



CHURCH SHAMES PF OVER PRIME TV

...but Dora, Sunday accuse clergy of making ignorant comment

By Sipilisiwe Ncube and Mirriam Chabala

The three church mother bodies say the Independent Broadcasting Authority's decision to suspend Prime TV's license is not only embarrassing to government but also shows how dead the

consciences of those leading the country have become. In a joint press statement, the three church mother bodies; described the action by IBA as harassment and intimidation

to media houses that do not dance to the PF tune. But Chief Government

Spokesperson Dora Siliya and PF media director have told critics, including the clergy

to stop making ignorant comments on the issue. Story page 3 and 5



University of Zambia graduates record academic memories at the 48th graduation ceremony yesterday - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Civil servants must expect no salaries in future – Kambwili

By Zondiwe Mbewe
NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili says civil servants are yet to experience longer periods without pay because

it is the beginning of the end. And Kambwili says ministers and top government officials should stop paying themselves and prioritise

civil servants so that they can also feel the pinch. Meanwhile, Kambwili has wondered what kind of government can buy toxic drugs from China to kill its own citizens.

Chingola man beats wife to death, kills self

By Daniel Chansa
A 47-year-old Chiwempala man in Chingola has committed suicide after beating his wife to death. Copperbelt Police Commissioner Charity Katanga has confirmed the death of Gertrude Mpundu, 38, of Nalumango Road in Chiwempala Township.

Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, Kambwili said he had been vindicated because he had previously warned civil servants that they would start going months without receiving their salaries given government's mismanagement of public resources.

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Lusaka is cholera free, says Minister
Story page 7

Reopen Prime TV, demands US govt

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
The United States Embassy has asked the Independent Broadcasting Authority to urgently reverse the suspension of Prime TV's broadcasting license saying it is counter productive to upholding democratic tenets. To page 7

Govt pondering China debt swap, reveals Mwanakatwe

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Patriotic Front candidates who have applied for adoption for the Roan Parliamentary seat pose for a picture in Luanshya after interviews

Govt maintains penalties to curb street vending

By Mirriam Chabala

Local Government Minister Vincent Mwale says government has partnered with the National Pensions Scheme Authority (NAPSA) and the German government to construct new markets to curb street vending across the country. And Mwale says local authorities will continue penalizing individuals involved in street vending because making the culprits pay will serve as a deterrent to would-be offenders. Responding to Mumbwa UPND member of parliament Credo Nanjuwa, who wanted to know if the Ministry had issued any circular to the local authorities to stop abuse of authority by the police so that vendors could trade freely, Mwale said the permanent solution to street vending was to construct new markets. "I have observed that most of the solutions that you are providing are highly concentrated on Lusaka. But the police brutality and harassment of vendors is across the country and the people of Mumbwa are equally affected. So, what I want to find out from you, Honourable Minister, is have you issued a circular to the local authorities or you will issue a circular so that this abuse of authority by the police can come to an end so that our people can trade freely?" Nanjuwa asked. In his response, Mwale said government had partnered with NAPSA and the German government to construct new markets across the country. "Mr Speaker, the circular has been issued to all councils guiding them on how to handle this matter. But the long-term solution, of course, is to construct markets and I have said that we are going to construct markets in all the districts in the country. This is happening in Southern Province and

other markets are being constructed in Eastern Province. To achieve this, we have partnered with NAPSA and the German government. Some councils are actually using CDF (Constituency Development Funds), while some are using Equalisation Funds to construct new markets. The solutions are for the whole country and the circular has been circulated to the whole country," Mwale said. And asked by the Choma UPND member of parliament Cornelius Mweetwa who wanted to know if the Ministry would stop penalizing people found trading from the streets, Mwale insisted that financial penalties would serve as an effective deterrent.

"Mr Speaker, such amounts are used as deterrents because the aim is not to encourage street vendors to be in those areas. But the problem with the Council was actually aiming for that. By the way, the maximum amount is K499, which is still too high for the poor women you are just describing. But the aim is that it's supposed to be a deterrent and at the same time, local authorities are supposed to provide alternative spaces, which are actually being shunned. So, what we are saying is that councils, together with the people, must find common solutions and not go for the maximum or that full force; they should only do that when the people involved decide knowingly so to disregard the law. But they must

actually be warned several times before we can reach

that conclusion of making them pay. But it has to be

there as a deterrent," said Mwale.

Chingola man kills wife, self after dispute

By Daniel Chansa

A 47-year-old Chiwempala man in Chingola has committed suicide after beating his wife to death. Copperbelt Police Commissioner Charity Katanga has confirmed the death of Gertrude Mpundu, 38, of Nalumango Road in Chiwempala Township. Katanga said Mpundu, a house wife, was beaten to death after a marital dispute with her husband, Lacabu Simukoko, who was a businessman. She said Simukoko soon after killing his wife, fled and went to commit suicide by diving in

front of an oncoming vehicle.

"Ms Mpundu had sustained multiple cuts on shoulder, neck, head, back and also a suspected fractured right arm. Simukoko had run away from the scene of crime to unknown destination unfortunately he was also found dead along Chingola - Chililabombwe road near Kazenene work shop after being hit by unknown motor vehicle and died instantly," said Katanga, Tuesday. "Police have picked up the two bodies and were taken to Nchanga North General Hospital mortuary awaiting post-mortem."

BAT Zambia posts K16.1m losses

By Stuart Lisulo

British American Tobacco (BAT) Zambia Plc incurred increased losses of over K16 million after tax during its financial year period ending December 31, 2018, mainly triggered by foreign exchange losses, company data reveals. And BAT Zambia have complained that the Customs and Excise Act, 2018, posed the company challenges. In a statement outlining the abridged unaudited financial results for the year ended December 31, 2018, BAT Zambia board chairperson Michael Mundashi revealed that the tobacco giant incurred losses attributed to the company's shareholders was K16.1 million compared to K14.1 million incurred in the corresponding period in 2017, increasing its losses by around K2 million. This represents a 14.1 per cent year-on-year decline after the company posted losses before tax

of K16.6 million in 2018. "A loss before taxation of K16.6 million was recorded during the year 2018 and represents a 50 per cent increase over the loss recorded in 2017 of K11.1 million. The loss before taxation was mainly due to high net finance costs driven by foreign exchange losses suffered on the US \$15 million loan that the company contracted in 2017 for the construction of the new factory," Mundashi stated. He, however, explained that BAT Zambia

remained committed to liquidate the outstanding loan in due course. "The company is committed to ensuring that this liability is liquidated in the short to medium-term in order to arrest the erosion of shareholder value. To this effect, various interventions have been employed and more are still being explored to manage the foreign exchange risk that this necessary liability carries," he stated. On dividends, Mundashi

announced that no dividends would be paid owing to the poor results. "The Directors do not recommend the payment of a final dividend for the year ended 31 December, 2018, in view of the financial results recorded as highlighted. Further, no interim dividend was declared or paid for the year ended 2018," he stated. And Mundashi explained that Zambia's regulatory environment remained challenging on the company's financial performance.

"The regulatory environment in 2018 did pose some challenges for the business. Specifically, changes to the Customs and Excise Act 2018 threatened the viability of our new state-of-the-art manufacturing plant. The uncertainties created by the changes were addressed and it must be noted that the achievements recorded thus far would not have been possible without appropriate legislative amendments," stated Mundashi.

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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

The three church mother bodies say it is hypocritical and undemocratic to suspend Prime TV's broadcasting license when government owned and controlled media outlets have miserably been unprofessional and unethical in their news coverage. And the church mother bodies say the Independent Broadcasting Authority's decision to suspend Prime TV's license is not only embarrassing to government but it shows how dead the

Church mother bodies shame govt over Prime TV closure

consciences of those leading the country had become. In a joint press statement, the three church mother bodies; Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of

Zambia (EFZ) and Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), said the action by IBA to suspend Prime TV was harassment and intimidation to institutions that do not

dance to the PF tune. "We, the Three Church Mother Bodies namely Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Zambia Conference of

Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) wish to condemn in strongest terms the suspension of Prime TV broadcasting license by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) for thirty days over broadcasts that are deemed to have potential to cause unrest. It is clear for every well-meaning Zambian to draw a line between the Government owned media institutions (ZNBC, Zambia Daily Mail and Times of Zambia) and Prime TV in terms of professional and balanced coverage of news in the country," the church mother bodies stated. "It is also our view that the grounds IBA has used to suspend the broadcasting license of Prime TV must have been applied first on the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), Zambia Daily Mail and Times of Zambia before applying them on any other media house. Further, it is hypocritical to allow the suspension of a broadcasting license of a Private Media House when Government owned and controlled media outlets HAVE MISERABLY BEEN UNPROFESSIONAL AND UNETHICAL in the manner they cover news in the country, more especially during election times." And the church mother bodies said the development showed that the consciences of those leading the country were dead. "The decision by the Independent Broadcasting Authority to suspend Prime TV is not only embarrassing to the Government, but also it shows how dead the consciences of those in Government have become. As a country that

aspires to be Christian, we strongly believe that both Government and IBA need to have recourse to the biblical principle as enshrined in the Gospel of Mathew 7:3-5 that a man cannot remove a speck from their brother's eye when they themselves have not first removed the plank from their own eye," the church mother bodies stated. The church called on IBA to seriously consider lifting the suspension of Prime TV's broadcasting license with immediate effect. "We therefore call for an end to this kind of behaviour which arguably betray double standards being applied, and does not promote the democratic credentials of our beloved country. Office bearers have the duty to ensure that the law is applied fairly on all citizens and institutions, unlike what is obtaining on the ground. In addition, the action by IBA has the potential of being construed as a harassment and intimidation of institutions that do not dance to the tune of the Government and the ruling party, and constitutes a threat to democracy. The suspension will also negatively affect the employees of the private media house and their families. We hope that Prime TV will use and exhaust every legal channel in this matter to pursue justice. Finally, we call upon IBA to seriously consider lifting the suspension of the broadcasting license of Prime TV with immediate effect and allow the media house to operate freely without any intimidation," stated the church.



Lands Minister Jean Kapata (c) and deputy vice chancellor Prof. Enala Mwase at the University of Zambia's 48th Graduation Ceremony at the main Campus on March 5, 2019 - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Govt must strengthen Immigration to stop foreigner dominance - Sacika

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Former Secretary to Cabinet Dr Sketchley Sacika says government needs to conduct an audit to ascertain whether all foreigners working in Zambia are operating in legally, with valid work permits. In an interview, Dr Sacika expressed concern that foreigners were dominating in many sectors. He cautioned that foreigners' unchecked infiltration into the country's economy would eventually lead to possible State capture. "Our press is awash with stories of foreigners at construction sites pushing wheelbarrows and doing jobs that should go to Zambians. Who has given these people work permits to work in Zambia? Our laws require that no foreigner shall be issued with a work permit to work in Zambia, unless there is no Zambian capable of doing the job for which a work permit is needed or there are special circumstances. These laws we made to protect Zambian workers. The Zambian government must as a matter of urgency carry

out an audit to ascertain whether all the foreigners working in Zambia are here legally on valid work permits. For those who are not, the law must take its course," Dr Sacika said. "It is the responsibility of every government to protect its own citizens. Running a liberalized economy does not mean opening the door to whoever wants to come and work in Zambia to do so. Considerations of national interest and national security must prevail. As you know, the British are about to leave the European Union (on March 29, 2019) because they are unhappy with others coming to Britain to take up jobs that can be done by the British! So, why should the Zambian government allow foreigners to come to Zambia to do jobs that can be done by Zambians? We gave away our mines to foreigners and our economy is now dominated by foreigners and we are marching backwards to the pre-Independence days when Zambians were drawers of water for the foreigners." He also expressed concern that foreigners would

take total control of government if their rapid infiltration in the country's economy was not regulated. "If foreigners dominate our economy, they will also control our government! We will have a puppet President,

puppet ministers, who will be there to serve the interests of the foreigners and not the interests of the people who elected them. If you look around, you will see that this is already happening," observed Dr Sacika.

Chitambo District Health Office runs out of fuel for ambulances

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Chitambo District Health Office has been hit by a shortage of fuel for emergency referrals. In a letter dated March 3, 2019 and addressed to the District Commissioner, Chitambo District Health Officer Dr Knoziack Chisenga stated that the office had completely run out of fuel, and that the credit facility, which enabled his Department to get the commodity for emergency referrals was no longer being honoured. He stated that the last time the District Health Office was funded was in September, 2018 and he feared that patients' lives might be endangered. "I wish to inform your able office that the District Health Office has completely

run out of fuel and the credit facility, which enabled us to get fuel from the gas station from time to time for emergency referrals, is no longer being honoured. We are concerned for the well-being of the patients in the clinics and we fear that lives may be lost. In this regard, we wish to kindly inform your able office and request for any support that might be available. You might also wish to know that we have not been funded since September, 2018," wrote Dr Chisenga. But when contacted, Central Province Health Director Dr Charles Msiska wondered why Dr Chisenga had rushed to write to the DC before discussing the matter with his office first. He said, however, that the matter had been addressed.

"All the districts have ambulances running with fuel and even at times when there are challenges, we normally support them as Provincial Health Office/Ministry of Health. So, I think our colleague didn't consult as he was making that comment. But otherwise, we have discussed with our colleagues and we are actually meeting him later on to find out if there are any other problems that he is having there. But otherwise, all the districts have fuel to run their services. We had a chat before even all that and we addressed it as Provincial Health Office and we are going to meet him to understand why it was written before any discussions we made, because we have actually supported them," said Dr Msiska.

By Stuart Lisulo
Zambia's maize export ban should not be expected to be lifted in view of the intermittent drought conditions being experienced in some parts of the country, say the Grain Traders' Association of Zambia (GTAZ). And the Association has described government's move to lift the ban on mealie meal exports as a "fair compromise" for grain

Zambia's drought conditions may prolong maize export ban – GTAZ

traders to help add value to the raw commodity. Reacting to the Ministry of Agriculture's lifting of the ban on mealie meal exports, GTAZ executive director Chambuleni Simwinga welcomed the move, but explained that traders remained pessimistic of the government going a step further to lift the

ban on maize exports. Agriculture Minister Michael Katambo announced the lifting on the ban of mealie meal exports last Sunday following consultations with key stakeholders on the maize availability situation in the country. According to Katambo, the move reflected government's satisfaction that Zambia was now food secure given the availability of maize on the local market. "I don't see it happening now. I will be fair-minded, reason being: the current drought situation; these pronouncements are also creating [uncertainty] with the policymakers. So, sometimes, if we were to push for maize with

these comments going round about almost 53 districts with drought is that, it becomes a tall order to negotiate with government," Simwinga said in an interview. "It's something (maize export ban) that we can work around, especially after the (2019) Crop Forecast Survey." And he described government's move to lift the ban on mealie meal exports as a "fair compromise" for grain traders to help add value to the raw commodity. "It's a very good pronouncement; better late than never. Even to get the mealie meal exported, it was not easy so we had to compromise ourselves and say 'let's go for value-added products,'" he explained. Asked if grain traders were happy with government's move to lift the ban on mealie meal exports, but still maintain restrictions on maize, he said

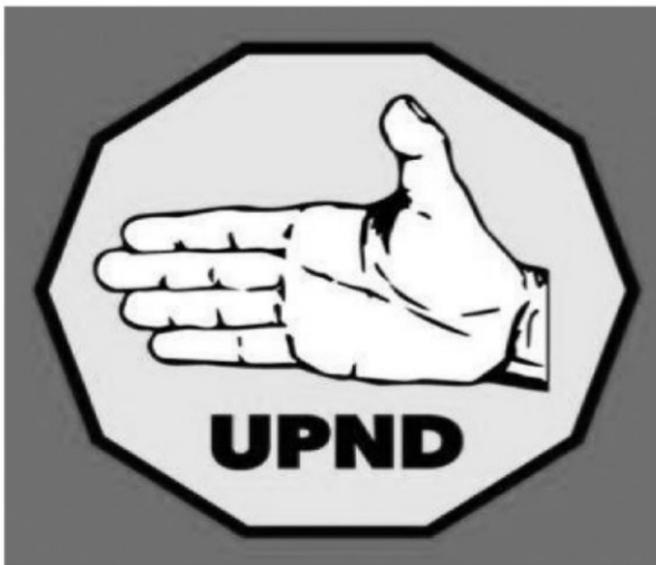
traders would persevere. "For us, as traders, we will try and recover. It is a fair compromise. We are okay with it. Being happy and being okay are two different things, isn't it?" Simwinga replied. He, however, expressed optimism of a decent maize harvest still being recorded this year despite dry spells experienced in the southern parts of the country. "Traditionally, we have had issues of drought in these areas; it's not the first time. Gwembe, we have seen troubles in those high temperature areas. But we have had good rains, starting from Kapiri (Mposhi) up to Muchinga, Luapula, Northern Province, Central, the Copperbelt and North-Western, too. And these are the ones that produce most of the 2.3 million tonnes of maize. So, I reckon we might even get 2.6 million tonnes," said Simwinga.

Lusaka man admits stealing mattress

By Zondiwe Mbewe
A 42-year-old general worker has pleaded guilty in the Lusaka Magistrates' Court to stealing a mattress worth K600 for his personal use. This is the matter in which Chispine Chembo of Chiyaba village in Nampundwe, is facing one count of burglary and theft contrary to Section 301(a) and 272 of the Penal Code Chapter 87 of the Laws of Zambia. Particulars of the offence allege that during the night of February 12 and 13, 2019, in

Lusaka, Chembo broke into Lister Kausu's house and stole a mattress valued at K600. And when the matter came up for plea before magistrate Victoria Chitulangoma, Wednesday, Chembo pleaded guilty saying he entered the said house around 20:00 hours by forcing the door open. He added that he managed to break the lock to the house because it wasn't strong enough. Chembo said when he entered the house, he only stole the mattress which

was on the bed and left. "Yes I entered the complainant's house around 20:00 hours. I opened the door because the kind of lock which was there is not strong. When I entered the house, I just got the mattress which was on the bed and left," he said. Chembo disclosed that after getting the mattress, he took it to his house. Asked why he stole, he said he wanted to be using it. The court adjourned the matter to today for facts and possible sentencing.



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All applications should reach the Secretary General and respective Constituency Chairpersons by Friday, 15th March 2019.

Issued by: ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Reopen Prime TV, demands Hichilema

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema says The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) has played out a PF agenda by suspending Prime Television's broadcasting licence. In a statement, Wednesday, Hichilema had demanded for the immediate lift of the suspension saying failure to do so would prove that President Edgar Lungu is a dictator. "The suspension of Prime Television broadcasting rights must be lifted immediately, if not done then the people have every right to brand Mr Edgar Lungu, a dictator. Ours will be to empower the private Media so that they bring out issues affecting our people and then we can act on those concerns and not shutting them down. This is how modern Governments operate. They need feedback from their citizens. We will allow the media to give a voice to the voiceless because in the UPND we believe that it is Zambia and Zambians first," Hichilema stated. Hichilema stated that the move to shut independent media houses was unacceptable. "Human rights, freedoms

and liberties are under constant threat in our country and this must be a source of concern to each one of us. Our statement comes in the light of the closure of Prime TV under suspicious circumstance by the IBA with obvious instructions from PF. This is a gagging order on the media which plays a critical role in our country. Media intimidation, curtailing of freedom of speech and expression are all signs of a dictatorship that Zambia has become. Therefore, as people that believe in Media freedom, we would like to condemn the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) for playing out a PF agenda by closing privately owned Prime Television. The reasons stated for the closure are nothing but political and gagging the media. This move is unacceptable and all well-meaning Zambians must condemn it. We state so because IBA has never taken time to take such an action on ZNBC an institution funded by the Zambians despite it's unfair and biased coverage. You do not need to be media expert to know how biased ZNBC has become since 2011," stated Hichilema.

By Mirriam Chabala

Chief Government Spokesperson Dora Siliya says there is nothing sinister about the suspension of Prime Television's broadcasting license, insisting that everybody deserves to be corrected whenever they error. And Siliya says government is hoping that public transport operators will also adjust downwards transport fares following the reduction of fuel prices announced by the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) last week. Speaking when she addressed a press briefing in Lusaka, Wednesday, Siliya, who told journalists that she had not yet seen IBA's reasons for suspending the license, said that there was nothing special about Prime TV because every media institution deserved to be punished wherever they do wrong. She also castigated the Church for coming out so loud in their demand to have the suspension of Prime TV lifted, arguing that there was nothing special about Prime TV, as it was just a medium like several others whose licences had been suspended. "First of all, let me state that IBA is the responsible body for managing media houses so that they adhere to the code of conduct. I am not aware yet or have not taken site of the reasons that have been put forward by the IBA to suspend the Prime TV broadcasting license. I just wish to believe that based on their judgement, they [IBA] must have reasonable cause. I am still awaiting the report on the reasons that have been advanced by the IBA. For those who are commenting, I hope that they have seen the reasons, I would like to believe that they are making informed comments and not ignorant ones! But as far as I am concerned, it's very difficult for now to make a comment because it will be an ignorant one, as I haven't yet taken sight of the reasons that have been advanced by the IBA Board. So, it is my wish and hope that everybody first waits to see the reasons advanced so that we don't make ignorant or emotional statements. I have not been around, I was in Livingstone and I have been busy with Cabinet and cluster meetings so I haven't seen the report myself yet and I cannot make a comment yet," Siliya said. Asked if the presence of Ministry Permanent Secretary Chanda

There's nothing special about Prime TV - Siliya

Kasolo at IBA as Chairman would compromise Prime TV's process of appeal in any way, Siliya said denied the assertion, insisting that there was nothing special about Prime TV. "First of all, I don't think there is anything special about Prime TV. Government did not suspend in some cases, it revoked licenses! We withdrew licenses from Ngoma Radio in Luanshya and in Nyimba, a radio license was actually withdrawn. All what I have been made to believe is that a license for a radio in Kafue was suspended and Prime TV was also suspended. So, there is nothing special about Prime TV because there are about 115 radios and over 45 TV stations in this country. And like I said, I don't know what the specific reasons for Prime TV or the other radio stations were, so I wouldn't want to make an ignorant or emotional decision. I want to take sight of the reasons and then look at what the law provides for. And I have not yet seen an appeal from the any of the affected institutions," Siliya said. "Now, in every institution, just like in every family, there are 'dos and don'ts' and there are procedures. So, I would like to believe that the people at IBA must have grounds, and if there will be any appeals, there must be grounds. These are everyday administrative matters, if you have an accident every day with your car or the road license is not renewed, the RTSA can decide to take action or to provide for fines. These are normal administrative issues and there is nothing sinister about it! I just hope that those who are making comments are not making ignorant comments and that they have sight of the report because I haven't seen it yet for me to say these are the reasons or not and that they are valid or not. And then the PS by virtue of being here [at the Ministry], is a member of the IBA Board

anyway. So, it doesn't take way [anything] in terms of the appeal; the appeal is to the office of the Minister and the assumption that these people are always sinister is a wrong assumption!" And Siliya told the church mother bodies to stop making comments on issues they don't understand. "Let us make statements because we have taken sight of the report and we say: 'I don't like this and that'. So, until I take sight of the report, for me, I don't want to make ignorant or emotional statements. As for the Church Mother Bodies, I don't want only to hear about the Church Mother Bodies making statements when it's Prime TV or politicians [affected]. I want to hear them make statements about youth issues, about jobs and about the scandal we had with the Lusaka Hustle [programme], I think the silence from the Church was very loud! So, I just hope that everybody is making an informed comment not an ignorant one," she said. Further, Siliya said government was expecting public transporters to slash bus fares following the reduction of fuel prices effected by the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) last week. "I wish to take you back to the briefing I had a few weeks ago where I said that government was going to share the gains with the public, once the fuel (oil) prices internationally came down. You have seen that government has gone ahead to share with the people that gain by passing on the gain to the people, and what we are hoping for is that public transporters also can pass on the gain to the public because government worked through the ERB to reduce the prices to respond to the international oil prices. Our hope is that the public transporters can also share that gain with the public as well. I just wanted us to recall that this was an issue that came



up in one of these press briefings on why the fuel prices at that time had gone up because of international oil prices and that now when the price has come down, government has responded positively," she explained. Meanwhile, Siliya called on Zambians to work with government to promote the film industry in order to provide the much-needed jobs. "Government through ZNBC is a shareholder in Multi-choice and there, we have provided for content production on Zambezi Magic. And on our platform TopStar, there is a platform for Zambian content and there is investment in the studios, which means there is demand for local content. So, the reason why we have to promote local content is because we don't want to export jobs. Every time you watch a foreign film, you

are exporting a job, instead of that job being provided here. Every time people are producing a film, it's not only cameras and actors present, there are people who supply food; people who supply insurance; banking; phone facilities; wardrobes...all these are opportunities for Zambians to get into business," said Siliya. The briefing also attracted Youth, Sport and Child Development Minister Moses Mawere, who led a team of youthful film makers that had gone to meet the Minister of Information to launch the the Professional Film Makers Guild in Zambia, along with their interim chairman Lawrence Thompson. And PF media director Sunday Chanda said many people who were condemning the closure of Prime TV did not understand the gravity of damage it was causing. "Many of them did not even watch

the Prime TV News Bulletin of 9th February 2019; yet, as per their custom of blind solidarity they have hurriedly criticised government just for the sake of it, without even thinking of the terrible consequences the over-hyped inflammatory story could have had in the nation. We also note that the Statement purported to be authored by three (3) Church Mother bodies only carries one signature instead of the usual customary three," said Chanda. "The gravity of fake and inflammatory broadcasting should not be under rated. Examples abound the world over of Media houses and journalists engaging in thoughtless and inaccurate, partisan and inflammatory reporting that have set nations ablaze."

Govt pondering China debt swap – Mwanakatwe

By Stuart Lisulo

Zambia will propose a debt swap with China from US dollars to Chinese yuan when government officials visit that country at the end of this month, Finance Minister Margaret Mwanakatwe has revealed. Speaking during a press briefing in Lusaka, Wednesday, Mwanakatwe explained that the rationale made sense in view of the need to mitigate the exchange rate exposure between Zambia's kwacha and the US dollar, and the large trade volumes between the two countries. Whenever the kwacha depreciates against major currency convertibles, the country's external debt position is adversely affected meaning the debt amount increases. At the current exchange rate, one Chinese yuan, otherwise commonly referred to as the Renminbi, is equivalent to around K1.79, compared to K12.00 per dollar. "...Ourselves, as a country, our largest importation comes from China. So, it makes sense to look at ways and means as to how we can take advantage of this kwacha-yuan position. We have borrowed from

China, we've borrowed in dollars. So, our intention is to actually swap the dollar into yuan, or Renminbi as you may wish to call it, so that we can try and mitigate, somewhat, the exposure to the dollar and the movements of the dollar," Mwanakatwe told journalists at the Ministry of Finance. She, however, hastened to add that official bilateral discussions between Zambia and China had not commenced on the proposed debt swap. "Let me say that, again, we have not begun those discussions. This is a thought that is going on amongst ourselves as a Ministry, together with the central bank, so we can see how we can best utilise what we have as import-export, and how we can how come up with a swap that will mitigate some of the dollar exposure that we have, and, as such, put less pressure on our reserve requirements for dollar and be able to boost our reserves," explained Mwanakatwe. Zambia's gross international reserves by the end of the fourth quarter of last year plummeted to US \$1.57 billion, the lowest in the last nine years, from a high of around US \$3.1 billion in 2014.

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Home of investigative journalism in Zambia

ZNBC's Shalala scoops Khashoggi award for courageous journalism

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

ZNBC journalist Paul Shalala has won an international inaugural Jamal Khashoggi award for courageous journalism.

And ZNBC has congratulated Shalala for his achievement.

Shalala and four other journalists from America, Pakistan and United Kingdom won the awards that were introduced by a Texas-based NGO called the Inti Raymi Fund.

In a statement, ZNBC corporate affairs manager Yvette Chanda stated that Shalala has received the recognition for a series of stories he covered on the youth criminal gangs on the Copperbelt Province.

"Mr Shalala is one of the five recipients of the award that was introduced by Texas-based Non-Governmental Organization-the Inti Raymi Fund after Saudi journalist was killed in the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Turkey. Mr Shalala has received the recognition for a series of stories he covered on the youth criminal gangs on the Copperbelt, among them, the Tokota Boys; 70 Niggas; The Hundreds, and Mbwambwamba. The other four recipients have been drawn from Nigeria, United States of America, Pakistan and the United

Kingdom. And the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation has congratulated Mr Shalala for the award," Chanda stated.

And Northern Region Media Club (NORMEC) secretary Clinton Masumba stated that it was elating to learn about Shalala's achievement and further called for serious dedication to the profession.

"The Media Club is elated that Shalala, is not only among the five winners, but also the only Zambian awarded among other brave journalists who expose abuse of power and corruption; share difficult truths and work in hostile environments. We wish to encourage other journalists to continue working hard and remain professional in their daily work activities. NORMEC is hopeful that Shalala's progression in winning global awards will motivate other journalists to enter such competitions as well as continue working hard to bring out issues affecting communities. The award that seeks to promote investigative journalism across the world is named after Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian journalist who was murdered in the Saudi Arabian Consulate in the Turkish city of Istanbul on October 2, 2018,"

Masumba stated.

Meanwhile, Chipata Press Club president Oswald Yambani stated that it was encouraging to see the work of Zambian journalists being recognized by international bodies and called for global competition among journalists.

"It is encouraging to see a journalist raise the Zambian flag high! We feel proud and encouraged that Zambian works are recognized by international bodies, which should encourage more journalists in the country to be participating in global competitions. We further want to take this opportunity to ask government to be recognizing courageous Zambian journalists that have been winning international awards in a special way so as to encourage others to raise the Zambian flag even higher. The award seeks to promote investigative journalism across the world," stated Yambani.



University of Zambia graduates take a selfie during the 48th graduation ceremony at the main Campus yesterday - Photo by Tenson Mkhala

State turns another trafficking-accused court official into witness

By Zondiwe Mbewe

The State has discontinued

the case against one of the seven court officials who are jointly charged with two businessmen for allegedly trafficking in 24 kilogrammes of cocaine that went missing under the custody of the Lusaka Magistrates' Court.

The State, however, turned Florence Mushoka, a court interpreter, into their witness immediately after entering a nolle prosequi. Mushoka is the second person, among the accused, to be turned into a State witness since the matter was taken to court, the first being Charles Nkuwa.

Nkhuwa, a businessman at Katondo Street, was initially charged with the accused persons before the State entered a nolle prosequi in a case before another court where they were all facing three counts of drug trafficking, but was set free. This is the matter in which Mushoka was jointly-charged with businessmen Eric Chipango, Emmanuel Chimba and court officials Emmanuel Chirwa; Bearvan Mengo; Mathews Mukanda; Victor Nzaila; O'Brian Muyunda and Didie Kangwa, a senior clerk of court, with four counts of trafficking in cocaine and two counts of theft by servant.

The accused persons are charged with one count of trafficking in 80.11

grammes of cocaine without lawful authority and another count of trafficking in 1Kg of cocaine without lawful authority.

Chimba, a businessman, and Chirwa, a court interpreter, are facing another count of trafficking in 1.5 grammes of cocaine without lawful authority. Chirwa is also facing one more count of trafficking in 4.5 grammes of cocaine without lawful authority and another count of theft by servant where he's alleged to have stolen 4.5 grammes of cocaine, the property of the government of Zambia.

Meanwhile, all the court officials are charged with one count of theft by servant where they are alleged to have stolen 24 kilogrammes of cocaine between August 4, 2017, and August 9, 2018, the property of the government of Zambia. When the matter came up for continued trial before Magistrate Victoria Chitulungoma, Wednesday, State advocate Sipholiano Phiri informed Court that the State wanted to discontinue proceedings against Mushoka following instructions from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

"This court is informed that the State will like to discontinue the matter against A7, Florence,

through a nolle prosequi and that this court should, therefore, enter into its record the said nolle prosequi," Phiri said.

And Mushota's lawyer Zevyanji Sinkala told the Court that he had no objection for the State to proceed in the manner that they had done, adding that he was grateful that it had taken that stance.

However, immediately after her discharge, the State called Mushota to the stand as its witness in the case.

But before Mushota could even take oath, one of the defence lawyers Keith Mweemba applied for an adjournment, saying the lawyers representing the third accused person were not in court.

He added that in the interest of justice, the defence wanted to get fresh instructions from their clients because the discharge came as a surprise to them.

"We have been ambushed! We did not foresee the application that has come. In view of this, we shall also need to seek further instructions from our clients. [The application] was so sudden, more than the speed of lightning itself. We shall be ready tomorrow (today)," Mweemba said.

The court then adjourned the matter to today for continued trial.

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By Zondiwe Mbewe
 NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili says civil servants are yet to experience longer periods without pay because it is the beginning of the end. And Kambwili says ministers and top government officials should stop paying themselves and prioritise civil servants so that they can also feel the pinch. Meanwhile, Kambwili has wondered what kind of government can buy toxic drugs from China to kill its own citizens. Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, Kambwili said he had been vindicated because he had previously warned civil servants that they would start going months without receiving their salaries given government's mismanagement of public resources. "The press briefing today is entitled 'The beginning of the end, effects of the thieving, unreasonable government'.

Civil servants must expect no salaries in future - Kambwili

For the past two years, I have been telling the people of Zambia that this government is corrupt, full of thieves who have plundered national resources for their own pockets. I have also told this country that over borrowing by this government will have a turning effect on the service delivery to the people of Zambia in terms of social aspect," Kambwili said. "But our borrowing unnecessarily today has started showing its ugly face on Zambian social front and economy. I have warned Zambians before, particularly civil servants

that soon and very soon 'you will start going months without your salaries'. I have said it before that at the level this government has borrowed, at the level this government is tolerating corruption, at the level ministers are stealing from this government, soon and very soon civil servants will start going months without pay. I think I have now been vindicated." Kambwili warned that what was currently happening was just the beginning, as disaster lay ahead. "What is happening today is the beginning of the end.

Where we are heading to is disaster. It is up to Zambians to realise that this is the beginning of the end. By June, July, August, I can tell you that all the civil servants will not be able to be paid by the 10th or 15th of the following month for which they are supposed to be paid," he said. Kambwili charged that the PF was a selfish government because they should have paid civil servants first rather than prioritizing the top government officials. "These are selfish leaders. Ministers have been paid, Permanent Secretaries,

members of parliament have been paid but the support staff civil servants have not been paid. This is selfishness of the worst kind, because if there is a crisis in terms of finances in the country, the best approach is that leaders must not be paid first. It's better you get the money that you are paying the leaders, you go and pay the common ordinary civil servant other than ministers, MPs. This is a selfish government," he said. And Kambwili said top government officials should stop getting paid so that they could feel the pinch that civil servants and ordinary

citizens were feeling. "Imwe bene (you same) leaders, ministers, MPs, constitutional office bearers, should stop getting your salaries until you are able to pay everybody, not only civil servants, so that you can feel the pinch that these people are feeling. Because you are eating well and getting paid, you cannot see the suffering of the people," he said. Meanwhile, Kambwili wondered what kind of government could buy toxic drugs from China to kill its citizens. "I have talked about cheap and dumping of imported things particularly from China. Because this government is broke, they can't afford to buy good quality medicines from England, Germany, they now go and buy toxic medicines from China. What kind of government can buy medicine which can kill people, make people more sick? What a government," he said. Kambwili urged Zambians to open their eyes and start preparing to kick out the PF in 2021. "Where I come from they say 'umweo wa muntu waba mu kutwi'. A leader who doesn't listen, who doesn't get advise, a leader who only wants to listen to things that pleases his ears is a wrong leader and can lead the nation into chaos. This is exactly the character of President Edgar Lungu. I want to seriously appeal to Zambians, please start preparing to kick this government out of office through the ballot," said Kambwili.



University of Zambia graduates at the 48th graduation ceremony at the main Campus yesterday - Photo by Tenson Mkhala

Health Minister declares Lusaka cholera free

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
 Health Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya has declared Lusaka as a cholera free city. Updating Parliament on the status of the cholera outbreak, Wednesday, Dr Chilufya said 19 days had passed since the last cholera case was recorded. "A number of cases that were investigated proved negative. Mr Speaker, today marks 19 days after the last case of cholera was recorded. I, therefore, declare the cholera outbreak as over in Lusaka. Mr Speaker, I wish to remind the House that this time last year, we were at the peak of the cholera outbreak and we saw 5,346 patients affected with 97 deaths. In the recent outbreak, we have only recorded seven cases and no deaths," Dr Chilufya said. And he explained that the last case of cholera was diagnosed on February 12,

2019, with zero deaths. "On 29th January 2019, the Ministry of Health, through its surveillance intelligence unit, the Zambian National Public Health Institute investigated and confirmed a case of cholera in Kabanana

area in Lusaka's Chipata sub-District. The index case was a 38-year-old male from Kabanana who presented at Chipata level one hospital with dehydration caused by severe diarrhoea and vomiting. Laboratory testing

revealed cholera and the cause of the disease. Five days later, another case [of] a 38-year-old female from Garden Chilulu was confirmed for cholera. Five more cases have since been confirmed and the last case

was confirmed on the 12th February, 2019. A total of seven confirmed cases have been recorded. Mr Speaker, the cases came from Kabanana; Chilulu; Kamwala and Kabanana Overspill and Mtendere [with] all

cases presented with severe dehydration due to acute diarrhoea and vomiting and all patients were treated in the cholera treatment centres within then sub-districts in which they reside," said Dr Chilufya.

Prime TV appeals, as US asks IBA to lift suspension

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
 The United States Embassy has asked the Independent Broadcasting Authority to urgently reverse the suspension of Prime TV's broadcasting license saying it is counter productive to upholding democratic tenets. And Prime TV managing director Gerald Shawa has appealed to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services against the suspension. In a statement, Wednesday, the U.S Embassy joined other voices in raising concern over IBA's conduct. "The United States remains a staunch

advocate for inherent human freedoms around the world. U.S. Embassy Lusaka joins other voices in concern over the Independent Broadcast Authority's decision to suspend Prime TV's broadcasting license. The fundamental freedoms of speech and the press are critical for the advancement of a vibrant democracy. The United States finds the suspension of Prime TV's license counterproductive to upholding these principles, and encourages an urgent reconsideration of this action," read the statement. And in his letter, addressed to

Information Minister Dora Siliya, dated March 5, 2019, Shawa argued that suspending the TV licence for 30 days was not the only available remedy to address the alleged unprofessionalism at Prime TV. "We write to appeal against the IBA decision to suspend our broadcast license for 30 days in their letter dated 4th March, 2019, pursuant to Section 31 (1) of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Amendment Act No.26 of 2010. It is our considered view that a suspension is not the only remedy available to address what the IBA termed as unprofessional practice

by Prime Television," Shawa stated. Shawa appealed to Siliya to review and consider giving him a warning with specific guidelines so that the institution did not suffer economic losses. "Given the immediate, economic effects on the broadcast institution that would follow as a result of the IBA decision, we request that your Ministry reviews the IBA action to a warning with specific guidelines as has been the practice with other institutions before. We hope and pray that our request is favourably considered," appealed Shawa.

For the past few months, we have been seeing headlines to the effect that some parastatals are declaring dividends to the Ministry of Finance, amounting to millions of kwacha. This is great news for our country because it shows that our ever hardworking government leaders are implementing sound economic policies which are yielding evident results and pouring the much-needed revenue into the Treasury.

But before we celebrate this feat, let us all as citizens look into the development with inquisitive eyes. Today, Zesco will declare millions in dividends; tomorrow when the bosses at ZCCM-IH hear economists warn that dividends may decline owing to the 2019 mining tax policy, they will also go and flaunt a cheque; then the next day the Industrial Development Corporation will be at the Ministry of Finance to register their overall profits too; but at what cost? What is government's net expenditure on these investments before we count the profit?

Our starting point will be the governance structure at the mother body of State Owned Enterprises – the Industrial Development Corporation. Last Friday, government-funded and State-controlled media ran headlines about the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) declaring dividends to the Ministry of Finance worth about K9 million.

We have no argument about this resultant declaration, but we have problems with the procedural accountability in the expenditure. This is a classic example of what we have been talking about with regards the governance of the parastatal mother body. To start with, these dividends were declared to the

Paying dividends to paint imaginary parastatal profits

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Fredson Yamba, and his Minister madam Margaret Mwanakatwe, as shareholder of IDC. But Mr Yamba and madam Mwanakatwe are both members of the IDC board at the same time.

In a proper governance system, an independent board of a parastatal presents dividends to independent shareholders, who then can provide accountability oversight on the board and examine its flaws. But in our case, it's like Mr Yamba and madam Mwanakatwe as a board members of IDC were declaring dividends to themselves as shareholder of IDC. In which world can that be called good governance? What accountability can Mr Yamba and madam Mwanakatwe enforce since they are part of the board and its decisions? What is worse is that the Republican President cannot enforce accountability because he is actually the board chairman of the IDC. So it is also logically correct to look at this confusion from the point of view that the Head of State was presenting

dividends to his Minister of Finance. This is the scandal that we have been singing about.

The next issue is the real value of the K39 million profit declared by the IDC board and the IDC assets estimated to be worth K15 billion. Our understanding is that for a business to record profit, there must be expenditure and revenue thereof. We have noted that when making these declarations of profits, the expenses and revenues are never brought out. We want to know the whole quantum of revenues recouped from the investments so that we can appreciate the dividends that our parastatals are declaring to government. Knowing the amount of profit is not enough.

One can also argue that a company that has K15 billion worth of assets declaring a profit of K39 million, and giving dividends to the Zambian people worth K9 million (which is even less than a million dollars) is not only a loss but a scam. People already know that IDC for example is spending

amounts like US\$16 million cash in one investment transaction, so it will be disturbing for citizens to receive paltry dividends without an explanation of what expenditure the profit was calculated against.

Further, when we understand the revenue that IDC is collecting, we will be able to evaluate that against the investments that it's making on behalf of Zambians. This is very critical because we don't want the IDC to borrow money for investments which are loss making. If IDC is recording profits of K39 million, where are the millions of dollars coming from which they are using to purchase struggling milling companies, loss-making banks and unprofitable palm plantations? As a matter of fact, some of these companies which are declaring dividends to the Ministry of Finance, are going back the following morning to ask for funding, so who are they fooling?

If the IDC and the ministry officials held an extraordinary meeting where these profit figures

were produced, there must have been audited accounts from the institution. This is what the people holding IDC shares on behalf of Zambians should be interested in, to see how the company performed during the period under review. As stakeholders, we want to see audited accounts published in the newspapers the way other companies publish their accounts. Give us the full computation of figures so that we stop speculating.

Actually, we want to go further than that. Since IDC has declared that these are the assets and this is the profit; let the Auditor General's office step in to verify the records and affirm that indeed the profit makes business sense, given what was spent. Are IDC assets truly worth K15 billion? Are the profits and dividends being declared without passing through a message parlour? We don't want doctored information, and only an independent auditor can tell us the truth, not the IDC board declaring to itself.

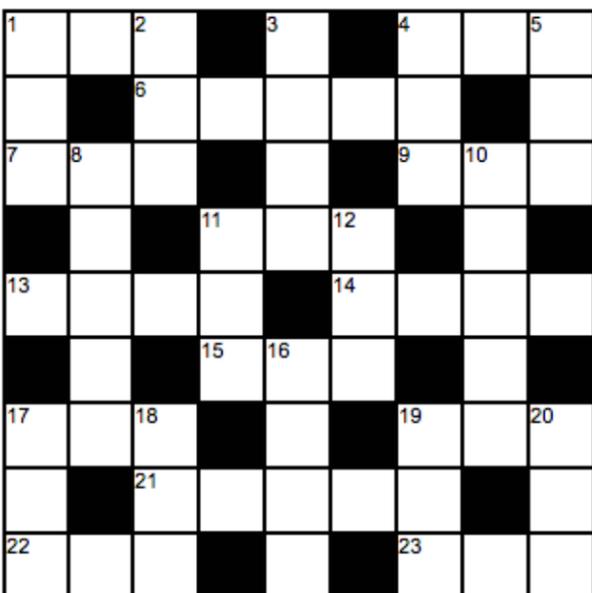
This is the reason why we argue that the IDC is

not achieving the purpose for which it was created. This is because the multi-million dollar institution is making political decisions in places where economic decisions are needed. This is the point where we must ask the question; what is the IDC doing, which individual ministries and parastatals would not have achieved on their own? Which State Owned Enterprise has the IDC turned around to double or triple its earnings? In our view, there is none. Money which would have gone directly to the Treasury from parastatals, is now passing through IDC, where it is massaged before being passed on to the Zambian stakeholders. It's more like a spending agency hiding under an umbrella of imaginary profit.

Despite the expectation that was envisioned during the formation of the IDC, that State Owned Enterprises would be turned around towards profitability, the new structure has reduced government revenue and ended up being parasitic on the little dividends paid by few State Owned Enterprises.

Our point is that there is no transparency in this whole operation and Zambians must demand that declarations are made with full audited information. In the absence of that complete picture, let's stop clapping for the IDC and its parastatals which are queuing up to paint a smiling image when the actual picture is gloomy.

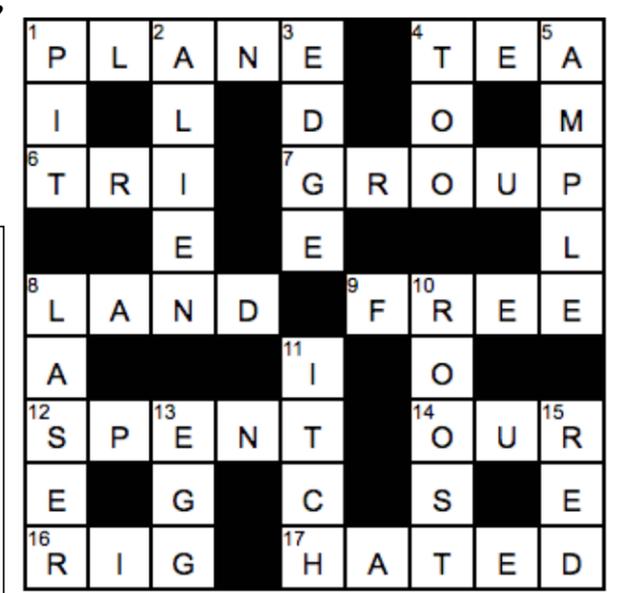
Crossword puzzle 308



“God will not look you over for medals, degrees or diplomas but for scars.”
- Elbert Hubbard

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Across</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greek H 4. Begley and McMahon 6. Awesome 7. Large deer 9. Orangutan, e.g. 11. Little devil 13. Muffin choice 14. Absent Without Leave (abbr.) 15. Hoodwink 17. Neptune's realm 19. Grassy clump 21. Tightness in a muscle 22. Foot part 23. Babble on | <p>Down</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The night before an event 2. Pose a question 3. Unwanted email 4. Earned Run Average 5. Litigate against 8. T-shirt size 10. Album insert 11. Co. name ender 12. Skillet 16. Fall birthstone 17. Take a seat 18. 'A' on cards 19. Snoop 20. Slightly submerge |
|--|--|

Solutions to puzzle 307



Reader's feedback

Charles Zulu still insisting on being a full-time PF member

Editor,

Miti

"The problem with Charles Zulu MP is he very arrogant and thinks he owns Luangeni constituency. Let him continue to live in self-denial, but the truth is that the man was suspended from the PF as News Diggers! has correctly put it. All we are waiting for now is for him to exculpate himself on the charges levelled against him. If he has not done that to-date, then it's a clear case of insubordination and lack of respect for the party disciplinary process! Now that he has defied the procedure, the next step is expulsion from the party so that we can have a by- election, and here I come; I'm next in line for the seat!" – Yosi

"Davies Mwila, just direct Dr. Matibini to declare the seat vacant, and it will be so. It's that simple! Call for candidates for adoption for the by election, chapwa! Davies Mwila's running the show!" - Sarah Musongole

Govt's recalling of hazardous Chinese drug

Dear Editor,

"No wonder they jump on the next available plane seeking treatment abroad!!! They are not sure of the

medicines they buy for us!!"
- Chimbulu Matanga

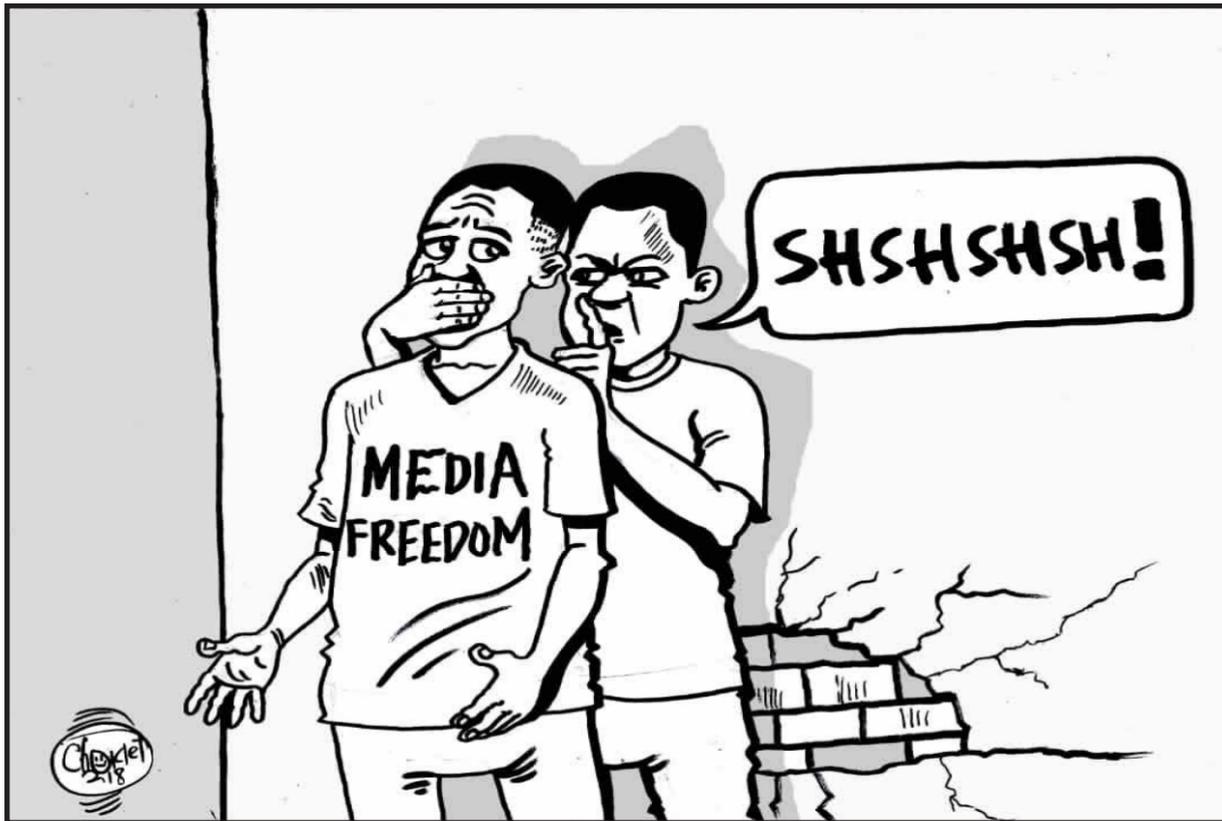
"We have capable medicine manufacturing facilities in Zambia with a proven record accepted by ZAMRA's standards, yet we import from places where we are not assured of the quality of products; this is the result!" - Methews Kabungo

"What happened to quality control? Minister of Health, since when did we start procuring these sensitive medicines from China?" - Mike Kajoba

"When someone says I have no vision, these are the results. Vision comes with commitments and responsibilities!"
- Marx Green Ngandu Sinkolongo

"These are the cases a caring government should quickly move in and arrest all those in charge of procurement!"
- Angel Shaka Mainga

"Those responsible need to be taken to court for risking lives of Zambians!" - Terry Mike



Govt's lifting of mealie meal export ban

Editor,

"That's how long it takes us to configure ourselves for business. First, lose the market share, then try and regain it. Very commendable move by the Minister. Let us learn that one can or shouldn't control that which they didn't grow. In the process, we are also saving our roads as DRC was importing mealie meal from SA through Zambia. Further, the Minister should look at how DRC's high mealie meal prices can be used to subsidise local consumption. Allow the price of maize to rise to whatever level and let those who can efficiently produce it export or sell locally. After all, we have a logistical bottleneck of what can be exported in any one year. The local demand is still higher. Let millers exporting cushion local prices alongside those getting subsidised FRA maize, but can't export. Allow farmers & traders alike to make money and payback their loans. That's how you grow agriculture!" - Brian Tembo

Nundwe's move to start verifying freedom fighters' credentials

Editor,

"Long overdue, let them leave us, the true freedom fighters to be benefiting." - Lawrence Makombo

fighters!" - Peter Victor Shamabanse

"Good idea, but let's spend our energy and monies eradicating poverty first!" - Jjoe Umbidza

"I support this, even those aging rapidly ati 'freedom fighter'." - Emelda Litana

"And let's make it clear that they are freedom fighters from Kaunda's days; the democratic fighters for Chiluba's days; the corruption fighters of Mwanawasa..." - Allan Shikanjika Kasungami

"Who is a freedom fighter? I guess age is not a factor provided one champions the well-being of the community, speaks for the oppressed and provides for them." - Kangwa Mathews

"Imagine? Even cadres have become freedom

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.



A picture taken on October 31, 2018 shows polar bears feeding at a garbage dump near the village of Belushya Guba, on the remote Russian northern Novaya Zemlya archipelago, a tightly-controlled military area where a village declared a state of emergency in February after dozens of bears were seen entering homes and public buildings. Scientists say conflicts with ice-dependent polar bears will increase in the future due to Arctic ice melting and a rise of human presence in the area as Moscow bolsters economic and military activity in the Arctic. An "invasion" of aggressive polar bears in inhabited areas of Arctic Russia occurred for around ten days in February 2019 after the animals came to the area looking for food. Polar bears are affected by global warming with melting Arctic ice forcing them to spend more time

hot chocolate a day helps reduce fatigue, study finds

Drinking a cup of hot chocolate every day can help reduce fatigue in people with multiple sclerosis (MS), a study has found.

People who were given a cocoa drink rich in flavonoids - compounds known for their antioxidant properties - reported less tiredness and pain than those given another drink.

The researchers concluded flavonoids, which are found in various plant-based foods, including raw cacao, could help reduce inflammation in the body. Around 127,000 people in the UK suffer with MS, which affects the brain and spinal cord, and can cause symptoms such as problems with vision, arm or leg movement, sensation or balance.

A six-week study, funded by the MS Society, of 40 people recently diagnosed with the relapsing remitting form of the disease split patients into two groups.

The first were given a cup of cocoa, rich in flavonoids, while the other half were given a version containing a lower level of flavonoids. Researchers found those who drank the beverage with a higher dosage of flavonoids were less



fatigued.

It is thought the drink could also influence mood, cognitive performance, and the ability to perform certain movements.

Lottie Campion, 35, from Warwickshire, was diagnosed with relapsing MS in 2017, having experienced her first symptoms shortly after giving birth to her son the previous year.

The part-time marketing assistant said: "My most crippling MS symptom was fatigue, so when I saw people were needed for a trial I thought 'anything is worth a shot'. Plus, I'm a chocolate monster!"

"I noticed after just a few weeks that I felt less tired - I couldn't believe it!" ... "I've been drinking it every morning since."

A year later, she says she's finding the fatigue easier to manage: "I still have MS,

but I'm pretty confident the hot chocolate is helping. I even tell my friends and family that they should try having a cup to feel more energised!"

Dr Shelly Coe, senior lecturer in nutrition at Oxford Brookes University, said "we now need to know exactly how effective flavonoid-rich hot chocolate is and whether it can benefit all people with MS before it's recommended".

Dr Susan Kohlhaas, director of research at the MS Society, said: "We know fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of MS and it can have a huge impact on quality of life, so finding more comprehensive treatments that help is one of our top research priorities."

The results were published by the Journal of Neurology Neurosurgery and Psychiatry. Sky news

Gamers suggest ways to combat addiction

Gaming "addicts" have been talking to MPs about the dangers of spending too much time online.

One told them that parents should set a three-hour-a-day limit on their children's gaming.

It is part of an inquiry into technology addiction, being held by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

At an earlier hearing, representatives from the gaming industry downplayed the issue.

There is no publicly available content from that meeting but, in written evidence to the committee, the association for UK Interactive Entertainment (Ukie) said there was a "lack of evidence" around the concept of gaming addiction, citing both a UN report and one from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

It also told MPs gameplay could be a "force for good".

"We believe that games can provide educational, physiological, psychological, recreational and social benefits to players," it said.

"Games provide rich story worlds, creative canvasses.

"They encourage critical thinking skills, empathy and, for many millions of players, highly valuable social platforms."

But when MPs asked gamer Matus Mikus whether parents should set time limits, he said: "I would say first that parents need to talk to their children, as each one is different, but I'd say that three hours at most per day. More than that is when it starts affecting you.

"Games by their nature are addictive."

Gamers were encouraged to compete for points or earn rewards for games, he said.. BBC

Trump renews Zimbabwe sanctions

Existing US sanctions on Zimbabwe in place since 2003 have been extended for a further 12 months.

President Donald Trump says the southern African nation poses an "unusual and extraordinary" threat

to US foreign policy.

He blamed President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government for failing to implement the "political and economic overhaul required to rebuild its reputation". The US president also said on Monday that Zimbabwe's 2018 election wasn't "fully free and fair".

US, UK and EU sanctions on Zimbabwe target individuals, as well as banning trade in weapons and direct government assistance for non-humanitarian programmes.

The decision will come as a blow to the Zimbabwean administration.

The BBC's Andrew Harding says it is trying to dig its way out of an economic hole caused by years of reckless spending, corruption, policy uncertainty and sluggish exports.

Last month, there were violent protests in Zimbabwe after a steep increase in fuel protests.

President of neighbouring South Africa, Cyril R. BBC

Michael Jackson's nephew defends him against new abuse allegations

Michael Jackson's nephew Taj Jackson has told Sky News the singer's controversial behaviour was a result of him never having a full childhood.

Taj Jackson defended his uncle after a new documentary featuring sexual abuse allegations against the late pop star was broadcast on US TV network HBO.

Jackson said it was because his uncle "didn't have that childhood" that the star would host sleepovers with children at his Neverland ranch in California.

Speaking to Sky presenter Kay Burley, he also said Jackson would "live vicariously" through his younger family members because he wanted to know what it was like.

Taj Jackson argued the allegations, including claims that the singer "married" a 10-year-old boy, could have been "made up" and that his uncle was not



alive to defend himself over it. Jackson, whose father is Michael's brother Tito, also said he would not have defended his uncle if he thought he was a bad person, saying supporting the pop star was the least he could do. It is alleged Jackson carried out sexual abuse at his Neverland ranch in California

A new two-part documentary called Leaving Neverland features interviews with James Safechuck and Wade Robson, who allege they were sexually abused by Jackson when they were children.

As a result of the claims featured in the documentary, three major radio stations in Canada have

pulled Michael Jackson songs from their playlist following the audience response.

The family and estate of Jackson, who died in 2009, have said the documentary spreads lies about the musician.

His relatives called the documentary a "public lynching" and said he was "100% innocent".

His estate said it was a "rehash of dated and discredited allegations" and filed a lawsuit against HBO in February, saying it breached a 1992 agreement that the channel would not belittle Jackson.

His brothers have spoken against the documentary but his sister Janet has stayed silent, with the family saying she does not want to give more "energy" to the allegations contained within it.

Director Dan Reed has defended Leaving Neverland and claims it shows the singer was very different from his "Peter Pan-ish image".

Jackson was accused of molesting 13-year-old Gavin Arvizo, conspiring to kidnap him and his family and giving him alcohol, but was found not guilty of all charges following a high-profile four-month trial in 2005.

In 1994, the singer settled a sexual abuse lawsuit concerning another 13 year-old boy. Sky News



Left: Harry Kane celebrates scoring the winner against Dortmund. Right: Dortmund's Witsel wins an aerial challenge against Kane as the two teams battled for a spot in the Quarter finals of the UEFA Champions League on Tuesday night. Tottenham won the tie 0-1 and 4-0 on aggregate

FAZ reveal plans to set up U23 camp abroad

By Abraham Kalito
Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) has revealed plans to set up U23 camp abroad in preparation for the 2019 AFCON qualifying match against Malawi scheduled for March 20th and 23rd. FAZ has also revealed plans to schedule an international friendly to enhance the preparations for the AFCON tournament which will also be used as a qualifier for the Tokyo 2020 olympics.

FAZ spokesperson Mwazipeza Chanda told NewsDiggers in an interview that the association was doing everything possible to ensure that players were ready for the game. "The team is in camp I hope you are aware of that. Its been in camp for some time now. Yes, we do have plans as FAZ to set up

camp ab road just like our colleagues. We might do so next week probably, but we will keep you informed of the developments. I think we will finalise those plans by the end of the week (this

week). We also have plans to schedule an international friendly prior to the qualifying match. It might be played here or abroad; those plans have not been finalised yet," she said.

Vinicius Jr out injured until tail end of the season as Madrid woes pile up

Vinicius Junior will be sidelined until the tail end of the season after Real Madrid confirmed the Brazilian teenager has torn calf ligaments in his right leg.

The winger sustained the injury in the first half of Madrid's Champions League defeat at the hands of Ajax on Tuesday. He was substituted in the 35th minute,

with Ajax leading 2-0, and the Eredivisie side went on to win 4-1 and dump the three-time defending champions out in the round of 16.

Vinicius has been a rare highlight for Madrid in a terrible season that has seen the club dismiss Julen Lopetegui, with Santiago Solari reportedly close to following suit. *Goal.com*

FAZ to investigate Copperbelt's division 2, 3 representative, Kunda

By Abraham Kalito
Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) has commenced investigations against division two side Afrisport FC representative Gabriel Kunda for allegedly unethical conduct.

Kunda recently wrote FAZ and gave them an ultimatum, demanding that the association address

issues affecting division two and three clubs, especially compressed match fixture.

Early last month, FAZ split division two and three into two streams in the transitional period that runs up to June.

The move was aimed at adhering to Confederation of African Football (CAF) directive to realign the league

to the preferred standard of commencing in August and ending in May.

FAZ hence realigned the matches in the two leagues to ensure that they are played between the period, a move that prompted Kunda to write to the association expressing his displeasure.

"In consultation with Copperbelt Division Two

and Three clubs, serious concerns have been raised which would like your good office to consider in consultation: There has not been any consultation or communication in regard: to the 2019 Compressed fixture which shall run from 3rd February to 23rd June 2019. Most clubs are sponsored by individuals who strangle to

manage the teams. Football is about fair play and all 30 games must be played on the pitch and all teams should have 2019 cards to avoid player transfer confusions. It has been suggested that if the teams are divided in groups of 8 teams per fixture then this compressed fixture may be flexible and manageable and can be played in the period in question with ease.

In conclusion Copperbelt Division Two and Three would appreciate if a consultative MEETING regarding the above three (3) points is held within Seven (7) days from today," lamented Kunda.

But FAZ has instead commenced investigations against Kunda for unprincipled behaviour.

"We write to notify you that you are being investigated for unethical conduct for illegally calling a meeting in accordance with the FIFA Code of Ethics Article 63. (2). You will then be notified of the outcome of the investigation in due course and the subsequent date of your hearing," a FAZ statement read.

Katongo in contention for Mufulira Wonderers job

By Abraham Kalito
Zambia's football star Christopher Katongo is reportedly being considered for a coaching role at Mufulira Wonderers FC where head coach Justin Chinama was recently suspended following a poor run in the first five games. Katongo has been re-appointed to assist Green Buffaloes coach Bilton

Musonda who was reinstated at the club less than three months after he was dismissed.

Sources close to News Diggers! however revealed that Katongo might return to the copperbelt and be given an opportunity to prove his coaching credentials if appointed coach. Katongo has emerged as a favourite

to replace suspended Chinama who is likely to be sacked when the club decides his fate in a few days time.

Earlier in the year, Katongo was favourite to land the Buildcon job after that club fired the coach.

Katongo who was raised in Mufulira did not play for the club, even though he is held in high

esteem there.

He led Zambia to the 2012 AFCON glory after which he was named BBC's African footballer of the year.

Katongo played his football in South Africa, Denmark, Greece, Germany and China before retiring aged 33 in a career that span for 15 years.

'Irritated' Bayern condemn Germany's decision to axe Muller, Boateng & Hummels

Bayern Munich have reacted angrily to Germany coach Joachim Low's decision to rule three of their veteran stars out of further international football.

Low has indicated he will not select Thomas Muller, 30, Mats Hummels, 29, and Jerome Boateng, 30 - who have 246 caps between them - for future games, summarily retiring the trio.

The decision comes with the national team boss ready to move on to a new generation, saying: "This is the year for our new beginning."

But the timing of it - ahead of key Bundesliga and Champions League games - and finality of the treatment of the three 2014 World Cup winners on a surprise visit to the training ground, has annoyed their club.

In a statement, Bayern said: "National coach Joachim Low has decided not to consider our players Thomas Muller, Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng in the future.

"Basically, we do not comment on sporting decisions of the national coach, the nomination of the squad of the national team is solely the responsibility of Joachim Low.

"However, we believe the timing and circumstances of this decision to the players and to the public is questionable. The last international match of the German national team took place on 19 November 2018.

"The fact that the players and the public were informed three months later, just ahead of important matches for FC Bayern next Saturday in the fight for the Bundesliga title against VfL Wolfsburg and a few days before the decisive second leg in the round of 16 of the Champions League next Wednesday against

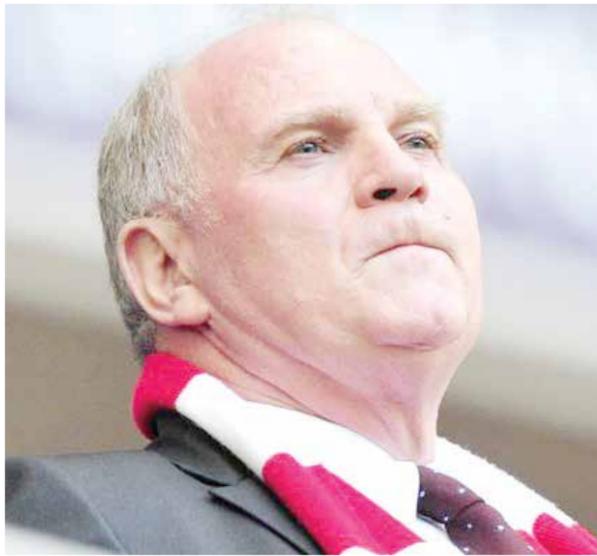
Liverpool, irritates us.

"In addition, we were surprised that this was done yesterday in the context of an unannounced visit by Joachim Low and Oliver Bierhoff (Director National Teams and Academy) at Bayern.

"Muller (100 caps), Hummels (70) and Boateng (76) have completed 246 internationals for the German national team, they have had an extremely successful decade of the DFB crowned by winning the world title in 2014 as an absolute highlight.

"FC Bayern have great respect for the athletic merits of Thomas, Mats and Jerome for the national team and German football."

Goal.com



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Madrid's Vinicius Junior out injured



Ajax players celebrate after a stunning 4-1 victory at the Bernabeu, knocking out three-time defending UEFA Champions League Champions Real Madrid. Real Madrid won the first tie 2-1 away in Amsterdam

WE'VE NOT SUSPENDED CONTRACTS

By Joseph Mwenda and Abraham Kalito

FAZ General Secretary Adrian Kashala says the association has not suspended any contract for employees, but it is correcting salary anomalies for individuals who awarded themselves allowances without board approval.

And Eastern Moon Hotel says although it is true that FAZ has not yet paid the bill for the Under-23 national soccer team that lodged at the facility, no one in the hotel management has ever made a payment claim to the soccer governing body; adding that it is false to say the players were threatened with eviction.

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...we are correcting salary anomalies - Kashala

