



Kambwili's seat vacant - Speaker

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini has declared Chishimba Kambwili's Roan parliamentary seat vacant. Dr Matibini said this in parliament, Wednesday, when he made a ruling on a point of order which was raised by Eastern Province

Minister Makebi Zulu last week, seeking the speaker's ruling on whether or not Kambwili was in order to continue being in the House as Roan PF member of parliament when he was at the same time claiming to be NDC leader as well as a member of the opposition political parties Alliance.

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Felix Mutati confers with MMD member of parliament Raphael Nakacinda during a party mobilisation meeting in Kafue - Picture courtesy of MMD media team

Opposition Alliance kicks out PAC's Andyford Banda

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CK STILL POPULAR

- MUSENGE

...people want him to be President

By Thomas Mulenga

Suspended National Democratic Congress (NDC) party secretary general Mwenya Musenge says Chishimba Kambwili remains a very popular politician in Zambia and many people would like him to be President one day. And Musenge says NDC is his brain child which he cannot sell to the Patriotic Front for any pieces

of silver, adding that the party has still not yet formally informed him about the 21-day suspension. In an interview, Wednesday, Musenge explained that although Kambwili used disparaging remarks against him following their party differences, he still feels the former chief government spokesperson is popular among voters who want him as President.

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IBA gives Prime TV a 14-day ultimatum to apologize to Mwila

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

IBA Director General Josephine Mapoma has given Prime Television a 14-day ultimatum to apologize to PF Secretary General Davies Mwila for what she terms as "biased reportage". Mapoma, in her correspondence with Prime TV, asked the TV station to also hold an in-house training session to teach its staff basic journalism ethics, principles and script writing.

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5 Zambians lose R185,000 in SA online purchase

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

The Zambian High Commission in South Africa has reported that five Zambian nationals, among them civil servants, farmers and businessmen have been swindled in Pretoria through various online payment systems.

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Govt needs predictable economic policies to attract FDI, says Foote

By Thomas Mulenga

United States Ambassador to Zambia Daniel Foote says in order for local businesses to grow, there is need for stable and predictable economic policies. And Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Christopher Yaluma says investors from other countries are being attracted to invest in Zambia because

the country remains politically stable and upholds democracy. Speaking during a cocktail reception in honour of a visiting American business delegation at the U.S. Embassy in Lusaka, Tuesday, Ambassador Foote explained that in order for businesses to grow and thrive in Zambia, there was need for predictable economic policies.

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Govt not coordinated, observes Lungu

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Some Zambians can't afford K250 for electric grid connection - Nkhuwa

By Mirriam Chabala

Energy Minister Mathew Nkhuwa says Zesco Plc is always faced with the task of mobilising finances to cover up the gap in financing requirements for new connections, leading to delays in connecting power to applicants' premises. Nkhuwa has, however, regretted that most people in rural areas do not have the financial resources to get their houses connected to electricity due to lack of sustainable income-generating ventures, but committed that government will empower rural communities economically. He was responding to a question from Chipili Independent member of parliament Jewis Chabi, who wanted to know what the total number of applicants that had paid for electricity connections in Eastern; Muchinga; Northern; and Luapula provinces were. In his question, Chabi also requested that Nkhuwa explain when the connections to the applicants' premises would commence and what the cause of the delay in connecting power was. In response, Nkhuwa said existing new connections charges that did not cover the actual full cost of effecting the connections was the cause because it was usually incurred by Zesco. "Government through Zesco is currently implementing projects across the entire country to increase national access to electricity supply in line with the aspirations enshrined in the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). Through this initiative, it is envisioned that the quality of life for a large number of citizens, especially in the rural areas, will be uplifted as electricity is a key enabler for any meaningful, developmental economic activities. The following are the total numbers of paid-up applications for electricity connections: Eastern Province, 4,033;

Muchinga Province has 2,137; Northern Province has 729; Luapula has 1,222. Government through Zesco endeavours to connect paid-up customers for new connections within a period of 90 days from the date of payment. Hence, Zesco is currently in a process of effecting new connections for customers falling in this category," Nkhuwa explained. "However, various constraints have contributed to the delays in effecting new connections for customers falling in the category of 90 days from the date of payment. The cause of delay in connecting power to the applicants' premises has maybe been due to existing new connection charges that do not cover the actual full cost of effecting the same; that is usually incurred by Zesco. Zesco is always faced with the task of mobilising finances from other sources to cover up the gap in financing requirements for the new connections. Consultations with relevant stakeholders to effect cost reflective connection charges are currently in progress in order to create sustainability in the long-term. However, in short, medium-term, you may wish to note that Zesco has managed to mobilise financial resources to the tune of US \$8 million to cover the financial gap of effecting new connections countrywide. A project to implement this initiative has already been packaged and is currently being implemented. This is envisaged to effectively accelerate the connection rate." He also disclosed that cooperating partners such as World Bank and JICA were helping Zesco through grants to increase the electricity and access rate through a project called 'Increase Access to Electricity Supply'. But in a follow up question, leader of the opposition in the House Jack Mwiimbu,

who is also Monze Central UPND member of parliament, claimed that Zesco was restricting the number people accessing the connection of power under the World Bank-funded project. "Madam Speaker, arising from the answer that has been given by the Minister of Energy, I would like to find out from him why Zesco has been restricting the number of people who are supposed to access the connection of power under the World Bank-funded project. We have received a

letter through REA (Rural Electrification Authority) where they have indicated to us various areas including Luapula; Northern, Eastern and Southern provinces. But we are encountering problems where they are refusing to accept people to pay a subsidized fee under the World Bank-funded project, what is the problem, Mr minister?" asked Mwiimbu. But in response, Nkhuwa dismissed Mwiimbu's claims. "I don't think there is anything in that line. I

remember one time I went to Southern Province and we did commission some electricity grid and we told the people right there that this is a charge that they are going to pay: K250 instead of K1,700. And as far as I am concerned, that is the position of government," he replied. Meanwhile, Nkhuwa regretted that most people in rural areas had no resources to allow them to get their houses connected to electric grid. "I will give you a typical example of Shiwangandu

where we put one megawatt of a mini hydro and for about two years, the off-take has been about 25 per cent. Basically, people don't have the little K250 to put on top of that. So, from where we are sitting, we know that we need to do a little more for the people of Zambia so that they can start earning; like the work that the government is doing to introduce farming blocks so that people can start earning money and then they will be able to have access to electricity," observed Nkhuwa.

Eliboma salutes Lungu, guns for East PF chairmanship

By Mirriam Chabala

Eastern Province PF aspiring Provincial Chairman Elias Daka says the decision by President Edgar Lungu to nullify his expulsion, together with Petauke's Emmanuel (Jay Jay) Banda shows that the Patriotic Front stands on democracy. Addressing a press briefing, Wednesday, in Chipata where he also announced his candidature for the position of Provincial Chairman in the upcoming PF intra-party elections, Daka who is fondly referred to as Eliboma, thanked President Lungu for intervening in his predicament. On Wednesday last week, outgoing Eastern Province PF Chairman Andrew Lubusha expelled Banda and Daka, alleging that the duo had breached the party constitution. Lubusha further alleged that the expulsion was arrived at after a central Committee meeting and instructions from party secretary general Davies Mwila,

when in fact his actions had no blessing of the party Secretariat. "I would like firstly to thank his His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu for his quick intervention to lift the expulsion. This has proven that he is on top of things to promote intra party democracy and protect the rights of members. Secondly, I would like to thank the Secretary General of the mighty party, the Patriotic Front, Honourable Davies Mwila and the Central Committee for supporting the intra party democracy by lifting this suspension. Sir, you have proven that PF is a democratic party that operates and stands on democracy," said Daka. "I would like to appeal to Patriotic Front members in the Province to remain calm and united for the good cause of the mighty Patriotic Front as we look forward a free, fair and democratic intra - party

election from constituency, district and the Province. These elections are not meant to divide us but to strengthen and grow the party in readiness for the 2021 general elections. May I also take this opportunity to announce my candidature for the position of Provincial Chairman for the inter party elections in Eastern Province. I have drawn this inspiration from the overwhelming support and encouragement from the general members, that is the Church; the business community; and the party members at large." On Tuesday after President Lungu nullified the expulsions, Lubusha told the press during a briefing in Chipata that he did not follow the party constitution guidelines when he decided to expel Daka and Banda. "I received an instruction from the Secretary General, he told

me yesterday (Tuesday) to immediately lift the suspension for Mr Emmanuel (Jay) Banda and Mr Elias Daka and refer the matter to the Constituency. Therefore we have referred the matter to the constituency Chairman Mr Mutangwala and the constituency Chairman for Petauke central to handle the matter. We have therefore withdrawn the earlier letters of expulsion because the laid down procedures as per our party constitution demands that an accused must be given an opportunity to be heard before a decision is made, and that was not done. My letter of retraction was clearly instructing me to effect that directive, which I did. So that's the current situation. But all in all, the expulsion has been withdrawn with immediate effect and we've declared them null and void," said Lubusha.

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By Thomas Mulenga


United States Ambassador to Zambia Daniel Foote says in order for local businesses to grow, there is need for stable and predictable economic policies. And Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Christopher Yaluma says investors from other countries are being attracted to invest in Zambia because the country remains politically stable and upholds democracy. Speaking during a cocktail reception in honour of a visiting American business delegation at the U.S. Embassy in Lusaka, Tuesday, Ambassador Foote explained that in order for businesses to grow and thrive in Zambia, there was need for predictable economic policies. The US Envoy noted that while the country remained stable, there is still much work to be done to attract large, diverse sources of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). “I want to highlight the important role that government plays in facilitating business and economic activity. Businesses need an enabling environment of stable and predictable economic policies that allows them to plan for short and long-term business cycles and cost-out returns on investment. Businesses need fair and transparent procurement practices and policies. I have spoken with many of the government ministers here tonight about this issue. While Zambia has been known as a welcoming and stable country, much work remains to attract large and diverse sources of foreign investment,” said Ambassador Foote. And speaking at the same event, Yaluma said investors had continued to invest in Zambia because they were attracted to its stable political environment. He noted that the Zambian economy had continued growing with a stable Growth Domestic Product (GDP) of between 4 per cent to 5 per cent in the recent past. “Let me take this opportunity to assure investors that have come to explore investment and partnership opportunities in various sectors of the economy, that Zambia is one of the better places for investment due to its political stability; peace and democracy; adherence to the rule of law; investment guarantees and security; attractive investment incentives; abundant natural resources presenting excellent

Zambia needs predictable economic policies to attract FDI - Foote

investment and trade opportunities and duty-free access to regional, wider African, European Union and US markets. To support investment in the manufacturing sector, my Ministry, through the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), offers a number of incentives. Investors who invest not less than US \$500,000 in the Multi-Facility Economic Zones (MFEZ), industrial parks or any priority sector, there is a zero per cent tax rate on dividends for five years, zero per cent tax rate on profits for five years and zero per cent import duty rate on capital equipment and machinery for five years,” Yaluma said. “In the recent past, Zambia has experienced a steady growth in GDP ranging from 4 per cent to 5 per cent. This economic growth has placed our country on a positive spotlight for investors and entrepreneurs from across the globe as one of the preferred investment destinations. In addition, Zambia has continued to perform well in terms of the Ease of Doing Business. According to the World Bank’s 2019 Doing Business Report, Zambia is ranked 87th out of 190 economies of the world.” He said that Zambia was among the top 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that were profiled as being easy to do business in. “The Government of the Republic of Zambia recognises the pivotal role the private sector plays in advancing the achievement of the economic sustainable development agenda. You may wish to note that, currently, government is implementing private sector development reforms, which are aimed at creating a conducive business environment, thereby, increasing trade and investments. This is in line with the 7th National Development Plan whose major objective is to create a diversified and resilient economy for sustained growth,” said Yaluma. “I am very happy to note that this is working very well for Zambia as evidenced by a number of investments being undertaken topping Zambia as one of the best investment destinations in sub-Saharan Africa and ranking among the top 10 reformers in Africa on the Ease to Doing Business Index. This milestone has been achieved through business reforms alongside meaningful and attractive investment opportunities and incentives for both local and foreign investors. These reforms include: online business registration, streaming and automation of key business service delivery points like the online tax system, regulatory services centres and decentralization of key functions from the central government to the local authorities.”



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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

IBA Director General Josephine Mapoma has given Prime Television a 14-day ultimatum to apologize to PF Secretary General Davies Mwila for what she terms as “biased reportage”. Mapoma, in her correspondence with Prime TV, asked the TV station to also hold an in-house training session to teach its staff basic journalism ethics, principles and news script writing. She has also since invited the TV network to a hearing, Thursday, at 11:00 hours in the IBA boardroom. “We are in receipt of a letter dated 18th February, 2019, from the Patriotic Front Secretary General Mr Davies Mwila in which he complained of a biased and unethical reportage as captioned above. The complaint was escalated to the Authority by the Patriotic Front Secretary General after not been satisfied with your response in your letter dated 16th February, 2019. The complaint made reference to how your news bulletin on 9th February, 2019, was inaccurate, biased, unethical, inflammatory,

IBA directs *Prime TV* to apologize to Mwila within 14 days

sensational and misleading. We wish to mention that the allegations levelled against your station are serious and the Authority investigated the complaint in accordance with the IBA Act of 2002 Section 33 to 38, which provide the procedure for lodging and resolving complaints against broadcasting stations. The Authority is satisfied that the complaint is justified,” Mapoma stated, in a letter to Prime TV proprietor Gerald Shawa. She stated that after investigating Mwila’s complaints about the TV station, it was concluded that Prime TV had made several breaches of the IBA Act as well as its own editorial guidelines. “The Authority did find that the 19:30 hours Prime TV news of 9th February, 2019, had several breaches to the IBA Act as well as the station’s

own Editorial Guidelines. For example, the headline ‘UPND Leader Hakainde Hichilema’s life is still in danger in Western Province where State police and Patriotic Front cadres fired live ammunition at the UPND entourage and supporters on Friday.’ [That headline] was sensational and likely to incite violence. The headline and the story had the potential to cause supporters of the UPND to be angered and rise against the police and the Patriotic Front members. The story was not balanced in the sense that it shows no other side of the story. This is to mean that the Patriotic Front’s voice was missing and the coverage lacked evidence to show that the station even attempted to speak to the Patriotic Front,” she argued. Mapoma directed Prime TV to write a letter of

apology to Mwila as well as to copy in the Authority. “In view of the above, the Authority hereby directs you to write a letter of apology to the complainant, which must be copied to us. We expect this letter of apology to be executed within fourteen days. In addition, based on the provisions of the IBA Act of 2002, particularly Section 5 (2) (F), which sanctions the Authority to issue to any or all broadcasters, advisory opinion relating to broadcasting stations and ethical conduct in broadcasting, we wish to advise

as follows: (a) Your quest for content or scoop should not at any time be at the expense of verifying facts; (b) Your headlines and news stories should not be sensational and biased; (c) Your news stories and sources must not be backed by facts and must be credible; and (d) You may wish to consider having an in-house training on basic journalism ethics and principles and news script writing,” she advised. And Mapoma advised Prime TV to make peace with Mwila for the good of the community they both serve.

Meanwhile, Mapoma stated that an analysis of the TV station’s news bulletins and “Oxygen of Democracy” programme recordings revealed a lot of unprofessionalism. “Analysis of submitted Prime TV news bulletins and Oxygen of Democracy Programme recordings has revealed presence of the following unprofessional elements: opinionated news; unbalanced coverage; material likely to incite violence and use of derogatory/unpalatable language,” stated Mapoma.

Kachingwe’s son should prove his innocence at ICC, insists Katuka

By Thomas Mulenga

UPND secretary general Steven Katuka says Major Richard Kachingwe should not expect the Opposition Alliance to spare his son from the list of people that it intends to drag to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for allegedly being involved in violence in Sesheke on the basis that he was a UPND member. In a statement, Tuesday, Katuka stated that Major Kachingwe should instead advise his son, Mpange, to prove his innocence before the ICC once he is taken there. “As a member of the Opposition Alliance, we wish to take great exception to Mr. Kachingwe’s unfair

accusations of president Hichilema and the UPND over his son Mpange Kachingwe’s involvement in the Sesheke political violence. If Major Kachingwe believes his son was mistakenly identified in the political violence, the ICC will acquit him. It is our considered view that we do not leave any stone un-turned as we bring the matter before the ICC,” Katuka stated. “Perhaps Mr Kachingwe wanted us to leave out his son on account of him being UPND. Unfortunately, this ICC issue has no regard for a relative, but will focus on those involved in the Sesheke violence and

attempted assassination of president Hakainde Hichilema where live ammunition were fired, and all those who have led to the loss of life of our fellow citizens, persecution of political opponents, and all those involved in State-sponsored militia as presented by the Opposition Alliance. When a relative is involved in criminal activity, he should be regarded as a criminal and not a relative.” Katuka advised Major Kachingwe against “cleansing” his son through a press briefing. “The issue of the ICC has nothing to do with Kachingwe’s son alone, but has everything to do with justice, human rights and the rule of law. Instead of Mr. Kachingwe cleansing his son through a press briefing, we urge him to prove his innocence at the ICC. The son and the PF officials will not be the first ones to be indicted to under the Roman Statute. Further, public self-cleansing will not deter us from going ahead with our quest for justice,” Katuka stated. And Katuka noted that the UPND would remember Major Kachingwe for his efforts in marketing Hichilema. “As a party, we shall remember Major Kachingwe for having authored a book titled: “The Making of a President,” in which he explained what makes president Hichilema the next President of Zambia. We thank him for his efforts to market HH. Major Richard Kachingwe appeared to believe in HH, but is this time, off the mark. We wish Major Kachingwe well in his new political career,” noted Katuka.

5 Zambians lose R185,000 in S/Africa fraudulent online transactions

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

The Zambian High Commission in South Africa has reported that five Zambian nationals, among them civil servants, farmers and businessmen have been swindled in Pretoria through various online payment systems. First Secretary for Press and Public Relations at the Zambian High Commission in that country Naomi Nyawali confirmed the development, Wednesday, revealing that the victims had been swindled monies amounting to over 185,000 South African Rands. She stated that victims who were swindled on different occasions while trying to purchase various goods online, had since reported to the High Commission in Pretoria. “According to the documentation made available

to the Zambian High Commission in Pretoria, one of the five people lost over R100,000, which was paid for the purchase of a second-hand John Deere tractor and trailer. Others lost various amounts of R45,000 and about R6,000 meant for purchases of motor vehicles and Turkey birds respectively,” Nyawali disclosed. And Zambia’s High Commissioner to South Africa Emmanuel Mwamba warned all would-be online buyers of goods from that country to verify the existence of the companies they intend to do business with before making any payments. The Envoy revealed that the Mission in Pretoria had been overwhelmed with reports of Zambians being swindled while trying to purchase goods from that country.

Banks will maintain high interest rates – BAZ

By Stuart Lisulo

Interest rates on loan facilities offered by commercial banks are likely to remain elevated at over 20 per cent because government continues to crowd out the private sector, says the Bankers’ Association of Zambia (BAZ). But the Association has disclosed that the Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) ratio has marginally improved to 10.2 per cent by the start of 2019 from 11 per cent by the end of 2018. In an interview, BAZ chief executive officer Leonard Mwanza explained that interest rates on loan facilities are likely to remain elevated at over 20 per cent due to government’s continued borrowing of credit, which had the effect of crowding out the private sector, and constraining access to credit. Bank of Zambia (BoZ) data shows that commercial banks’ average nominal lending rates edged up to 23.6 per cent by end of the fourth quarter of last year from 23 per cent by September 30, 2018. The central bank’s data revealed that elevated lending rates had

negatively affected credit growth in the local economy during the fourth quarter of last year compared to previous quarter, a situation which even restricted government’s access to credit on the market. “Quite right, they (interest rates) will still remain elevated in those margins, with further pressure that might emanate from the risk-free rate in terms of the interest rates that are going towards government securities because that in itself is an alternative way of lending. Banks, the public, are now lending to government at quite elevated levels. Right now, banks are happy to place their funds on securities, which are fetching the same rate as the lending rate,” Mwanza said. “So, for now, if you were to be in the shoes of a (commercial) bank, it’s much easier to just sit back and pump money into government securities, which are giving you an equivalent return as you would get from lending out to the private sector. So, what it is; I would rather lend to government and get the 23 per cent (interest rate)

and not focus on whether the lending rate should increase or not, for now.” He explained that interest rates remained primarily influenced by commercial banks’ decision to lend more to government rather than the private sector because the former was less risky. “The lending aspect is going more towards supporting the fiscal need on securities. That is why, if you look at lending itself from an aggregate perspective, lending has been flat for much of the time, whilst lending to government has been on the increase,” Mwanza explained. “The question of (interest rates) either increasing or reducing is always difficult one to give a good answer to. Yes, the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) has been consistent at 9.75 per cent, which is good for monetary stability. But when you further interrogate, there is a problem coming from the fiscus side: the rates on securities, that is government bonds and Treasury Bills, are quite high considering where the lending rates are because you are now able to lend to government at 23 per cent

for one-year T-Bills, and 23-24 per cent for government bonds. So, that is what may be a threat in terms of whether we will see interest rates coming down in the short to medium-term period.” But Mwanza, a former Natsave managing director, revealed that the NPLs ratio had improved to around 10.2 per cent as an industry average from 11 per cent by the end of last year. This indicates that there have been fewer loan defaults registered by commercial banks of individual borrowers of credit. An NPL is a loan which the borrower is not making interest payments or repaying any principal. At that point the loan is classified as non-performing by the commercial bank and becomes a “bad debt”. “As at end of last year, NPLs had improved to 11 per cent, but we have seen a better improvement end of January to somewhere around 10.2 per cent so that’s quite a positive improvement, but it’s not good enough, especially that the minimum threshold is supposed to be below 10 per cent,” said Mwanza.

By Thomas Mulenga

Suspended National Democratic Congress (NDC) party secretary general Mwenya Musenge says Chishimba Kambwili remains a very popular politician in Zambia and many people would like him to be President one day. And Musenge says NDC is his brain child which he cannot sell to the Patriotic Front for any pieces of silver, adding that the party has still not yet formally informed him about the 21-day suspension. In an interview, Wednesday, Musenge explained that although Kambwili used disparaging remarks against him following their party differences, he still fills the former chief government spokesperson is popular and deserves to lead Zambia in future. He explained that he did not expel

Kambwili remains popular, people want him to be President - Musenge

Kambwili from the party, but that he only terminated his consultancy contract, which he signed in his capacity as party secretary general. “I want to put it very clear that I never suspended anybody, I never expelled anybody. It is the preserve of the central committee to suspend or expel an individual from the party. I am secretary general. What I did was to terminate the contract that the party entered into with

Honourable Kambwili when we wanted him to help us, as we were starting the party. You know, people hire consultants to help them do a number of things; you can hire a consultant when building a house or, indeed, anything, and that’s what we did when we were starting the party. We said let him come and help us, as someone who has been in the political arena for a long time,” Musenge explained.

Asked if he still thought Kambwili would make a good Republican President, Musenge said the former Roan PF member of Parliament who lost his seat yesterday, remained his popular “brother” whom people would like to elect President. “I wouldn’t want to drag my brother into such a discussion now, I wouldn’t even want to comment about that. My position as at now is to try and find how

we can resolve the issues that have befallen us as a party. Chishimba Kambwili remains a very popular guy and, generally, the people of Zambia would really want him to be President of this country one day, and it’s entirely up to them. For now, we have to focus on how we can position ourselves for the Zambian people to have confidence in us,” replied Musenge. “I know him, he is a friend, we have worked together in PF during president Sata’s time, but from the time we had these issues we have never spoken to each other! I have been reflecting on these issues and maybe that’s why we have not talked to each other since that time. But my desire is to see the party being more powerful than an individual so that when there are issues, the party can call people to order. What is ideal is that the way we had issues with Kambwili, the party central committee could have called us to hear all sides of the issue. But it’s sad that when individuals become leaders of political parties, they become so powerful and want everyone in the party to go and kneel before them, that’s not how it should be.” And Musenge claimed that he had not been communicated to formally by the NDC over his 21-day suspension. “I have not been communicated to formally, although I have been spoken to verbally by the vice president (Joseph Akafumba) and what I was told was that I had not actually been suspended, but was only asked to take a ‘chill’ for 21 days, that’s what I was told. But I can only be able to know whether

it’s a suspension or a leave when I am formally communicated to. So, I am still waiting for communication from the party. I have opted to take a serious reflection, it’s so unfortunate that the person whom I held in so high esteem, whom I regarded to be a future leader of this country, would go such an extent of insulting and disparaging me! Dressing me down in such a manner, but I wouldn’t want to go that route. Everything that is happening now is just giving us and the Zambian people to know each other better,” he narrated. Meanwhile, Musenge said NDC was his brain child and he would not sell it. “Those are machinations by my perceived enemies! The fact is that, the NDC is my brain child; I am a parent of NDC and there is no way I can discard it along the way! And I know the principles, the ideologies and vision that I have for this party are very much alive and there is no way I can trade my own baby for a few pieces of silver, that cannot be done. So, I wouldn’t want to waste my time over that, the people will be able to tell if indeed there has been such. The way I have been brought up and in fact, even the Bible says: ‘uto ukwete inga natukulinga, cimo noukwete ifingi’ (if you are content with the little that you have, you are as good as someone has got plenty). So, I am not too ambitious to amass wealth, I am content with what I have,” argued Musenge. “My fight is to have a better Zambia where people will be able to enjoy their life and their rights. And my coming up with this party was one way of contributing to national governance and show how leadership is supposed to be. I have always believed that those who aspire for public office should go there purely to serve and not for selfish interests or to go and amass wealth. And that’s why I am proud of myself, having served as Minister at Ministry of Works and Supply; as deputy minister at Defence; as Provincial Minister for Copperbelt for over 3-4 years. I have never been followed by anyone, I have never been followed by ACC because I worked with a clear conscience that I was there to serve and not for selfish intentions.”

Former ZAF officers petition ConCourt over housing allowances

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Five former Zambia Air Force (ZAF) officers have petitioned the Constitutional Court seeking an order that ZAF should pay them their housing and utility allowances, including withheld salary arrears until their pension benefits are paid in full. The five: Owen Mayapi; Mulasikwanda Manengu; Hezron Gondwe; Edward Falanga and Majory Munkena who have sued the Attorney General, are also seeking a declaration that ZAF’s decision to stop paying them housing and utility allowances is unconstitutional. In a petition filed in the ConCourt registry, Mayapi, Manengu and Gondwe stated that they joined ZAF as officers on different dates and rose to the ranks of Lieutenant-Colonel, Major and Major, respectively. And Falanga and Munkena stated that they joined ZAF as non-commissioned officers and rose to the ranks of warrant

officer class one and two respectively. The petitioners stated that the conditions governing their employment provided that they could retire from employment upon completion of 10 or more years of service by giving ZAF the prescribed notice. “In keeping with the condition governing their employment, the five who had all completed more than 10 years of service applied to voluntarily retire from employment with ZAF by giving the due notice to ZAF,” read the petition. The petitioners stated that ZAF accepted their application for voluntary retirement and advised each of them that they would be paid their benefits calculated in accordance with the Public Service Pensions Act. They stated that during the period of their employment, their salaries comprised of a basic pay and a housing allowance calculated at 40 per cent of the basic pay for those who were not accommodated in the respondent’s house.

The petitioners stated that on or about November 22, 2018, ZAF issued a circular stopping payment of Housing and Utility allowances to the petitioners and advised them that they were only entitled to be paid their basic salaries, pending payment of all their pension benefits. They stated that despite representation from them that they were entitled to be paid their housing and utility allowances, ZAF had gone ahead and stopped payment of the same, and had even threatened to recover the housing and utility allowances paid to them since their respective retirements. The petitioners pray that the Court declares that a circular issued by ZAF stopping the payment of their housing and utility allowances is unconstitutional. They are further seeking for an order that ZAF should pay them their housing and utility allowances, including withheld salary arrears until their pension benefits were paid in full.

Zambia needs quick regime change, says Msoni

By Mirriam Chabala

All People’s Congress (APC) president Nason Msoni says Zambia requires a quick regime change to help restore the dignity and credibility that the country has lost at the hands of the Patriotic Front government. Last week, Finland’s public broadcaster issued a statement that the Finish government would be cutting off its financial aid to Zambia by the year 2023, citing a toxic political atmosphere in Zambia. Finland’s aid to Zambia has been dropping steadily in the last five years. In 2013, Zambia received more than 30 million euros, but the funding given to Zambia has declined dramatically since then, with Finland having allocated just 4.3 million euros in bilateral aid for Zambia last year. This year, the amount was projected to drop even further to 3.5 million euros, and in 2020, it is estimated to reduce to two million euros until funding eventually completely dries up by 2023. Reacting to the announcement, Msoni regretted the development in an interview News Diggers!, saying Zambia had lost credibility in the eyes of donors and hoped that once the “trouble makers” in PF had been indicted, that could provide a key regime change. He observed that the country had continued to lose financial aid from its traditional donors

because of the PF government’s reckless expenditure. “Indeed, this country has witnessed a steady reduction in donor support, particularly the Nordic countries, although the Zambian government thinks otherwise. In a statement the other day, the Zambian government said it was because of the improved outlook of the economy. But we think that government is being disingenuous by asserting that it’s because of an improvement in the economy or that the reduction has everything to do with it’s improved structured economy. The truth is that we have lost credibility in the eyes of creditor nations, those nations that give us bilateral assistance, for the reason that this government has now become known in the world to be the most irresponsible, reckless government in which corruption has been institutionalised and literally legalised! Corrupt elements and thieves are being kept in the government at the pleasure of the President! All these things are being seen by their representatives in Zambia and report back to their respective governments,” Msoni said. “It’s quite laughable to imagine that any sober and serious Head of State would want to procure a Presidential Executive Jet with [anti]missile [system] on-board, what are those for? Really, you would question the judgement of the man; whether he still enjoys the mental capacity to continue

in the Office of the President. But looking at this, we have reason to doubt whether he still enjoys sound mind in his judgement. Such reckless procurement at the expense of so many overwhelming needs? This country needs to move towards legitimate regime change at the earliest opportunity.” Meanwhile, Msoni reprimanded State House Spokesperson Amos Chanda for persistently attacking opposition leaders and wondered why the President had still not fired him. “Keeping such a person in the highest office of the land rather

serves only to bring down that office for which he is designated to operate from. The Office of the President is supposed to be a dignified office, where even those that occupy it should have some form of dignity. But the vitriolic attacks coming from office only serve to bring it down. But the trouble is that the President in this country is a ‘do-nothing President’ who relies on young people who are employed in that office to work for him. I don’t know what he does. I don’t know whether he reads these things that his assistants in office channel out. It’s striking that

such a rotten mouth [as Amos Chanda’s] can continue to serve in a public office funded by tax payers! So, all these things in totality have contributed to tarnishing the image of this country. It’s most unfortunate and I can only predict a terrible downfall. We are disgusted by insults coming from the highest office! All these things speak to moral bankruptcy the entire clique in State House! You can’t have a State House where everybody is a millionaire, that’s where this arrogance is coming from,” charged Msoni.

Mayors should’ve powers to fire councillors, says Sampa after Chilenje backlash

By Mirriam Chabala

Lusaka Mayor Miles Sampa says it is regrettable that, as executive Mayors, he does not have powers to hire or fire erring councillors under his administration. This came to light when Sampa, castigated councillor Chipulu, who allegedly made a unilateral decision and embarked on an operation to demolish makeshift stores within the city. Sampa said councillors like Chipulu’s deserved to be fired by the Mayor. “Ba Chipulu goes on operations demolishing tu Temba without notifying the office of the Mayor and also he goes on the streets and his people have been reported to be confiscating goods and harassing vendors. We know it’s legal but we have asked them to act humane.

But this man doesn’t listen, so the Chilenje operation, am asking why didn’t he tell my office? Ba Chipulu elo bali na lucky pantu nshakwata ama powers (Chipulu is even lucky that I do not have any powers over him), I have no powers to hire and fire. Ba Chipulu I would have fired you today if I had powers because you are embarrassing my office,” said Sampa. “The area MP has said he didn’t know, the councillor of Chilenje says he wasn’t consulted, Executive cadres were not aware. So you are just doing what you want. But ukutukana teimwe baletukana (it’s not you who gets insulted by affected people), they are insulting me. Ba Chipulu, who was elected between you and me? Who gets insulted between me and you? So why do you do things things that get me insulted? You, you are at peace,

my voters are not at peace... the residents of Lusaka are not happy, they are insulting me and me also am not happy I don’t want to be insulted. So am naming you as the one who doesn’t get my instruction imwe ba Chipulu and that’s why we are fighting that Mayors should have powers so that imwe ba Chipulu nga twamituma ku mushi eko mwafuma mukaye chita efyo mulefwaya (so that we can send you to the village where you come from so that you can go and do whatever you want.” On Tuesday night, council police conducted an operation that left several makeshift shops destroyed, some with merchandise. This caused a public uproar in Lusaka as some residents took to social media to register their displeasure of the councils unannounced actions.

Potential options of commercialising the small ruminant value chain in Zambia

By Dr Chisoni Mumba, PhD

In the previous two articles, we discussed the possibility of exporting goats and sheep (small ruminants) to Saudi Arabia, and the importance of commercialising the small ruminants value chain in Zambia. The first article was sceptical and analytical, while the second one was strictly analytical. For those who did not read the articles and are interested in joining the discourse, you can find them on the following links (<https://diggers.news/guest-diggers/2018/09/21/is-zambia-ready-for-the-saudi-arabian-goat-and-sheep-export-market/> and <https://diggers.news/guest-diggers/2018/12/14/commercialising-the-small-ruminants-value-chain-will-have-broad-and-significant-socioeconomic-impact-on-rural-livelihoods-in-zambia/>). In the later article, I promised to write up on how the small ruminants value chain can be commercialised and who can commercialise it? In this article, I will attempt to answer this question by providing the various ways of commercialising livestock value chains, their merits and demerits, and recommend what Zambia must adopt.

Let us start by briefly describing the current informal small ruminants value chain in Zambia. On top of the chain are producers who are found mostly in rural areas of Zambia. Small ruminants are either set free in communal grazing areas or tethered against trees. When a financial need arises, farmers mostly sell live goats to intermediaries (traders) who buy at lower prices. The lower prices are justified by the high cost of transportation of goats and sheep from the remote to urban areas of Zambia. Thus, the producer gets a lower farm gate value for their goats and sheep, which do not stimulate investment into production. Some traders slaughter goats and sell goat meat (chevon) or sheep meat (mutton) along the road like the one in Chongwe.

At the end of the value chain are rural and urban consumers. Rural consumers mostly slaughter small ruminants during funerals and festivities. They also slaughter and use the meat to barter with grains such as maize and rice after crop harvest. Urban consumers do not have easy access to goat meat. For instance, the common source for goat meat in Lusaka is the Lusaka Urban Small Livestock Market in (Chibolya) managed by Small Livestock Association of Zambia (SLAZ) (Lukubi 2009), which is mostly supplied with small livestock by traders and to a lesser extent, small-scale producers. Another source is the Chongwe roadside market, which is mainly accessed by those travelling along the Great East Road. Food safety remains a significant challenge at these open markets making it difficult for consumers who are food safety conscious. However, there has been a change in consumption patterns as people are eating slightly more of goat meat through the famous “soup ya mbuzi”. Unfortunately, this is usually consumed at beer drinking places, some restaurants, and to a lesser extent at the household level, making goat meat not much consumed by the majority of the people with the buying power in urban areas. The market for live goats and goat meat remains very informal making it a challenge to enforce food safety and hygiene standards. Another group of urban consumers worth mentioning is the Muslim community, which ONLY buys live goats and sheep for the slaughter at the household level due to Halaal restrictions. The Muslim community is a heavy consumer of small ruminants, and consumption even significantly increases during the two festivities of Eid-ul-Fitr (after the month of fasting or Ramadan), and Eid-ul-Adha (celebration of sacrifice during pilgrimage or Hajji). Every financially able Muslim must at least slaughter a goat or sheep during these festivities. These annual Muslim festivities lead to a shortage of in supply of goats and sheep. The growing Muslim community nationally, regionally and internationally is an essential factor in the commercialisation of the small ruminant value chains as the population keeps increasing with a good purchasing power, as is the case of the much talked about Saudi Arabian goat market deal.

The informality of small ruminants value chain makes price changes of small ruminants not seem to affect the market in comparison to that of beef and chicken. For instance, during the livestock movement ban due to diseases of cattle such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), you will see a significant increase in prices of beef due to a decrease in supply. Why doesn't the change in prices of goat meat seem to affect the value chain? It is because the majority of middle-income earners do not have easy access to it. Middle-income earners buy meat from established butcheries. The coming of shopping malls has seen more demand for meat from these malls because of the desired hygiene and food safety standards. To incentivise consumption of goat meat in urban areas, there is a need for improved access, tractability, quality and consistency of supply. Consumers wish to find the product they require now (regularity of stocking), on

the shelf where they found it previously, equal in appearance to the previous purchase (branded), similar in quality to the previous purchase (consistency), and feel satisfied that they can trust its safety for consumption (Roets 2005). If proved unsafe, the consumer would wish to have some form of recourse, which is enabled through the mechanism of tractability back to the source. There are no doubts that commercialising the small ruminant value chain will increase access to goat meat through local butcheries and other markets in shopping malls. This will stimulate consumption by the majority of Zambians, and eventually have a pull and push effect on production and eventual supply of small ruminants. Studies have shown that supply of goats seem somewhat elastic, meaning that sustained improvements in prices offered would likely result in substantial increases, over time, in the production (supply) of goats (Lukubi 2009). However, many producers and prospective producers of goats face resource limitations which includes; financial, technical knowledge, time or suitable land area. Such constraints may delay response time for increasing goat numbers even when favourable prices are encountered for an appreciable time. Our national small ruminant commercialisation agenda must be cognizant of these limitations for the successful development of small ruminant value chain. Let us look at some mechanisms of commercialising livestock value chains.

Mechanisms of commercialising livestock value chains

To achieve a consistent flow of production and marketing of goats into the small ruminant value chain, a possible mechanism to ensure this would be through formal vertical coordination within the livestock industry. Rehber (1998) recognises four (4) types of vertical coordination that can occur. In layman terms, these are:

- Coordination without a contract:** This is called a spot market or open market transaction since there is no written or oral contract between the firms in the production and marketing chain. Each player in the chain can buy or sell his/her inputs and outputs to whomever he/she pleases, often based on price. The disadvantage of this lack of formal relationship is that there is uncertainty regarding future successful transactions taking place. Spot markets drive the current Zambian informal small ruminant value chain. Accessing regional and international markets with such market governance systems is very challenging owing to its uncertainties along the entire value chain.
- Contract farming:** This entails relationships between producers and private or state enterprises that provide processing, export or purchasing activities that regulate prices, production practices and product quality, which replace spot markets. Variations of contract farming have been called “outgrower schemes”, “nucleus-out grower schemes” and “satellite farming” in various parts of the world, and are generally promoted as an institutional innovation to improve agricultural performance, delivery of farming inputs and information in developing countries (Roets 2005). Contract farming makes small-scale farming competitive because small farmers can access technology, credit, marketing channels and information while lowering transaction costs. It also provides an assured market for the produce at the farmers’ doorsteps, thereby reducing marketing and transaction costs. Contract farming also reduces the risk of production, price and marketing costs. However, contract farming arrangements are often criticised for being biased in favour of firms or large farmers, while exploiting the weak bargaining power of small farmers.
- Ownership integration:** Here each firm loses its identity and becomes an entity within a larger company. The larger company owns its upstream suppliers and its downstream buyers. The benefits include lower transaction costs, synchronisation of supply and demand along the chain of products, and lower uncertainty, which provides an excellent opportunity for investment. Some of the disadvantages are market monopolisation and manipulation of prices.
- Farmer co-operatives:** Here the emphasis is that the firm is owned and controlled by the producers, and operates for the mutual benefit of its members (producers or patrons). A combination of farmer co-operatives and outgrower scheme is the desired option for commercialisation of the small ruminant value chain in Zambia. I propose a cooperative be formed, and members be contracted to supply goats to the cooperative, which in turn off-loads on the market. Such an undertaking can have access or contracted to supermarkets. The schematic cooperative model was presented in the first article which can be obtained via this link

<https://diggers.news/guest-diggers/2018/09/21/is-zambia-ready-for-the-saudi-arabian-goat-and-sheep-export-market/>. Having discussed some of the methods of commercialising livestock value chains, let us look at the procedure that we can take to commercialise our small ruminants value chains.

Possible ways of commercialising value chain in Zambia

- The small ruminant commercialisation process must initially involve stakeholder mapping so as to audit what is currently obtaining in the country. The stakeholders will come up with a strategic plan on how to commercialise the small ruminant value chains, with an emphasis that the commercialisation will be private sector-led. I stress the need to know the key stakeholders in the value chain and understand who is doing what so that we can have synergistic effects. For example;
- Riding on the pass-on goat value chain development approach by World Vision would be an entry point to organise livestock farmers into cooperatives.
 - Vertically integrating the small ruminant farmer groups with existing commercial farmers or agro-firms would boost domestic production and cut transactional costs. These can make our farmers understand that tethering a goat in the same place the whole day cannot improve productivity.
 - Emergent small ruminant farmers (middle-income earners) are a potential policy lever as they are more prone to adopting agricultural technologies even though most of them are weekend farmers. These have the potential to come together and pool resources to acquire land and produce small ruminants. Incentives can be developed to deliberately link them with small ruminant farmers in the area and bring them into cooperatives.
 - Small ruminants associations affiliated to Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU), quasi-government organisations such as Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trusts (GART), and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can also champion the development of these small ruminant cooperatives.

Take home message

In summary, the informal and formal livestock markets must run parallel, but with more bias towards the formal market and to a lesser extent, informal market to service certain classes that cant access the formal markets for several reasons. Informal markets play an essential role in developing countries because they allow members of the community to buy commodities on credit based on social connections and pay later arrangements. Informal markets also support barter systems as a way of conducting transactions in certain parts of the country where access to cash transactions are far-fetched, and thus livestock and livestock products are traded in an exchange with other commodities such as grains. The problem with livestock value chains in Zambia is that there is no balance between supply and demand. To balance the production and consumption side, the small ruminant value chain must be expanded along the entire chain. This means that value chains need upgrading at all levels from production, consumption and disposal of livestock and livestock products. We can incentivise goat production to the point of market saturation, but what happens if the consumer side remains constant? Prices will go down, and the ripple effect on production will be quite adverse to the point that producers are pushed out of the market. As long as we do not have contract markets with supermarkets in shopping malls where the middle-income earners buy their goods and services, we will not balance production and consumption. This is true for many other agricultural products. The cooperative livestock markets will carter for both production and consumption, as a cooperative is suitable for contract sells with upstream markets. The cooperative livestock market model must be complemented with out-grower schemes and eventually more developed market models. Let me end by reminding ourselves that to improve goat meat consumption, a consumer wishes to find the product he/she requires now, on the shelf where he/she found it previously, equal in appearance to the previous purchase, similar in quality to the last purchase, and feels satisfied that he/she can trust its safety for consumption. In the next article, we discuss a cost-benefit analysis or rather the economic viability of the local, regional (Democratic Republic of Congo) and international (Saudi Arabian goat export market) goat markets. Which market option is profitable and sustainable for the Zambian small ruminant subsector? This might take slightly longer because we will require some resources to collect this data.

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By Mukosha Funga
Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and Directors don't seem to be working together in the execution of their respective mandates, President Edgar Lungu has observed. According to a statement issued by State House chief analyst, press and public relations Cecilia Mulenga, Wednesday,

Govt is not coordinated, observes Lungu

President Lungu has called for closer collaboration among ministers, permanent secretaries and directors who constitute the economic diversification and job creation cluster of the Seventh National

Development Plan. The President expressed concern that lack of collaboration among ministers, permanent secretaries and directors was hampering progress on the implementation

of government projects and programmes. "It is important that we enhance our cooperation as ministers, permanent secretaries and directors to ensure the speedy implementation of government

projects and programmes. I wish to encourage you to work closely as a cluster. You should avoid duplicating the work of the cluster," President Lungu told the Cluster on Economic Diversification

and Job Creation on the implementation of the 7NDP at State House, Wednesday. President Lungu prodded the Minister of Energy to expedite the diversification of energy by exploiting alternative sources in order to improve power supply. "We are not moving fast in view of the negative effects of climate change. We need to be interrogating the alternative sources of energy. We have to escalate our efforts," said President Lungu. The Cluster, which was represented by Water and Development Minister Dr Dennis Wanchinga, comprises of Ministries of Finance, National Development Planning, Commerce, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Mines, Labour, Tourism and Energy. Other ministries include Fisheries, Transport, Housing, Works and Supply, Foreign Affairs and Higher Education. Meanwhile, President Lungu also met former chief justice Mathew Ngulube, who briefed him on the activities of the SADC oversight committee on Lesotho.

Kambwili's Roan seat vacant, rules Speaker

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini has declared Chishimba Kambwili's Roan parliamentary seat vacant. Dr Matibini said this in parliament, Wednesday, when he made a ruling on a point of order which was raised by Eastern Province Minister Makebi Zulu last week, seeking the speaker's ruling on whether or not Chishimba Kambwili was in order to continue being in the House as Roan PF member of parliament when he was at the same time claiming to be NDC leader as well as a member of the opposition political parties Alliance. Dr Matibini said Kambwili had on his own declared that he was running his own independent political party, NDC.

"Honourable members, the law governing the circumstances under which a member of parliament may vacate his or her seat in the National Assembly as outline in Article 72 of the Constitution of Zambia (1) of the Laws of Zambia and Article 72 is in the following terms 'a member of parliament shall except the speaker and the first deputy

speaker, vacate the seat in the National Assembly upon dissolution of parliament, (2) the office of a member of parliament becomes vacant if the member, (a) resigns by notice in writing to the speaker, (b) becomes disqualified for election in accordance with Article 70 (c) acts contrary to the prescribed code of conduct, (d) resigns from the political party which sponsored the member for election to the National Assembly, (e) is expelled from the political party which sponsored the member for election to the National Assembly, (f) ceases to be a citizen, (g) having been elected to the National Assembly as an independent candidate [and] joins a political party, (h) is disqualified as

a result of a decision of a Constitutional Court or (i) if he or she dies," Dr Matibini cited. "It is instructive to note that the provision of a member losing his or her seat on account of crossing the floor is provided in Article 72 (d) and (2) (g) cited above to recapitulate Article 72 (d) makes it mandatory for a member who presides from a political party which sponsored him/her for elections in the National Assembly to vacate his/her seat." And Dr Matibini said he drew the inspiration to declare the Roan seat vacant from the case of GBM versus the Attorney General as reported in the Zambia Law Reports of 2016. "I draw inspiration from the case of Mwamba versus

Attorney General as reported in the 2016 Zambia Law reports volume 2, page 296. This is what justice Siavwapa said at page 311 in construing the term "office bearer" and I quote 'It is clear from the above petition that the petitioner became an office bearer in the UPND upon accepting the position of vice president by virtue of which he became its member.' Justice Siavwapa went on to observe as follows on page 314 'the seat was declared vacant on account of the petitioner's decision to become a member of the opposition United Party for National Development when he accepted his appointment as its vice president for administration on 22nd July 2015,' said Dr Matibini.

Opposition Alliance kicks out PAC's Andyford Banda

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
The Opposition Alliance has kicked out People's Alliance for Change (PAC) for allegedly undermining the values, aspirations and objectives of the group. Alliance chairperson for media and finance sub-committee Sean Tembo announced at a press

briefing in Lusaka, Wednesday, that the decision was made at a meeting held at Pamodzi Hotel, Tuesday. Tembo charged that the "level of infection" that PAC had on the Opposition Alliance was so advanced, hence the decision to amputate it. "Just like any other living

organism, the Alliance is bound to develop an infection every now and then. As a way of guarding against opportunistic infections, the Opposition Alliance undergoes regular medical check-ups. It was during one of those routine medical check-ups that the Opposition Alliance realised that one of its toes had developed

an infection. The level of infection was so advanced that all efforts to try and save the toe were unsuccessful and the Opposition Alliance decided to take the painful decision to amputate this toe, for fear of the infection spreading to the entire foot and possibly the leg of the Alliance," Tembo explained.

He said after partying company with PAC, the Opposition Alliance had remained with 12 political parties. "It is on the basis of the above analogy that we wish to announce that the Opposition Alliance at its meeting held at Pamodzi Hotel yesterday (Tuesday), decided to part-company with the People's Alliance for Change (PAC) political party. That now puts the total number of members of the Opposition Alliance to 12 credible opposition political parties that are truly committed to delivering a better Zambia to the citizens of this Republic without compromising themselves through being used by the oppressors to undermine the aspirations and existence of the Alliance," Tembo narrated.

He further said that the credibility of Alliance members would not be compromised at the expense of any individual. "We in the Opposition Alliance have stressed the fact that the Alliance is made up and shall be made up of credible opposition political parties only. Our standards regarding the level of credibility of each one of our constituent members cannot, will not and shall not be compromised. We have also always laboured to explain the fact that the Opposition Alliance is a living organism, which means that during the course of its life, some additional members would join the Alliance while some will leave or be asked to leave the Alliance, but the Alliance itself will live on, long after we have delivered the much-needed landslide electoral victory in 2021 and change the lives of our people for the better," said Tembo.

Lungu won't blame Milupi if he loses 2021, so stay away from govt - Lubinda

By Mirriam Chabala
Justice Minister Given Lubinda says if President Edgar Lungu makes mistakes, he will be voted out alone in 2021, and as such, the opposition must not get involved in the governance of the country to mislead him. Lubinda was speaking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia when he transited to Brussels to attend the European Union 7th International Congress on Ending the Death Penalty. The minister observed that opposition leaders had a tendency of using back door styles of contributing to governance, instead of focusing on marketing their own party manifestos to win the hearts of Zambians ahead of the 2021 elections. He explained that President Lungu would never share the credit or blame put on him by the citizens for failing to steer the country to prosperity. "The tendency by some of the opposition political parties to clamour for governance, for participation of governance in the country is totally misplaced. The role of opposition political parties anywhere in the world is to come up with alternative programmes, not to be participants on the

governance of the country. For any given time, there is only one governing party and that is the one that is accountable to the people. For the time being, the only one who is accountable to the Zambian citizens is President Edgar Chagwa Lungu. If he makes wrong decisions, it's him who will be deselected in 2021. He will not carry the others with him, he will not go and say 'I was governing with Charles Milupi, I was governing together with Hakainde Hichilema', he will not go and say that because people will say 'you are the one we made President,'" Lubinda explained. "So for others, if their role is just to oppose, let them oppose without saying 'President Lungu let us sit together and govern together,' no! President Lungu has a mandate to govern and he's going to govern with his political party. If the others have brilliant ideas, let them go and sell their ideas so that in 2021, the Zambian people can elect them. They must not go and put spanners in the work of President Lungu so that they make him fail because that's their agenda." Lubinda observed that the Constitution amendment had delayed because the

opposition was dragging its feet. They have made him wait for one year with the constitution refinement. Who is to blame? They will not accept the responsibility, the responsibility squarely lies on the shoulders of President Lungu. So I would like to appeal to opposition political parties, instead of trying to find back door processes of governing and contributing to government, let them go and do what they are supposed to do, win the hearts of Zambian people for 2021 and let them allow President Lungu to also continue to govern and win the hearts of the citizens by delivering on his promises." Meanwhile, Lubinda said he would not force any of the members of parliament to participate in the constitution refinement process because all lawmakers know exactly why they were sent to Parliament by the electorate. Further, Lubinda said government would allow all stakeholder to make their final submissions before proceeding to table to the constitutional amendment process in Parliament "In amending the Republican Constitution, government wouldn't like to go it alone.

We wouldn't even like to go ahead with only the submissions we received, starting from 2017. We have decided to open yet another avenue for all those political parties and Church Mother Bodies that did not make their submissions. So if anybody has any issue that they would like to submit they will come. If there are people who have ideas on how to amend the 14 days article in the Constitution, as regards to Presidential election petition, they are welcome. If there are others who have other ideas, including how to enhance the Bill of Rights, this is their opportunity. But people cannot claim that they want to participate in a process, then when they are invited, they shun the process. That's playing double standard, let all those who are sincere with themselves and with the people of Zambia tell us exactly what they want us to do," said Lunbinda. Lubinda said the Public Order Amendment Bill would be released to the public in the first week of March, 2019 and that it would not wait for the national dialogue process to take place, saying the Public order Act and Constitution refinement processes were not a replacement of the national dialogue.

In the recent few days we have seen a bitter exchange of vulgarities between State House and the opposition. In fact, to say an “exchange” would be unfair to members of the opposition because the continued foul language has been originating from the Republican Presidency.

We have written about PF being the *Manyozo* forwarding party, and in that opinion, we went ahead to name the culprits of foul language, including a summary of their distasteful remarks. But today, we would like to zero in on President Edgar Lungu’s spokesperson, Mr Amos Chanda.

This man is supposed to be different from the rest. His job description distinguishes him from everyone else who is free to say out whatever comes to mind. Those people we named in the *Manyozo* opinion can justify their undesirable behaviour, because without foul language, they can’t achieve what their horrible jobs demand them to achieve. But that is not the case with the State House Press Aide.

Mr Davies Mwila is not in government; he has no office anywhere near State House. His deputy Mrs Mumbi Phiri is equally just a cadre of the ruling party, and so is the PF Media Director Mr Sunday Chanda. These ‘insultants’ and a few other ministers who have rotten mouths are reasonably detached from the Presidency. It’s easy for them to engage in bad language and get away with it, but Mr Amos Chanda cannot because he is the face of State House and public image of the Head of State. The President’s spokesperson must cultivate the ability

Amos is betraying his inner character

News

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Temp 8, Alex Chola Road, Nyumba Yanga, Lusaka.

to control his temper so that he can always stand the higher moral ground.

We feel the recent fray between Mr Amos Chanda and Mr Charles Milupi has not been handled well by the State House official. Of course, we agree that Mr Milupi, in his capacity as Opposition Alliance chairperson, provoked Mr Chanda by accusing him of being at the centre of the Sesheke by-election violence. We can vouch for Mr Chanda and testify that during the heat of things in Sesheke, he was actually attending the Mining Indaba in Cape Town, South Africa.

We know this because during that period, we called him on a number of occasions requesting for an interview over the arrest of Infrastructure Development Minister Ronald Chitotela. We wanted to know if the arrest had President Lungu’s blessings and if the Minister would be suspended. He told us that he was away in Cape Town,

and as such, he could not give a remote comment without understanding what was going on back home. The Opposition Alliance didn’t need to investigate Mr Amos Chanda’s whereabouts because everybody saw his pictures with other government officials at the Cape Town event. So, it could not be possible that he was in Sesheke.

On that fact, it was, therefore, wrong for Mr Milupi and his Opposition Alliance to claim that Mr Amos Chanda was among those who instigated violence in Sesheke. We can add by saying that it is unacceptable to accuse a person of committing a crime just because that individual is serving in government. Critics need to establish facts before opening their mouths to make allegations. In this case, Mr Milupi has surely offended Mr Chanda because he cannot prove his accusations in any way.

But be that as it may, Mr Chanda is holding a

much more sensitive and important position in the Republic of Zambia than Mr Milupi. The two cannot speak the same language and with the same tone. From a political point of view, the Opposition Alliance chairman is just but a job seeker. So, it is expected that he will make some unfounded allegations on the governing party so that voters can think he is a better politician than those in power. If his accusations are too grave, the aggrieved have the right to litigate.

Unfortunately, Mr Chanda’s liberty to verbally defend himself has to be measured and well thought out. This is important because people are inclined to believe that the State House Press Aide is a villain who is constantly abusing his powers. Unfair as it is, Mr Chanda ruins his reputation by ‘insulting’ Mr Milupi while the opposition leader gains public sympathy. As

can be seen in this case, none of the readers are questioning Mr Milupi’s false allegations, but they are stunned by the despicable reactions from the accused! People are just saying: “Amos *akula mutu*”, without caring about what has offended him.

That is why we are here, in good faith, to speak to the Amos Chanda that we thought we knew from the beginning. Sir, we are of the view that you have changed. In your career as a journalist, you have been able to stomach so many injustices. We know that you have tolerated so many people who have injured you. Those are the attributes that earned you that position. There were many people in the Patriotic Front who desperately wanted your job, they tried to poison each other to President Lungu, but you stood out among them. Today, you are serving your fifth year in State House under President Lungu while

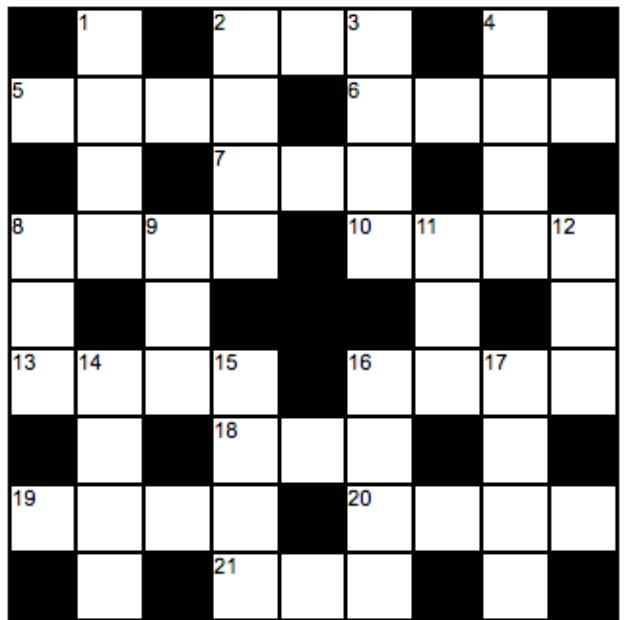
those who thought they were better are either out in Foreign Service or on the streets.

We are concerned that you are slowly detaching yourself from the Amos Chanda that you used to be. A kind, hardworking and listening journalist. You used to be meek and gentle in your handling of issues and we loved you for that. What has happened, sir? What has gone wrong? Why are you struggling to contain your emotions?

We want our Amos Chanda back, we reject this savage that has taken over his spirit! The Amos Chanda we knew would never call Milupi a lunatic, even when he knows in his heart that the elderly man is among the most sane and respected political figures out here. The Amos Chanda we knew would find so many ways of exposing the lying opposition leader without ruining his own image. That is what we, the younger journalists, admired about him. We are concerned that soon, his achievements will stop inspiring upcoming media practitioners because his language is taking away so much.

Bring back our God-fearing Amos Chanda. If President Lungu wants that kind of language poured on those who are challenging his leadership style, let him hold a press conference and use his own mouth to insult. Stop betraying your inner self to please your employer, Mr Amos Chanda. Use that position to prove to the public that you are a level-headed person. Make mistakes, but don’t make unnecessary enemies. It’s not too late to make amends, sir. We submit.

Crossword puzzle 303



“Stop in somebody's shadow to rest and cool down, and you are lost. No one can make anyone else happy.”
- Peter Deunov

- Across**
2. Cry uncontrollably
5. Difficult journey
6. Rowboat need
7. Internal Revenue Service
8. Exchange
10. Without a date
13. Not odd
16. Intelligent social outcast
18. Honest ____ Lincoln
19. To: You, ____ :Me
20. Top of the mouth
21. North pole helper
- Down**
1. Got bigger
2. Decide not to attend
3. Head honcho
4. Vicinity
8. Have sight
9. Mature
11. Worn around the neck
12. Zeus or Apollo
14. Fluctuate
15. Cite
16. Foam toy maker
17. Pandemonium

Solutions to puzzle 302



FAZ's move not to renew Sven's contract

“The coach was a bad

‘If police arrested Kambwili for hate speech, why not Amos?’

"They should also arrest Amos Chanda for

"The government should have just condemned what he did or said. Arresting the man seems not to add up. We have congested prisons with people waiting for months or years for trial or just appearing for mention. Such cases are just worsening the situation! Just tell him not to be xenophobic and let him go." - Ernest Mutale

"Once sitting in high position and thought Zambia was his back yard, we need leaders who can respect the law and not wanton hypocrites like him!"
- Noah Nyirenda



ND Opinion: PF has hijacked Police, it's total State capture

Editor,

Editor,
"On point! I believe everything written here." - Joseph Maimbolwa Namasiku
analysis, ba Diggers! Always on point. Let the hate

"I like your analysis, ba Diggers! Always on point, Let the haters continue, but it won't help them."

"Well articulated!" - Sydney Mukambwa

"Police are not happy at all. Kafue by-election coming soon." - Chibbonta Mwiinga

"Very sad reading this factual article." - Sylvester Chisangsing Lungu of being a lawyer otherwise he is not!" - Michael Chandaila

Lungu's warning to 'get rich quick' accountants

Dear Editor,

"This man can't be trusted because he forgets what he says." - Ezra Kalaluka

*"Meanwhile, a 'get rich quick' minister can't be fired!"
- Kingdom Boom Zamunda*

"Look who is talking! How much was the 'humble one' worth when he was a resident of Chawama?" - Micky Jericho Nsangwe

"How has he become rich himself within a very short time?

"Not only accountants, ministers mostly e.g. Chitotela, Chilufya, Kampyongo..." – Chibi Kala

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.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four-year term, the election commission says. The 76-year-old defeated his main rival, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, with a margin of nearly four million votes.

Mr Abubakar's People's Democratic Party (PDP) has rejected the result. Turnout was 35.6%.

Delays and violence marred the run-up to Saturday's poll but no independent observer has cited electoral fraud.

Mr Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) won in 19 of the 36 states while the PDP was victorious in 17 states and in the capital, Abuja, according to the electoral commission (Inec).

"The new administration will intensify its efforts in security, restructuring the economy and fighting corruption," Mr Buhari said after his victory was officially announced.

Overall, the APC got 15.2 million votes while the PDP recieved 11.3 million.

Mr Buhari swept the north, while Mr Aububakar did better in the south and east.

Turnout was much higher in the northern states - one factor behind Mr Buhari's victory.

A former soldier, Mr Buhari led

Buhari re-elected as president



a military regime for 20 months in the 1980s and was first elected president in 2015, becoming the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent and win the presidency.

His record in office is mixed. Mr Buhari's critics say that the very attributes that won over voters four years ago - his strictness and inflexibility - have emerged as liabilities. They accuse him of autocratic leanings as well as a disastrous tendency towards

inaction.

Mr Buhari's supporters can argue that he has largely delivered on campaign pledges such as tackling corruption and cracking down on Boko Haram. But they may struggle to point to concrete achievements in other fields, such as fixing the economy.

The breadth and depth of corruption is so great, it affects so many aspects of public life that making serious inroads into the problem would require a focus,

energy and application that was lacking in President Buhari's first term.

The second problem he faces in

fighting corruption is having the necessary political support. There is undoubted public backing but Mr Buhari's party is compromised by senior members suspected of enriching themselves through graft. The fear is that across the board the looters will carry on pretty much as normal.

Economically, ending the dependency on oil revenues needs to happen at a much faster pace. The World Bank has predicted sluggish economic growth: 2.2% for the coming year in a country with unemployment of more than 20% and nearly half the population living in extreme poverty

President Buhari also faces an array of security threats from clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the Middle Belt,

continuing instability in the Niger Delta and - most worrying of all - a revived threat from Islamic extremists in the north of the country.

Africa's most populous nation and largest economy faces a range of problems including power shortages, corruption, security threats, and an economic slowdown.

Nigeria is Africa's leading oil producer but corruption and a failure to invest the proceeds from the industry have hampered development.

A slow recovery from a recession in 2016 means there are not enough jobs for the large number of young people joining the employment market. About a quarter of the working age population is unemployed.*BBC*

World's biggest bee found alive

The world's biggest bee has been re-discovered, after decades thought lost to science.

The giant bee - which is as long as an adult's thumb - was found on a little-explored Indonesian island. After days of searching, wildlife experts found a single live female, which they photographed and filmed.

Known as Wallace's giant bee, the insect is named after the British naturalist and explorer Alfred Russel Wallace, who described it in 1858.

Scientists found several specimens in 1981 on three Indonesia islands. It has not been seen alive since, although there was a report last year of two bee specimens being offered for sale online.

In January, a team followed in Wallace's footsteps on a journey through Indonesia in an attempt to find and photograph the bee.

"It was absolutely breathtaking to see this 'flying bulldog' of an insect that we weren't sure existed anymore, to have real proof right there in front of us in the wild," said natural history photographer, Clay Bolt, who took the first photos and video of the species alive.

"To actually see how beautiful and big the species is in life, to hear the sound of its giant wings thrumming as it flew past my head, was just incredible. "

Wallace's giant bee (Megachile pluto)

With an estimated wingspan of two-and-a-half inches (6 cm), Wallace's giant bee is the world's largest bee

The female makes her nest in termite mounds, using her large jaw to collect sticky tree resin to line the nest and protect it from invading termites

The species depends on primary lowland forest for

resin and the nests of tree-dwelling termites

Wallace, who co-developed the theory of evolution with Charles Darwin, described the bee as, "a large black wasp-like insect, with immense jaws like a stag-beetle".

The discovery, in the Indonesian islands known as the North Moluccas, raises hopes that the region's forests still harbour one of the rarest and most sought after insects in the world.

There are currently no legal protections around its trade.

Trip member and bee expert Eli Wyman, an entomologist at Princeton University, said he hoped the rediscovery would spark research towards a deeper understanding of the life history of the bee and inform any future efforts to protect it from extinction.

Wallace's giant bee is currently listed as vulnerable to extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

However, the international trade of this species is currently not restricted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Environmental group, Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), which has launched a worldwide hunt for "lost species", supported the trip to find the bee.

"By making the bee a world-famous flagship for conservation, we are confident that the species has a brighter future than if we just let it quietly be collected into oblivion," said Robin Moore.

In January, the group announced they had found more rare Bolivian frogs belonging to a species thought to be down to one male.*BBC*



US President Donald Trump (L) poses with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Phu Trong before a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi on February 27, 2019, ahead of the second US-North Korea summit. Saul LOEB / AFP

Child supplements ‘mislead’ over vitamin D

Few children's multivitamins give the recommended daily vitamin D dose, a study suggests.

Researchers from the universities of Oxford and Southampton looked at 64 multivitamins and found only 25%-36% provided the correct dose of 400 IU.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) said the research was "highly concerning" and products were "misleading parents".

They recommend checking the dosage on the labelling of supplements.

Vitamin D is important to prevent rickets in children, which affects bone growth and can lead to deformities.

The main source of vitamin D is sunshine but it is hard to get enough in the UK in autumn and winter.

Cases of rickets in the UK have increased in recent years.

And in 2016 Public Health England recommended a daily supplement of 400 IU (international unit) (10 micrograms) of vitamin D for: Black and Asian people children aged one to four babies under the age of one



not getting vitamin D through formula milk people whose skin has little exposure to the Sun everyone else in autumn and winter

The researchers looked at multivitamins and vitamin D supplements marketed at children aged under 12 and sold at Asda, Morrisons, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Boots, Holland and Barrett, Lloyds Pharmacy and Superdrug and found:

Among the 67 multivitamin products, the daily vitamin D dose ranged from zero to 800 IU Only one multivitamin was suitable for use from birth - and this supplied 200 IU per day

For children aged under six months, only one multivitamin contained more than 340 IU Among the 24 specific vitamin-D products and vitamins marketed as being for healthy bones, the vitamin D content ranged from 50 to 1,000 IU

Six products of these were suitable from birth, of which five contained 340 to 400 IU per day - the recommended amount Writing in the Archives of Disease in Childhood journal, the authors said: "Multivitamins typically had lower vitamin D content than pure vitamin D supplements or 'healthy bones' products, although some products labelled as 'for bones' contained very low levels of vitamin D."

To obtain the correct dose, they

said, children "would either have to take over the recommended dose, which may increase the risk of toxicity from the other components, or they would have to take a combination of vitamin D and multivitamins, which is more expensive".

Vitamin D supplements are provided free to low income families on the government's Healthy Start scheme. But the researchers found the vitamins provided by the scheme gave only 300 IU per day of vitamin D.

Dr Benjamin Jacobs, from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), said: "A normal healthy UK diet provides less than 10% of the recommended amount of vitamin D.

"To learn that so many products fail to provide children with the recommended level of Vitamin D is highly concerning, especially when latest evidence shows our children's average intake are still below the recommended amount. "These products are misleading parents who think they are protecting their children from serious conditions such as

rickets, poor growth and muscle weakness.

"I would advise all parents to check that the supplements they use contain the recommended 400 units of vitamin D and consult their pharmacist if they are unsure."

He also said the government should seriously consider fortifying some foods and milk with Vitamin D.

Dr Carrie Ruxton, from the industry-funded health and food supplements information service (HSIS), said: "Food supplements are meant to supplement the diet, not replace the nutrients obtained from foods.

"In that respect, and since there are varying recommendations across different age groups of children, it is right that different supplements offer different doses. "Smaller doses allow parents to use the same product for younger and older children by varying the amount given.

"Many of the supplements in this survey would actually bridge the dietary gap topping up intake towards the recommended 10 microgram daily."*BBC*

Solskjaer admits his demands are contributing to Utd injury pile-up

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer believes the privilege of playing for Manchester United should be about the "survival of the fittest" as he deals with a mounting injury crisis.

Solskjaer had to make three first-half substitutions during Sunday's 0-0 draw with Liverpool as Ander Herrera, Juan Mata and Jesse Lingard all hobbled off injured.

The Norwegian could be

without 10 players in total for Wednesday's trip to Crystal Palace and acknowledged that at least some of the muscle problems suffered by his squad may be a result of the rising physical demands he is placing on them.

United's running statistics have increased significantly since Solskjaer replaced Jose Mourinho in December.

That has been a factor in a huge upturn in results, with

14 matches under Solskjaer bringing 11 wins and just one defeat.

"It's probably linked, yes," said Solskjaer. "But when do you make that change? Do you wait until pre-season and think you will change results by just not asking them to run?"

"Or do we start now and show them demands of intensity and how we want to play?"

The caretaker manager has made a point of getting United to play the fast-paced attacking game for which they were renowned during much of Alex Ferguson's 26-and-a-half years in charge at Old Trafford.

"You have seen what I have chosen," he added. "We need to play as a Manchester United team. If you want to be a part of Manchester United, it's a survival of the fittest isn't it?"

Solskjaer acknowledged that

the physical demands of a hard-running style may take its toll on some of the more experienced members of his squad.

But he stressed the importance of professionalism off the pitch, saying his players could prolong their careers.

"They are getting older aren't they, Juan, Nemanja (Matic), Ander. So it's about the preparation, the standards that you have to live up to on and off the pitch as a Manchester United player, and as a professional player in the Premier League.

"It's not just turning up, playing and training and then going home and doing all these little out-of-football activities that we have all seen too many players doing.

"I'm pleased with the way my lads have responded in that way, that we don't see too much of them outside football. *AFP*



Alonso back with McLaren despite F1 retirement

Two-time former world champion Fernando Alonso will continue to work with McLaren as an ambassador and a car tester for the next two years after retiring from Formula 1 in November, the manufacturer announced on Wednesday.

The Spaniard, a winner in 2005 and 2006 raced for the Woking-based constructor in 2007 and between 2015-2018 but will keep racing at the Indianapolis 500 this year looking to secure motorsport's Triple Crown having already won a Monaco Grand Prix and a Le Mans 24.

"I said before I stopped racing in Formula 1 last year that I see myself with McLaren for a long-time to come, so I am delighted at this new role and the ability to stay closely involved with the team I feel is my spiritual home" 37-year-old Alonso said in a statement.

"For any race team, having someone of Fernando's class on hand to provide support through his experience is of huge value," McLaren's chief executive Zak Brown said. *AFP*

Nantes complain to FIFA as Cardiff miss first Sala payment

Nantes have made a complaint to FIFA after Cardiff City failed to pay the first instalment of Emiliano Sala's £15 million (\$20m) transfer fee.

The Premier League side signed Sala for a club-record fee in January, but the plane carrying the striker went missing over the English channel as he travelled from Nantes to Cardiff to join up with his new team-mates.

The player's death was later confirmed after a body was recovered from the plane wreckage, with Sala's funeral having since taken place in Argentina on February 16.

Cardiff delayed their initial payment for the Argentine striker as chairman Mehmet Dalman said there were "anomalies" in the deal that need to be investigated beforehand, prompting Nantes to threaten legal action.

"Of course, if we are contractually obliged to pay them then of course we will. We are an honourable club," Dalman said.

"But if we are not - and there are some anomalies in that - then surely you would expect me as the chairman and guardian of this club's interests to look into that and hold our position? That is what we are doing."

The French club then granted an extension on the first deadline, but Cardiff have seemingly held off making that payment.

A statement from FIFA confirmed that Nantes have now taken the case to a higher authority.

"We can confirm that we have received yesterday evening a claim from FC Nantes against Cardiff City in connection with the transfer of Emiliano Sala," the statement read.

"We are looking into the matter and consequently we have no further comments at this stage."

On Monday, Cardiff expressed "grave concerns" over the legality of the flight after an interim report was published by Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB).

"We have grave concerns that questions still remain over the validity of the pilot's licence and rating to undertake such a journey, as identified in the bulletin," a statement from the club read.

"We are also concerned to discover that the trip involved an aircraft which did not conform to either UK CAA or US FAA requirements for commercial activity and therefore may have been operating unlawfully."

Sala's body was recovered from the wreckage two weeks after the aircraft went missing on January 21. The body of the plane's pilot, David Ibbotson, has not been found. *Goal*



Bale avoids punishment for celebration against Atletico

Gareth Bale is free to play in both El Clasicos against Barcelona this week after the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) decided on Wednesday not to punish the Real Madrid forward for his celebration against Atletico Madrid.

After scoring in Real's 3-1 victory earlier this month, Bale threw one arm under the other towards the Atletico fans, a gesture considered offensive in Spain.

La Liga filed a complaint against Bale for what it described as "a gesture of potentially obscene meaning" but the referee did not include the incident in his report.

The RFEF has confirmed in a statement it has not "found a breach of the rules of the game or action deserving either warning or disciplinary action".

Bale could have been banned for up to 12 matches but the decision means

he is available to face Barcelona in the second leg of their Copa del Rey semi-final on Wednesday, as well as the two clubs' meeting in La Liga on Saturday.

But his selection in Madrid's starting line-up remains in doubt. Santiago Solari has picked him only twice in the last eight matches and Bale has been heavily criticised for refusing to celebrate a goal he scored against Levante last weekend. *AFP*

Daka, Mwepu to arrive five days before match

By Abraham Kalito

Under 23 national soccer team assistant coach Bilton Musonda says the seven foreign based players summoned for 2019 AFCON qualifier against Malawi are likely to join camp five days before the match.

Musonda told Goal Diggers in an interview that the technical bench

would have loved to see the players join camp weeks before the game but that a FIFA rule prohibits them from doing so.

He however said the team is on the right track towards consolidating team work ahead of the March.

"We are tied with the FIFA rule. The FIFA rule doesn't allow any player to be released before the FIFA day. So

even them I don't think they can be released earlier by their clubs. Unless FAZ maybe has rapport with the club, good relationship, that is when they can be released early. In this case the FIFA day is from the 18th of March to 24, that is when the FIFA calendar, the FIFA days will start. But the boys are coming, for that we can assure you. And so far, we are on

the right track with the training. But it would be too early to mention that we already have identified the best eleven. We will prepare very well for the game," Musonda said.

On Tuesday, Under 23 national team coach Beston Chambeshi summoned seven professional players among them, the former under 20 winning trio of Patson

Daka, Fashion Sakala and Enock Mwepu.

Zambia will play against Malawi on March 23 in Blantyre before clashing again in Lusaka four days later.

The Under 23 qualifier is being used as a 2020 Olympics qualifiers. The best three at the competition will qualify for the Olympics.

UEFA charge Ramos over Ajax card



Real Madrid centre-back Sergio Ramos was charged by UEFA on Tuesday for "receiving a yellow card on purpose" during their Champions League last-16 tie with Ajax.

The Spaniard was booked for a tackle on Kasper Dolberg in Real's 2-1 first-leg victory in Amsterdam on February 13, two minutes after Marco Asensio scored the winning goal.

Three yellow cards bring a one-match suspension but Ramos may have seen sitting out the second match against Ajax as preferable to potentially missing a match later in the competition.

UEFA said that Ramos' case would be dealt with on Thursday.

European football's governing body set a precedent last season when Real full-back Dani Carvajal was suspended for two games after initially earning a booking in the group stage.

The 32-year-old Ramos said the day after the match that he did not "force the card". But straight after the game, he had appeared to admit that he got himself booked on purpose.

"The truth is that given the result I'd be lying if I said it wasn't something I had in mind," Ramos had said.

"It is not to underestimate the opponent but sometimes there is a time to make decisions and I have done so."

Real resume their bid for a fourth consecutive Champions League title in the return leg against Ajax at the Santiago Bernabeu on March 5. *AFP*



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