Fund (TDF), a newly-created sister institution, which will undertake activities of educational nature and support non-commercial activities in TDB member states."

It further stated that COMESA would be the recipient of a US \$10 million technical assistance grant,

geared at supporting the private infrastructure finance enabling environment, in particular for the region's off-grid energy market.

"As part of the broader arrangement, the Secretariat of the COMESA Secretariat will be the recipient of a US \$10 million technical assistance grant geared at supporting the private infrastructure finance enabling environment, in particular for the region's off-grid energy market. The need for long-term infrastructure finance has been further exacerbated during these disrupted times. Indeed, along with supply chains disruptions, risk perception and aversion have risen, and available liquidity from financial institutions has become more short-term. For the more vulnerable small and medium enterprises - which contribute up to 40 per cent of emerging economies' GDPs, and 70 per cent of all employment - this support from IDA will go a long way to ensure that they continue contributing to the sustainable socio-economic development of the region and of its peoples," read the statement.

"The proceeds of these credits will be deployed alongside a first-of-its-kind

10-year loan covered with a EUR 359 MIGA guarantee geared at trade finance, to support TDB's access to commercial bank financing at longer tenors and better rates, thereby, enabling the Bank to step-up its operations in some of its member states, which would normally not have been eligible for an equivalent cover."

TDB president and chief executive Admassu Tadesse expressed delight at the establishment of the ground-breaking partnership between the regional bank and the World Bank.

"We are delighted to establish this ground-breaking new partnership with the World Bank Group - now effectively one of our major strategic funding partners - to advance both regional integration and private sector development in the COMESA and broader eastern and southern Africa region," Tadesse stated.

"It is no doubt further demonstration of the World Bank's strong commitment to Africa in this brave new age of the AfCFTA (Africa Continental Free-Trade Area). With stronger winds beneath our wings, we can look forward to more vigorously push headfirst the SDG and Africa 2063 Agenda, and more efficiently respond to the difficult circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 crisis."

And commenting on the development, Prof Saasa called on Zambia and other regional member countries to take advantage of the funding to improve their economies.

"We have made history yet again yesterday when this decision was made by the World Bank in Washington after protracted, albeit fruitful, discussions. I would like to thank Mr Admassu Tadesse, the president and CEO of TDB, together with his management team in Nairobi, for having championed this effort over the last couple of months. This is another first in Africa and speaks volumes to the ever-growing confidence that TDB, as a multilateral investment-grade development financial institution, continues to receive, globally," stated Prof Saasa.

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WHEN we started writing about the infamous Belarusian businessman Aleksandr Zingman and his association with President Edgar Lungu and Valden Findlay, there was no malice in the questions that we were asking. We were writing and asking questions purely as concerned Zambians. We believe that any well-meaning Zambian who would come across the material we have around this puzzling association would be asking the same questions that News Diggers is asking.

The pictures that we have published today are puzzling and they raise a lot of questions. We have so far published pictures that show that our President had meetings with the Belarusian oligarch, Zingman, on at least four occasions (SO FAR). The question is, what were they discussing? What was the nature of these meetings? Which presidential aides or line ministries were involved in those meetings which the President was having with Mr Zingman and Mr Findlay? These pictures are nothing short of a scandal for our country.

From what we see, the subjects in these pictures seem to be enjoying a very jolly moment. They seem to be having quality time. To us, these pictures do not suggest that the subjects are (business) strangers to one another. In fact, the pictures don't suggest that it was a meeting between a Head of State and two ordinary businessmen; this looks like a moment of merrymaking among pals, close friends, business allies, confidants. It explains why they are not happy to see these pictures in public

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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What's the story behind Lungu, Zingman, Findlay?

domain because they know something is wrong about them.

When we first published our findings on the relationship involving our President, Mr Findlay and Mr Zingman, it was the Belarusian businessman who reacted. Mr Zingman reacted by threatening us with a lawsuit through his UK-based lawyers who did everything possible to intimidate us into retracting our story. They further demanded that we disclose the sources of the said photos. We refused to do that. We saw nothing to retract because all that we published was true and a fair analysis of the information that was available to us.

It is surprising that our government officials who were taking pictures with Mr

Zingman could not respond until we reached out to the Defence Permanent Secretary Mr Sturdy Mwale who saw nothing wrong. Mr Mwale, who leads the ministry that is responsible for managing our country's defence and security, said it was not his duty to check the character of the people that he interacts and deals with. For his part, Mr Zingman insisted that he is a legitimate businessman doing legitimate agricultural business with the government.

Is this what Mr Zingman and Mr Findlay were discussing in the pictures we have published today with our President? What is Mr Findlay's role in these transactions? What about the President himself? What is he doing in these pictures and what role is he playing in the contract that these

businessmen have with the Zambian government? These are legitimate questions that require answers.

The President claims that he is committed to the fight against corruption. If he is sincere, let him tell the nation what deals his government has been doing with Mr Zingman, and why this particular businessman is so special to warrant such a cosy wining and dining treat. How many government contractors does the President go out with for such drink ups? What qualifies a contractor to be honoured in this way? Is it when you win a government tender?

The questions we are asking have not been answered, and this is why we were not moved when Mr Zingman threatened

to sue us. We told him to go ahead and we are still waiting for his court process. We need answers. The questions that we were asking when Mr Zingman threatened to sue us are the same questions that we are asking him now and we would insist to ask the same questions if we appeared before a court of law. And these questions would have to be answered.

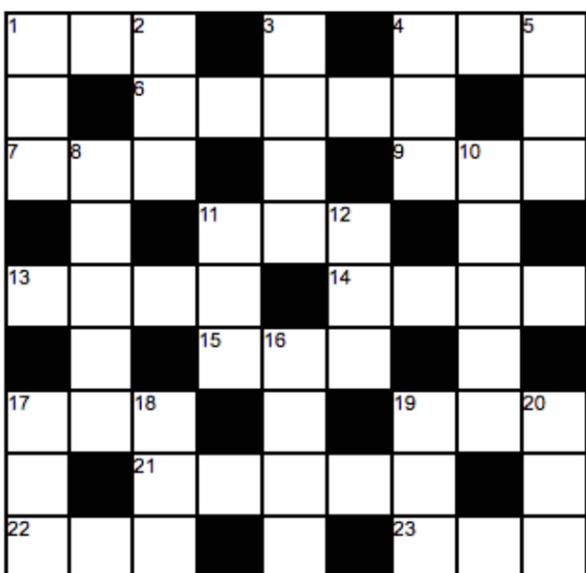
These pictures do not give us the confidence that the affairs of our State are being managed properly. There is something very wrong about a president of a country socialising in the manner that President Lungu seems willing to do. It would be interesting to find out what they were celebrating when they were tossing tu wine utwa lekana lekana. We challenge them, if they believe that

what they were doing is nothing sinister, to give an explanation to the Zambian people over what was happening in those pictures.

It is worrying that government does not share the concern of the average Zambian on this matter because there is cause for worry here. When President Lungu ascended to the office that he now holds, he ceased to be a private individual who could do whatever he likes. Whether you like him or not, he is the President of Zambia, and as Head of State, he is now accountable to the nation for all his activities. In many ways, President Lungu controls the destiny of the nation. The public resources and public institutions of this country are under his charge. His actions could either mean prosperity for the country or disaster. As citizens of Zambia, we have a duty to scrutinise the President's conduct and even the company that he keeps because it affects us. There is nothing private about the company that he keeps.

We believe very strongly that the President of a country is supposed to be the most accountable public official. This is so because his actions have the potential to affect the largest number of people. This Zingman, Findlay affair and what has been happening at the Ministry of Defence will not go away, someone will have to answer for this, sooner or later. They can ignore our questions today and try to intimidate us, but these questions will have to be answered. It is our opinion that these pictures are telling a story so big, but the question is: what is story? We leave that to the Zambian people; let them judge.

Crossword puzzle No 637



“When you work on something that only has the capacity to make you 5 dollars, it does not matter how much harder you work – the most you will make is 5 dollars.”
- idowu koyenikan

- | Across | Down |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Baked fruity dessert | 1. Dispenser candy |
| 4. Indefinitely long time | 2. Psycho's claim |
| 6. Beach find | 3. Assist |
| 7. Shoot with a ray gun | 4. Sprite |
| 9. Cook in a pan | 5. Dissenting vote |
| 11. Secret agent | 8. Spring month |
| 13. Curved structure | 10. Luxurious |
| 14. Poker stake | 11. Feminine pronoun |
| 15. Type of tree | 12. Potato substitute |
| 17. Shrewd | 16. Racing sled |
| 19. Organ of sight | 17. Total |
| 21. Kind of scout | 18. Japanese currency |
| 22. Human males | 19. Slippery fish |
| 23. Fib | 20. 12/24 or 12/31 |

Crossword puzzle No 636



Readers' Feedback

Kabimba's argument that there's no evidence those opposing Bill 10 are in majority

Editor,
 "It's only in court where you cry for evidence and at times induce it on ignorant victims! On this one, you have missed it Bwana!" - Sikabenga Ng'anda

"The few so called good things about Bill 10 aren't as urgent as you make it. Let's talk about Bill 10 when a certain party is in opposition after 2021, if they will still stand for it then we will support it". - Eng Steven Phiri

"Let ECL, Kabimba and friends organise a live debate on all ZNBC channels against just John Sangwa, and KBF and let them hear the Zambians sentiments and their thoughts about Bill 10. For most Zambians bill 10 is badly timed because they simply don't trust the PF. PERIOD!!" - Chishimba Chama

"But there is evidence that those proposing Bill 10 have a hidden agenda...Just they way they are coercing you can tell. Since when did they even care for Zambia. The only care when the outcome benefits them in some ways ..Which normal person can justify the procurement of wheelbarrows at \$1,000,000. If they care can someone tell us the owner of the 48 houses?" - Bias Sichamba

"Winter Kabimba cannot be trusted with issues of the constitution. He is the man who hid the Technical Committee Draft Constitution until the Zambian Watchdog leaked it. He doesn't respect the need for people driven constitution". - John Wilson Sakala II

"If you want to prove your assertions wrong advise your friends to subject it to the referendum then you will see that you are in the wildness". - Harvey Banda

"After poor performance in 2016 Rainbow party has never participated in any

of the by elections now Ba Kabimba which MPs do you want to support bill 10 when you have no MP in Parliament. There is evidence that you are among the minority that are supporting bill ten because you have no representation as Rainbow in Parliament!" - Max Kay

"That's myopic thinking on the part of winter, these are selfish individuals, it's not about minority and majority it's about integrity and honest, get that in mind winter, your bill 10 support is based on the protection of your business that includes your school, we know about that comrade". - Binwell Kunda



EDITOR'S NOTE:

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

Aka on Zambians not being safe with leaders who lack integrity despite having good Constitution

Editor,
 "A good Constitution in the hands of leaders who are not ready to be Accountable, Transparent and Honest with the citizens is just like giving what is holy or pearls to pigs. They will trample upon it and come and tear the people to pieces. That is what President Lungu and PF are doing". - Christopher Kalima

"Kaunda left a good country. Free of tribalism. Zambia is in a better place to prosper than Kenya. Poor leadership and lack of proactive citizens has made Zambia sink deeper". - Apong Kor

"That's correct bo Aka. With the best constitution in the world, if a leader himself/herself lacks integrity people aren't safe in that such a leader can easily manipulate it to suit his/her desires. Abash Bill 10". - Grace Shankaya

Dear editor,
 "It's just surplus on paper... as long as we the majority citizens can not afford a decent meal, cost of both living and doing business is for the elite then the surplus means nothing to a common man like me!" - Ian Malekhanie

"So what???? There is no benefit to us ordinary citizens. There is even a bumper maize harvest but no reduction in mealie meal price". - Daniel Maswahu

"Its just on paper there is no trickle down to the general citizenry suffering amidst this imaginary COVID-19! Even face masks distribution is a problem despite the numerous donations. Zambia the real Africa indeed!" - Gibson Nyoni

Zambia's record of 72.2% rise in trade surplus

"We want it to fight the dolar then we can agree that its true! I am now failing to pay ACCA because the pound is at a price of a dime". - Jairus Musonda

"That is very likely because basically there is simply no cash in Zambia for Citizens, Companies and Government to buy (import) anything from beyond our Boarders. People are just sitted at home. No one is going to Dubai, Tanzania, R.S.A, China etc on business. So what do you expect?" - Innocent Banda

Mulenga's pledge of 10,000 jobs to youths by December

Dear editor,
 "The whole 5 years term you have totally failed to create that 10,000 jobs and you want to do that after seeing that your term is diminishing. What is 10,000?? Do you know how many youths are suffering???" - Francis M Lubinda

"We thank God jobs will fall with rain in December. Draught areas please relocate to flooded areas so that you benefit from the 10,000 jobs promised by our humble Minister!" - Joe Mwale

"The 500 000 made by your leader is still pending, this adding debt unto debt. So it's an inborn trait". - Isaac Sulwe

"Elections are quite the catalysts for 'development' aren't they!!!" - Fareed Inambao

"You failed to deliver in 90 days for nine years now hon minister you want to deliver in four months? kkkkkkkkkkkkkk". - Sylvester Chungu

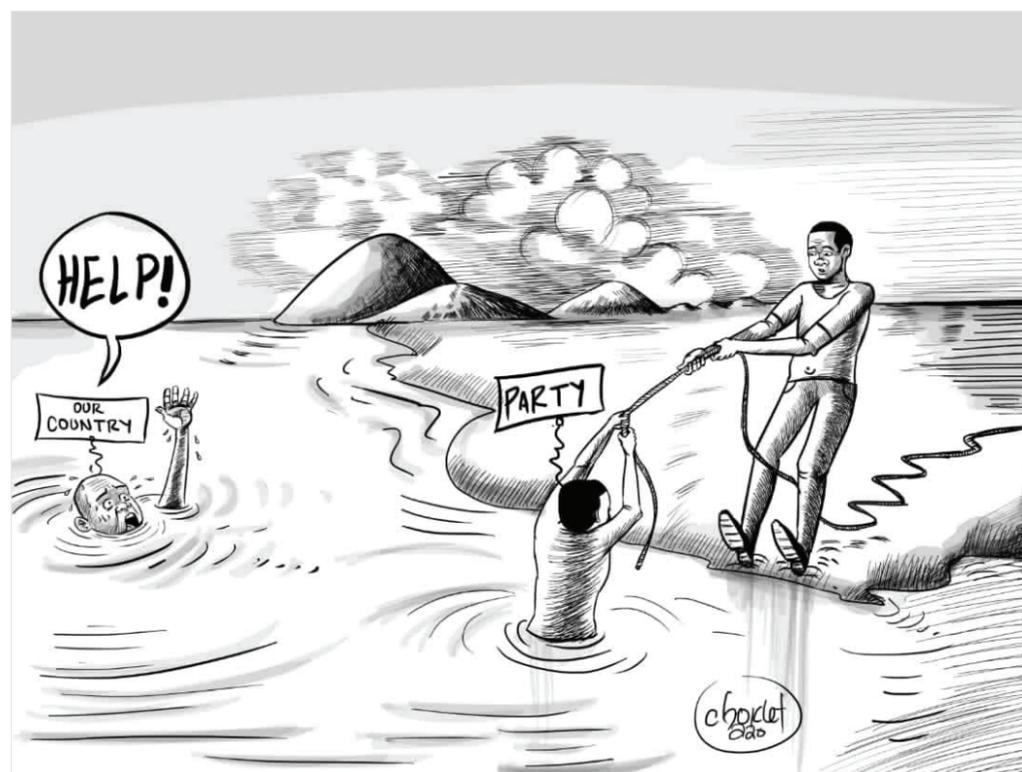
"I can imagine how many jobs could have been created in the past 4years, if they used the same tactics of pledging 10 000 Jobs in 5 months". - Moses Laishi

"Where will those jobs come from when you even fail to own your own gold mine instead you want to sale it? You don't own any industry in your name, even zNBC is owned by Chinese. And then you come here trying to deceive yourself, we the youths are not that dull to believe that nonsense!" - Mukuka Mwila Mike Mpuku

"How does he create such jobs when he doesn't even know he is youth minister in the first place. What he only knows 'Football Minister', where his job description is to 'create a job' for his 'youth' Kalusha Bwalya". - Martin Nyanjagha

"Minister Mulenga has no clue on the subject of job creation judging by the way he made his presentation. Infact according to him, the ministry is still brainstorming the issue. Well what do you expect because being an MP and Minister is his first corporate job other than being a jerabo from age 21". - Trevor Jengajenga

"This is just a trap I know, my fellow disgruntled youths, if you have access to a job please work but remember when voting we are going to use Malawi formula, because this is just like a campaign, when youths complained that is when you started to review all those jobs. Malawi formula should work this time?". - Governor Leonard Kasengo



Dwayne bumps Kylie Jenner from Instagram rich list



WAYNE Johnson has overtaken Kylie Jenner on the Instagram rich list - after Forbes magazine revoked her billionaire title.

According to editors at the publication, the Kylie Cosmetics make-up mogul grossly inflated the value of her company in doctored tax documents to swindle herself onto the magazine's prestigious billionaires list. She has repeatedly denied the allegations.

Kylie's worth was later estimated to be under \$900 million (£730 million), and the damning revelation has impacted other aspects of the star's business - including her earnings from Instagram.

Bosses at Instagram scheduling tool, Hopper HQ, have released its annual Instagram rich list, which revealed the 22-year-old has been knocked off the top spot by Dwayne, after earnings for his posts rocketed by 15 per cent over the past year.

The former wrestler can now scoop more than \$1 million (£800,000) for his uploads, while the amount Kylie rakes in is said to have dwindled by 22 per cent over the same 12-month period.

It's the first time in four years that a Kardashian or Jenner has not dominated the list.

Since quitting wrestling to focus on his acting career, Dwayne has become Hollywood's go-to action star.

The 48-year-old also topped the most recent Forbes actors rich list, raking in a fortune of \$89.4 million over the 2018-2019 period. *PeoplesMagazine*

PEOPLE testing negative for coronavirus antibodies may still have some immunity, a study has suggested.

For every person testing positive for antibodies, two were found to have specific T-cells which identify and destroy infected cells.

This was seen even in people who had mild or symptomless cases of Covid-19.

But it's not yet clear whether this just protects that individual, or if it might also stop them from passing on the infection to others.

Researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden tested 200 people for both antibodies and T-cells.

Some were blood donors while others were tracked down from the group of people first infected in Sweden, mainly returning from earlier affected areas like northern Italy.

This could mean a wider group have some level of immunity to Covid-19 than antibody testing figures, like those published as part of the UK Office for National Statistics

Immunity may be more widespread than tests suggest

Infection Survey, suggest.

It's likely those people did mount an antibody response, but either it had faded or was not detectable by the current tests.

And these people should be protected if they are exposed to the virus for a second time.

Prof Danny Altmann at Imperial College London described the study as "robust, impressive and thorough" and said it added to a growing body of evidence that "antibody testing alone underestimates immunity".

Herd immunity

This doesn't necessarily get us any closer to herd immunity, though, according to assistant professor Marcus Buggert, one of the study's authors.

More analysis needs to be done to understand whether these T-cells provide "sterilising

immunity", meaning they completely block the virus, or whether they might protect an individual from getting sick but not stop them from carrying the virus and transmitting it.

Much of the discussion around Covid-19 immunity has focused on antibodies - Y-shaped proteins which act like "missiles shooting down a target", assistant Prof Buggert explained

They bind to the virus before it can enter your cells, and neutralise it.

If antibodies fail to neutralise the virus, it can enter your cells and turn them into virus-making factories.

T-cells, on the other hand, target already-infected cells and completely destroy them, stopping them from spreading to other, healthy cells.

Meanwhile, People who were seriously ill in hospital with coronavirus need to be

urgently screened for post-traumatic stress disorder, leading doctors say.

The Covid Trauma Response Working Group, led by University College London and involving experts from south-east England, said those who had been in intensive care were most at risk.

The experts said regular check ups should last at least a year.

More than 100,000 people have been treated in hospital for the virus.

The experts say tens of thousands of these would have been seriously ill enough to be at risk of PTSD.

The working group highlighted research which showed 30% of patients who had suffered severe illnesses in infectious disease outbreaks in the past had gone on to develop PTSD, while depression and anxiety problems were also common. *BBC*

Malawi government 'dissolves 60 boards'

THE government in Malawi has dissolved the boards of 60 state corporations, known as parastatals, according to the state broadcaster.

The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation said the dissolution was with immediate effect quoting a statement from the government chief secretary.

Among the dissolved boards is that of the state broadcaster, the communication regulatory authority, the bureau of standards, the electricity supply commission, national examination board, education institute and various medical boards.

The state broadcaster did not give a reason.

Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera, who was sworn in on Sunday, vowed to unite the country and fight poverty.

President Chakwera was elected in a re-run after former president Peter Mutharika's win last year was nullified by the court over irregularities. *BBC*

India officials sorry for Covid body disposal video



OFFICIALS in the south Indian state of Karnataka have apologised after footage showing officials dumping bodies of Covid -19 victims caused outrage.

The videos circulated on social media showed workers in PPE kits tossing bodies wrapped in black garbage bags into deep pits.

Officials in the state's Bellary district confirmed that the footage was genuine and

apologised to families.

The bodies were of eight people who had died of Covid-19 days earlier.

Karnataka has seen more than 246 deaths due to Covid. However, it has been recognised as one of the states that has been more successful in tracing and containing the disease.

"We have issued a letter of unconditional apology to the families of the dead. We are very hurt by this and we are very sorry. We condemn the way corpses have been treated. They should have been treated more humanely," senior district official SS Nakula told BBC Hindi's Imran Qureshi.

"They followed all the protocols. Where they have gone wrong is not the part of the protocol but the mentality that a dead body should be handled with dignity," he added.

He said that the men in the video had been removed, adding that they would be replaced by a new team who would dispose of bodies "with sensitivity".

There has been a lot of fear and stigma surrounding Covid-19 in India. People who contract the illness are stigmatised and shunned, while their bodies are often disposed of as health workers are afraid to touch them.

With almost 600,000 confirmed cases, India has the fourth-highest number of Covid infections in the world. *BBC*



Traffic on the railway between Ivory Coast's biggest city, Abidjan, and Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, was halted on Friday after a landslide. It left 13 people dead in Anyama just north of Abidjan and At least 20 houses were also swept away following days of heavy rain.

THE Queen and US President Donald Trump have spoken on the telephone, ahead of US Independence Day on Saturday.

It is not known how long the pair spoke for, but the White House said Mr Trump wished the Queen a happy birthday after her official celebration last month.

He also expressed his condolences for those who have died during the coronavirus, the White House added.

The talks come six months since they last met at Buckingham Palace, at a reception celebrating 70 years of Nato.

The Queen has spoken on the telephone to several leaders during the virus lockdown, including French president Emmanuel Macron, Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison and Canada's Justin Trudeau.

Calls of this nature are made at the request of the government, in what is known as "soft diplomacy", to help strengthen Britain's ties with

Queen and Trump speak on phone

her allies.

"The president wished the Queen a happy birthday, marking 94 extraordinary years," said the White House. "The president also expressed his condolences for the British people who have lost their lives during the coronavirus pandemic."

The Queen celebrated her 94th birthday in April, but it was officially celebrated earlier this month with a ceremony at Windsor Castle.

The White House added: "The president and the Queen discussed close co-operation on defeating the virus and reopening global economies."

"The president and the Queen also reaffirmed that the United States and United Kingdom stand together in our special relationship and will emerge from this trying time stronger than ever before."

The Royal Family said on

Twitter: "Today, The Queen spoke to President Trump by telephone from Windsor Castle ahead of Independence Day in the United States on the 4th July."

It added that the telephone call was the "latest in a series" that the monarch has held in recent months

Their conversation comes ahead of US Independence Day celebrations on 4 July. The day marks the date in 1776 when Americans broke away from being ruled by the British, who had been on the continent since the 16th Century.

A White House event is being



The Queen and Mr Trump first met in 2018

By Abraham Kalito
 NATIONAL team coach Milutin Sredojevic, popularly known as Micho, says the postponement of the AfCON from 2021 to 2022 implies an opportunity for Zambia to fight for competitive advantage and take charge of matters instead of waiting for things to happen.

And Micho says Chipolopolo stars Patson Daka and Enock Mwepu should seek new challenges, saying the duo have been exposed enough to play in any competition.

On Tuesday, CAF announced that the AfCON tournament scheduled for 2021 in Cameroon will be held a year later, adding that the African Nations Championship tournament

AfCON deferral is to our benefit – Micho

would kick-off in January 2020 instead of this year.

Micho said during a press briefing in Lusaka, Wednesday, that the changes mean that Zambia would have a chance to fight for competitive advantage.

“Our intention is to fight for competitive advantage and that competitive advantage is what Chipolopolo is supposed to have. It’s something that

we are fighting for and in relation to that, we are looking forward to provide, before the competition starts, goalkeeping coaching course for Premier league and first division teams because we are having with us someone who is also an instructor who has worked in 7 countries for 23 years and made many goalkeepers who are in the UEFA Champions league. So, we want to

use his presence to make comprehensive goalkeeping coaching course and to make a direction where Zambian goalkeeping is supposed to go,” Micho said.

“And then we shall have a course of video analysis. And we got caught with yesterday’s decision of CAF, moving CHAN to January 2021 and AFCON to 2022. When someone asks what this means to us, I will just

say it means to us, we are fighting for competitive advantage, meaning we have no right to wait for things...but we want to make things happen. I can assure you that our team will be very competitive and ready to represent Zambia and Zambian football. We want to take the maximum points from Botswana and Zimbabwe that will take us to 2022 in Cameroon.

I believe that Zambian football is always supposed to be on the top five on the continent.”

Meanwhile, Micho says Daka and Mwepu are ready for bigger challenges in their football career.

“We want to congratulate Patson Daka and Mwepu for winning the Austrian league, we want to keep that winning mentality with us,” said Micho.



Lionel Messi takes on Atletico Madrid defenders during their 2-2 draw at the Camp Nou on Tuesday

Mourinho: You expect Kane to score more – that’s his fault

TOTTENHAM boss Jose Mourinho feels the expectation for Harry Kane to score more goals than he is currently managing is his own fault, having set his own lofty standards since establishing himself as one of the most feared strikers in football.

Kane was back in action for Spurs after the Premier League returned following the coronavirus-enforced break and has scored one goal in two games since the restart.

But Kane has been singled out for some criticism regardless, with fans expecting more from a proven finisher.

Mourinho, however, was quick to point out that his

star man has only recently returned to the pitch following a bad hamstring tear, having picked up that injury on New Year’s Day.

“In the game before the goal [against West Ham], I think it was minute 60, we had a defensive corner that Dele Alli cleared with a header and Harry Kane was in the box on a defensive corner,” the Portuguese boss started.

“I think 10 or 11 seconds later, he was in front of [West Ham goalkeeper Lukasz] Fabianski with a left-footed shot that was almost a goal at the far post.

“You expect Harry to score more than one goal in two matches – that’s his fault. He created this expectation for you. So when the guy doesn’t score many goals you think there’s a crisis, but there is no crisis, there’s an improvement.”

Another area of his squad that has been pleasing Mourinho is his defence, who recorded their first clean sheet in 10 games across all competitions when they beat the Hammers 2-0 in their previous encounter.

“The defensive organisation is not just about the keeper and the back three or back four,” he said. “It’s about the team.

“Speaking about the defensive organisation of my team, I want to speak about my attacking players - the way they close spaces and respect organisation, the way they are learning to defend zonally.

“We are improving. I hope we are not saying this and then in the next two or three matches we concede a lot of goals. Hopefully the stats and the numbers are helping us, but our feeling is that we are improving, we are more stable and the team is getting better. **GOAL**

Klopp’s management style ‘a benefit for the world’, says Man City boss Guardiola

MANCHESTER City boss Pep Guardiola admires the way Jurgen Klopp’s clubs play football, stating that Liverpool’s high-pressing, all-action approach to games is “a benefit for the world”.

Guardiola’s City beat the Reds to the Premier League title last season by a solitary point, but were ultimately blown away in the 2019-20 campaign as Klopp’s well-oiled machine rolled their way to glory for the first time since 1990.

Both teams are widely regarded to be the best the English top tier has to offer ahead of the clubs going head to head on Thursday, with many more hotly-contested clashes between the sides bound to go ahead in the future.

Guardiola, however, insists that he continues to have a positive relationship

with the man who is considered to be his closest rival in terms of managerial prowess.

“As a human being first, I don’t know him that well,” the Catalan coach told a press conference. “We had dinner together once. I admire him, the way his teams in Liverpool and Dortmund, this type of football that his teams produce always is a benefit for world football.

“It is a massive, positive thing to try and always score goals. Jurgen is a big, big example for this. He wants to win and I want to win but when it is finished the game is over, it is done. He is my colleague and after my career I want to have a good relationship with all the managers.”

Asked if City have a point to prove against Liverpool, Guardiola added: “In sport,

you have to prove [a point] every time. We are incredibly satisfied with what we have done and what we are doing but for athletes it is never enough.

“The past is the past, memories, but the show must go on. It’s a new chapter in our lives and we have to live it.”

While the Premier League

title has been wrapped up, City are still in the hunt for Champions League and FA Cup glory, with ties against Real Madrid and Arsenal to come in those competitions.

And Guardiola feels that the best way to ensure progression on both fronts is to gain momentum in the league.

“We have a lot of time

to think about the Premier League,” he said. “Tomorrow is an important game and we want a good performance. We want to take a result [against Liverpool] and against Southampton to arrive at the best condition for Arsenal [in the FA Cup].

“The best way to do this is to play well in the Premier League.” **GOAL**





PORTUGUESE CLUB EYES SHONGA

By Abraham Kalito
THE Portuguese Primeira Liga club, CS Maritimo has inquired for the services of 'out of favour' Orlando Pirates star Justin Shonga whose contract at that club is reportedly coming to an end.

Shonga's representative Karabo Mathang confirmed that the club contacted

her to inquire about the availability of the Chipolopolo forward.

But Mathang said the onus is on the Primeira Liga club to contact the Soweto-

based giants because Shonga still has a running contract with Orlando

Pirates. Shonga's former agent Michael Ngobeni had stated that the Zambian would be a free agent beyond June 30, but Mathang, who claims to be the lawful representative, said the contract was still running.

She said she had advised the Portuguese club to approach the Premier Soccer League club and inquire about the services of the 28-year-old.

"There has been an enquiry for Shonga from

Maritimo in Portugal. However, the decision rests with Orlando Pirates, where he currently has a contract. The onus is on the interested party to approach his club and then we can take it from there," said Mathang.

Shonga's game time at the club has reasonably diminished and he has reportedly been forced to look for new challenges elsewhere.

A number of clubs have since been courting the Zambian international.



Madrid have won nothing yet - Zidane

ZINEDINE Zidane is adamant the title race is far from over in La Liga, insisting Real Madrid "have won absolutely nothing" yet despite Barcelona's recent wobble.

Leaders Madrid hold a one-point lead over their arch-rivals and also have a game in hand against Getafe to take in on Thursday, where they will be aiming to make it six successive wins since the 2019-20 season resumed in Spain.

In contrast, Barca have struggled for consistency in recent weeks. The reigning champions drew for a third time in four outings on Tuesday, twice pegged back by Atletico Madrid in a frustrating 2-2 stalemate at Camp Nou.

Having picked up four points in the two Clasico contests during the campaign, giving them the added buffer of the head-to-head advantage, the Blancos are now firm favourites to finish on top.

Zidane, however, is refusing to take anything for granted.

"We haven't won anything [yet]," the Madrid boss told a press conference on Wednesday. "We have six games. Eighteen points."

"Until we are mathematically champions, we have to keep going, our rivals are going to do everything they can to win their games."

"No confidence and no saying, 'this is over'."

"I've experienced this situation as a player. We have won absolutely nothing."

A goal from Casemiro was enough for Zidane's side to overcome struggling Espanyol 1-0 at the weekend, boosting their bid to win the league for the first time since 2017.

With neighbours Atletico helping them out by holding Barca, Madrid have the opportunity to move four points clear at the summit when they face fifth-placed Getafe. **GOAL**

Griezmann's brief Barca cameo leaves Simeone speechless

ATLETICO Madrid head coach Diego Simeone said he is "without words" amid Antoine Griezmann's struggles at Barcelona. Griezmann was a 90th-minute substitute against former team Atletico, who earned a 2-2 draw away to stuttering Barca in La Liga on Tuesday.

A €120 million (£108m/\$134m) signing from Atletico at the start of the season, Griezmann arrived amid much hype but the star forward has struggled at Camp Nou, where he has started on the bench against Sevilla and Athletic Club in recent weeks.

Griezmann has scored eight La Liga goals this season and 14 across all competitions for second-placed Barca, who could fall four points adrift of bitter rivals

Real Madrid on Thursday. However, Griezmann has not scored since Barca's 1-1 draw against Napoli in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie prior to the coronavirus pandemic in February.

Asked about Griezmann, Simeone told Movistar: "I'm without words."

Diego Costa's 11th-minute own goal had put Barca ahead before Saul Niguez's penalty restored parity for Atletico eight minutes later.

Lionel Messi converted a penalty of his own five minutes into the second half to celebrate his 700th career goal, but another Saul spot-kick - in the 62nd minute - secured a draw for Atletico.

It is the first time Atletico have scored

two goals against Barca in La Liga under Simeone, whose side are third and two points clear of Sevilla with five matches remaining.

"We are respectful of Barcelona with the quality they have," Simeone said.

"The game was played as a result of what we usually do. We started well. Their goal came in an isolated play. Then to generate a difficult game against a team that keep the ball well."

"We tried until the end. The work was very good, a very competitive team. I'm happy."

Setien admitted he felt bad for Griezmann after the match but revealed he wary of introducing the Frenchman as he can 'destabilise' his team. **GOAL**