



Govt single sources private firm to collect money from motorists

IMS TO RUN TOLL PLAZAS

By Joseph Mwenda and Mukosha Funga

Government has single sourced the private company that is installing speed cameras for RTSA to also take over the management and collection of revenues from toll plazas dotted on the road network around the country.

According to a News Diggers investigation, Intelligent Mobility Solutions (IMS), which is a joint venture between Lebanese plastic manufacturer "Lamise Trading" and an Australian company "Kapsch" submitted an unsolicited proposal for what they called "an integrated tolling solution".

To page 7

Three firms to import GMOs

By Diggers Reporter

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has granted three distributors permits to import products that may contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The three companies are Cold Chain, Horizon and Innscor.

To page 10

Mansa police arrest mother for selling baby

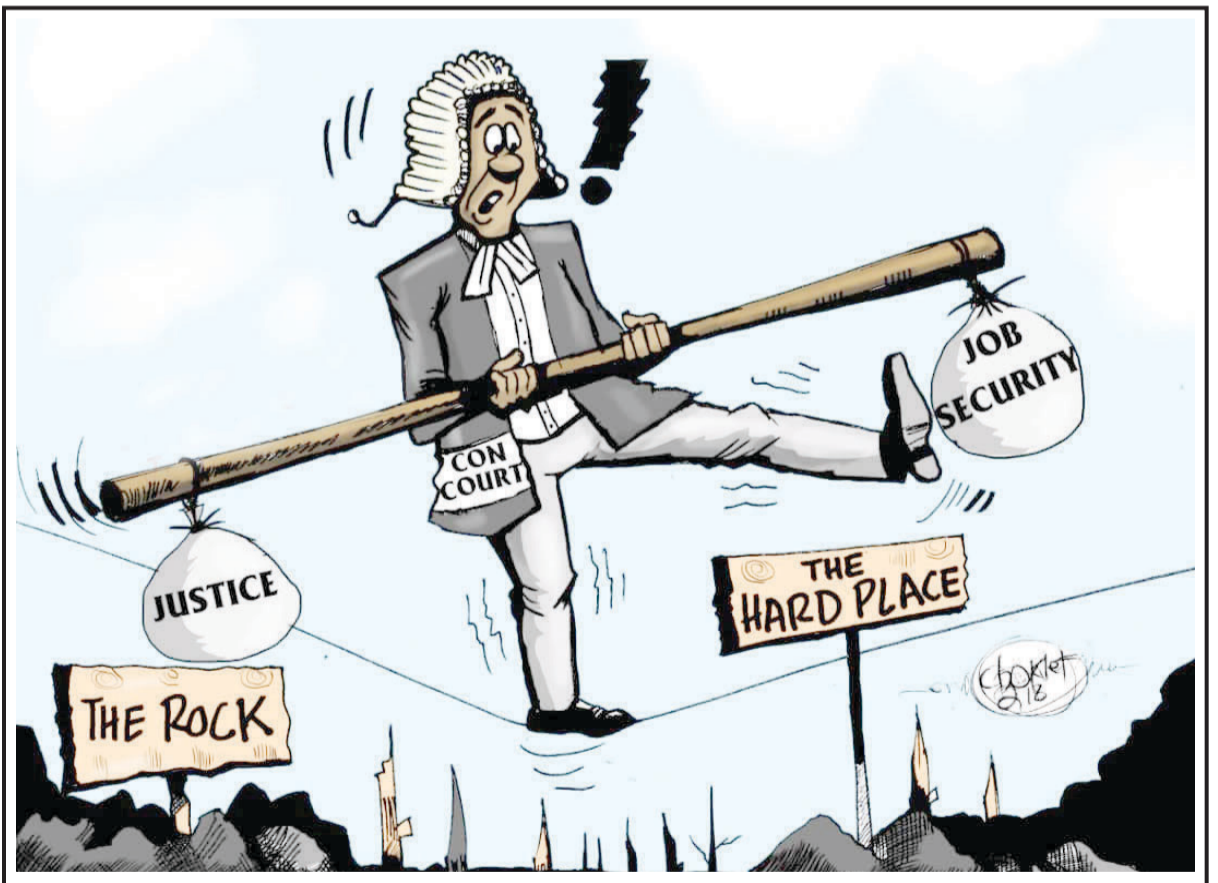
By Abraham Kalito

Police in Mansa have arrested a 16-year-old mother, Silvia Lawrence of Chamalawa village, Chief Mabumba in Mansa District, for human trafficking and subsequently selling her one-month-old biological daughter to Abigail Chama, aged 25, a traditional healer of the same vicinity.

To page 11

Lungu warns govt contractors fond of abandoning work

To page 2



Matibini's failure to declare Roan vacant is illegal, says Davies Mwila

To page 10



My husband used to sleep in chicken run, Livingstone woman tells court

By Zondiwe Mbewe

A woman of Livingstone's Maramba area has told the local court that her husband used to spend nights in the chicken run, leaving her alone in the bedroom.

This is the matter in which Maliambi Shimungalu had sued Mumba Mukuta for divorce.

The Court has since dissolved the couple's 10-year-old marriage on grounds that the two have lost affection for each other.

When the matter came up before Senior Local Court Magistrate Essau Daka and presiding Local Court Magistrate Ruth Liato, recently, Maliambi told the court that the two got married in 2008 and K3,600 was paid as dowry, representing six cows at K600 each.

She said they had three children; a 10-year-old, a six-year-old and a six-month-old baby.

Maliambi said before they got married, her husband, Mumba, had children from a previous marriage.

She said problems in their marriage started when Mumba started drinking too much beer and stopped buying food at home.

Maliambi told the Court that Mumba suggested

that they shift to the house left by his late brother to avoid paying rent, but whilst at his late brother's house, his behaviour got worse and he started spending nights in the chicken run, leaving her alone in the bedroom.

She said she reported the matter to the elders in the family, but there was no change, eventually Mumba started coming home late, between 22:00 hours and 23:00 hours.

Maliambi disclosed that the worst part was that his girlfriends could go to their home and boast of how they enjoyed Mumba's money and how a big buyer he was, yet he was failing to provide food or pay the children's school fees.

She further said her husband was violent and used abusive language against her.

But in his response, Mumba denied all the allegations against him, arguing that he was

actually a good man.

He explained that the problem was with his wife who had no respect for him, adding that he drank to avoid having high blood pressure.

Mumba claimed that at one time, his wife went somewhere for a month without his consent, and after she returned, she told him that the money he paid had finished.

He said this compelled him to finish the balance. Meanwhile, a witness, Irene Mangwato

of Kasenga village, Namwala, said Mumba was a problem who could not take heed to advice.

In their findings, the Court found that Mumba denied the claim, saying he still loved his wife, yet in his submissions he said he was ready to divorce her. They further found that the parties had lost affection for each other and that their marriage had broken down irretrievably.

They granted the couple divorce and ordered Mumba to be supporting his children with K1,000 payments.

They granted Maliambi custody of the children.

"Based on above findings, divorce is granted. Plaintiff (Maliambi) to have the custody of the three children forthwith. Defendant to be supporting his children with K1,000. The parties should share property equally," ruled the Court.

Lungu warns contractors fond of abandoning projects

By Mirriam Chabala

President Edgar Lungu has warned contractors working on various projects across the country to stop the tendency of abandoning works, saying the trend is costly to government's quest to foster national development.

Speaking when he commissioned the newly constructed US\$28.3 Million Mwomboshi Dam in Chisamba district, the President hailed Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company (AFECC)

for finishing works way ahead of schedule and called on other contractors to emulate their commitment.

The construction of the Mwomboshi Dam was funded by the World Bank under the Irrigation Development and Support Project under the Ministry of Agriculture and has the capacity to hold up to 65 million cubic liters of water as well as a 6,000 hectares capacity to irrigate.

The dam is expected to store water for irrigation by small-scale, emergent and commercial farmers and that close to 6,000 households are expected to benefit from

Mwomboshi dam, which has been constructed in Chief Chamuka's area.

"I am delighted to be associated with this remarkable project, which is the fulfillment of the Patriotic Front manifesto of increasing management and utilisation of water resources for agricultural development. This will be achieved by a number of things, constructing at least one large scale dam in each Province such as Mwomboshi to create massive water sources for irrigation ... This project is also a demonstration of our country turning a new page in the way we practice agriculture

in Zambia. The project is a stamp of the PF government's significant strides in initiating infrastructure projects which is aimed at enhancing tangible development," President Lungu said.

"This is the suspicious and ultra modern example of the main projects that we intend to roll out in our infrastructure development across the country. Mwomboshi dam is a game changer, not only in the irrigation system of the agriculture sector but also in particular Central Province. As government, we envisage to roll out power water

irrigation infrastructure projects like the one we are witnessing here throughout the country." The President also encouraged other contractors operating in Zambia to emulate AFECC's work culture.

"This achievement is a challenge and a wake up call to all contractors in all sectors of our economy, who have a tendency of abandoning works and failure to finish projects within the stipulated contract time frame. This is uncalled for and it's costly for us in our quest to foster national development. Let me take this opportunity to challenge all contractors to emulate the work culture and dedication which AFECC has exhibited here. The culture of not just completing works ahead of schedule but also of contrasting a dam which has a world class standard," said President Lungu.

And speaking earlier, Minister of Agriculture Michael Katambo said the commissioning of the Mwomboshi dam was a demonstration of the President's commitment to ensuring that the country was food secure.

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By Zondiwe Mbewe

Andyford Banda says a People's Alliance for Change (PAC) government will introduce a fast-track anti-corruption court and conduct forensic audits in the activities of previous administrations, punishing anyone found wanting.

In their weekly newsletter to News Diggers! Banda observed that corruption seemed to be an acceptable practice in politics around the world.

He, however, noted that the practice had heavily affected Africa, whose leaders portrayed "special skills" for greediness.

"In many developed countries, political leaders who abused public offices during their tenure are prosecuted, while in Africa many go scot-free, causing future leaders to continue on the same path of looting. Corruption has caused many challenges for governments around the world, including

We'll introduce fast-track anti-corruption court - PAC

Zambia. There just seem to be no care whatsoever, the consequences of such acts from heartless political leaders and their business associates. They don't care that people are dying in hospitals because of lack of medicines and equipment; they don't care that children fail to learn in proper environments due to lack of facilities. Farmers fail to get their adequate supply due to the corrupt system," Banda noted.

He stated that the fight against corruption was PAC's first priority, adding that a very significant portion of Zambia's problems could be

eliminated once they clamp down on corruption.

"The PAC believes that a very significant portion of the problems we face today could be eliminated once we clamp down on corruption. The fight against corruption is PAC's priority number one. Corruption has been a cancer in so many ways. Services are either delayed or not delivered at all, due to corruption. Government's supply chain has had to purchase goods and services at overly inflated prices due to corruption. The wrong people have been awarded tenders, even when it is clear that they don't deliver

or deliver poor quality goods and services. All this is the fruit of corruption. Corruption is a cancer," Banda observed.

He stated that PAC would restructure systems and come up with new and modern ways to fight corruption, adding that that they would introduce fast track anti-corruption court.

"We need to ensure that the Judiciary is reformed for speed delivery of prosecution and judgements. Just as we have a small claims court, and the RTSA fast-track courts, PAC will introduce fast track anti-corruption court. We must also set

precedence to prevent future leaders from committing the same crimes. Once PAC forms government, forensic audits will be conducted in the activities of previous governments, and all found wanting will be punished to set a good example for those who may want to contemplate getting involved in corruption. All properties acquired from abuse of public funds will be repossessed under PAC," he pledged.

Banda added that they would also implement an electronic procurement system that boosts competition and transparency in the

procurement of goods and services.

"We have to place in systems that will make it easy to trail corruption. We need to implement electronic systems to improve transparency in the operations of government, especially in the supply chain. PAC will implement an electronic procurement system that boosts competition and transparency in the procurement and outsourcing of various goods and service.

Meanwhile, Banda stated that PAC would ensure that the system that had long supported the people close to the corridors of power was stamped out by restructuring the existing Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

He added that they would ensure that the ACC takes an interest in the Auditor General's reports, adding that government officials who did not execute their duties professionally would either be dismissed or be recommended for prosecution, should elements of corruption be cited.

"The PAC will ensure that the system that has long supported the people close to the corridors of power is stamped out. This will only be possible by restructuring the Anti-Corruption Commission. It must be an autonomous body in order to ensure that the ACC is able to prosecute even high-level individuals, such as Ministers, without having to ask permission from the President. The PAC will introduce stiffer punishment for individuals who will be caught in corrupt deals," stated Banda.



Police mechanics getting hands on training on a Marverick Antiriot vehicle in South Africa purchased for the police which will soon be delivered. All provinces will be catered for as two types of the vehicles have been purchased; one type to be used by the paramilitary and mobile unit, the other for general riot situation. In total 18 vehicles - picture courtesy of Inspector General of Police Kakoma Kanganja

Escalating GBV cases despite stiff punishment worry CJ

By Daniel Chansa in Ndola

Chief Justice Ireem Mambilima says she is saddened by the increase in GBV cases despite the courts meting out stiff punishments.

Justice Mambilima said this at the official launch of the Ndola Gender Based Violence Fast Track and User-friendly Court, Thursday.

"The setting up is a culmination of the efforts of the Judiciary and the UN to rid communities of GBV cases. Justice to GBV

[victims] should be extended to all even in rural areas. Cases have continued in our country despite the stiff punishment metted," Justice Mambilima said.

"We have metted stiff punishment to even life imprisonment, but the cases continue to be on the increase. 2017 we recorded 21,504 cases in child defilement, rape, Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and others. It (GBV) is mostly perpetuated by relatives

and people they depend on. One of the drivers is traditional myths, like if the husband does not beat the wife, there is no love."

She observed that there was also an rise in cases of women murdering their husbands after a dispute.

"There is also a rise in acts of violence by women to the part of killing their husbands, 21 GBV murders were recorded in the first quarter of 2018. We have confidence in the court. So far

at this new court, 169 cases have been filled in the last two months in Ndola. We are determined to dispose off these cases on time," said Justice Mambilima.

And Ndola High Court Judge-in-charge Emilia Sunkutu the coming up of the fast track court would speed up cases of GBV.

"Cases of GBV here are on the increase. This, however, does not derail us from the bigger picture. Previously it could take several months to conclude cases but now it will be a new

thing," said Judge Sunkutu.

Earlier, United Nations resident coordinator Janet Rogan revealed that 58 cases of GBV are recorded in Zambia everyday.

Rogan said Copperbelt had a disturbing high number of child defilements.

"58 cases of GBV are recorded everyday in Zambia. Reported cases on the Copperbelt will rise by the opening of this court. On the Copperbelt, there is a disturbing high number of child defilements," said Rogan.

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By Zondiwe Mbewe

The Lusaka Magistrates' Court has found a 56-year-old man of Lusaka West with a case to answer in a case where he is accused of defiling a juvenile.

In this matter, Shaderick Kapalu is alleged to have defiled a 13-year-old girl after he asked her to accompany him to his house so that she could collect money that he owed her mother.

It is alleged that, on October 22, 2018,

Court puts Lusaka man, 56, on his defense in defilement case

Lusaka, Kapalu allegedly had unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under the age of 16.

And when the matter came up for trial before Magistrate Alice Walusiku, Wednesday,

the victim told the court that on the material day around 17:00 hours, Kapalu went to her parent's house.

She said thereafter, Kapalu asked her to accompany him to his

house so that she could collect the money he owed her mother.

"He told me to accompany him to his house so that I can collect the money he owes my mother for the relish that he got from

her," the victim narrated.

She explained that after she accompanied Kapalu to his house, he closed the door to the house and started looking for the money.

The victim testified that

Kapalu then pushed her on the bed and defiled her.

"He closed the door to the house and started looking for the money. He pushed me to the bed. He undressed himself and defiled me," she added.

She testified that later on, her mother and father arrived and found her and the accused in the house.

The victim said when her parents arrived, Kapalu tried to push her under the bed.

She said her father then called for the neighbours to come and see what Kapalu had done to her, adding that it was at this point that she ran to her auntie's house for fear of being beaten by her parents.

Three days later, she was taken to the clinic.

And Magistrate Walusiku said she had found that a prima facie case had been established against the accused and put him on his defence.

The matter comes up on December 19, this year.

PF's poor leadership can't resolve water shortages, says Mutelo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Mitete UPND member of parliament Misheck Mutelo says Zambia lacks the good leadership required to resolve the country's water shortages and alleviate people's suffering.

Speaking in Parliament, Wednesday, when he debated on the budget for the Ministry of Water Development, Mutelo said availability of water was not a problem given the numerous water bodies in the country, but argued that the problem was with poor leadership.

He even suggested that this year's delayed rainfall was because God was annoyed with the current administration.

"The PF has failed to manage the water situation in Zambia as given by God. If it was for prayers, we would pray to say: 'as much as we have received the water [bodies], we need to get the wisdom from God as to how the water situation must be managed. Nationwide, even here in Lusaka, you also have dry taps. Water just comes for hours and mostly during night time. No water, but we have all the surface water and ground water. The only mistake that we have for now is not water, but the people who are managing the country for now, PF. They would sometimes when they are reminded to say: 'you are going' they would say: 'where are we going?' Where UNIP has gone, where MMD has gone, the next in line to go where these two political

parties have gone is PF," Mutelo said.

He told the House that it was sad that the PF would mismanage monies budgeted for improving water supply every time there is such a provision.

"Madam chairperson, let's manage [the water problem]. I am tempted to support the National Day of Prayer; they (PF) should be praying for wisdom to be using these natural resources. We will also pray to God to do us good by removing these people out of power to bring fresh minds, which will be able to manage the water situation in Zambia. Yes, not

recycled, but fresh brains, fresh management, people who will be working hand-in-hand in harmony, who will be using the resources from our cooperating partners in a good way and not the PF who when they are given the monies, they mismanage. We were told monies have been borrowed for Western Province [but], again, to-date, nothing has taken off. Go to Mitete, not even a single borehole has been drilled or maintained. So, where is this money? The money which we were promised of here by the Minister then Dr John Phiri? Where has it gone?"

Mutelo asked.

He claimed that the rains had delayed because God was annoyed with what was happening.

"Thank God [that] Zambia is a unitary state, how I wish it was not like that. How I wish Barotse remained Barotse; it's my wish [but] that Zambia is a unitary state, but out of this being a unitary state, we are suffering. No wonder for this year, 2018, and 2019 season, to some extent God is annoyed, no water now, no rains! Let's pray hard for God to have mercies upon us and God will hear us. We still have those who have clean

hands. PF, you are the ones who are there today, let's see to it that we utilize our underground water and our surface water if at all you can, if you can't, try," said Mutelo.

And in winding up debate, acting Water Development Minister Richard Musukwa urged members of parliament to partner with government in ensuring that the provision of water supply became a reality.

Musukwa observed that water was a critical issue, which required level-headedness in terms of addressing the problem, rather than politicking.



Kansanshi Mine technical secondary smelter superintendent Lawrence Hanschar (left) and Kansanshi Mine manager public relations Godfrey Msiska (pointing) offer explanations to members of parliament from the Parliamentary Committee on Communications, Transport Works and Supply; and local government accounts tour Kansanshi Mine Smelter on copper cathodes stocked - Picture by Claver Mutinta/SUMA SYSTEMS.



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Fixing the system - Corruption

By Andyford Mayele Banda

Many people believe and somehow accept that everyone seeking leadership position in politics is doing it to enrich themselves not to work for the people. And it's true because that's what has been observed from the majority of politicians who have held government positions. This is also true looking at the desperation of those in power to try and hold on to their positions, because they want to continue eating so they say.

Corruption seems to be an acceptable practice in politics around the world but it has heavily affected Africa whose leaders portray special skills for greediness. In many developed countries political leaders who abused public offices during their tenure are prosecuted while in Africa many go scot free, causing future leaders to continue on the same path of looting. Just recently in Brazil, the former President of that country Luiz Inacio da Silva was sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges of money laundering and passive corruption.

Corruption has caused many challenges for governments around the world including Zambia. People who are connected to the system end up getting deals with inflated pricing such as the case of the fire trucks in Zambia. Resources that are supposed to be channelled to key issues such as medicine and facilities for schools end up in the pockets of a few greed politicians and their business associates. State owned companies such as Zesco fail to operate not because they can't make a profit but because the supply chain system has been invaded by corrupt politicians and their connections.

There just seem to be no care whatsoever the consequences of such acts from heartless political leaders and their business associates. They don't care that people are dying in hospitals because of lack of medicines and equipment. They don't care that children fail to learn in proper environments due to lack of facilities. Farmers fail to get their adequate supply due to the corrupt system.

The PAC believes that a very significant portion of the problems we face today could be eliminated once we clamp down on corruption. The fight against corruption is PAC's priority number one. Corruption has been a cancer in so many ways. Services are either delayed or not delivered at all due to corruption. Government's supply chain

has had to purchase goods and services at overly inflated prices due to corruption. The wrong people have been awarded tenders even when it is clear that they don't deliver or deliver poor quality goods and services. All this is the fruit of corruption.

A lot of bad elements have been employed and they have contributed to the inefficiency of government operations. Health care services, Education facilities and empowerment programs have been affected due to corruption in the system.

Most projects have been abandoned without being finished even when the government has paid advances to contractors; another fruit of corruption. The system has favored a few individuals as opposed to the majority Zambians due to corruption. Some people have failed to access services that rightly belong to them due to corruption

Corruption is a cancer. It's clear if we fight it we can win half the battle of the challenges we are facing as a country. Our politics have affected the fight to stamp out corruption. Successive governments have embraced the old rotten systems because it aids them to hold on to power and because they want to continue looting. The system which has long supported people that are friendly to the corridors of power, the so called big donors who get money from the government to fund the political party in government has to be stamped out.

The PAC on its agenda will give first priority to war on corruption. We will restructure systems and come up with new and modern ways to fight corruption. We have to place in systems that will make it easy to trail corruption. We need to implement electronic system to improve transparency in the operations of government especially in the supply chain. PAC will implement an electronic procurement system that boosts competition and transparency in the procurement and outsourcing of various goods and service.

The PAC will ensure that the system that has long supported the people close to the corridors of power is stamped out. This will only be possible by restructuring the Anti-Corruption Commission. It must be an autonomous body in order to ensure that the ACC is able to prosecute even high level individuals such as Ministers without having

to ask permission from the President.

The PAC will introduce stiffer punishment for individuals who will be caught in corrupt deals. The PAC will ensure that all individuals follow the law in acquisition of opportunities. The PAC will apply political will and ensure awareness to the general public on the dangers of getting involved in corruption or not reporting individuals involved in corrupt deals.

The PAC will ensure that the ACC takes an interest in Auditor General reports. The ACC will ensure that all queries raised are answered. All individuals who did not remit documents to support payments do so or payback the money owed to the government. All government officials who do not execute duties professionally in the execution of audit queries will either be dismissed or be recommended for prosecution should elements of corruption be cited.

We need to ensure that the judiciary is reformed for speed delivery of prosecution and judgments. Just as we have a small claims court, and the RTSA fast track courts, PAC will introduce fast track Anti-Corruption Court.

We must also set precedence to prevent future leaders from committing the same crimes. Once PAC forms government, forensic audit will be conducted in the activities of previous governments and all found wanting will be punished to set a good example for those who may want to contemplate getting involved in corruption. All properties acquired from abuse of public funds will be repossessed under PAC.

Summary-fixing the corrupt system:

1. Attach political will
2. Reform procurement and all systems
3. Attach trained intelligence in government and SOEs for this purpose
4. Introduce fast track anti-corruption court and stiff punishment
5. Conduct forensic audit in previous government operations, prosecute and repossess.

Andyford Mayele Banda
President
People's Alliance for Change (PAC)

Govt single sources IMS to take over toll plazas

By Joseph Mwenda and Mukosha Funga

Government has single sourced the private company that is installing speed cameras for RTSA to also take over the management and collection of revenues from toll plazas dotted on the road network around the country.

According to a News Diggers investigation, Intelligent Mobility Solutions (IMS), which is a joint venture between Lebanese plastic manufacturer "Lamise Trading" and an Australian company "Kapsch" submitted an unsolicited proposal for what they called "an integrated tolling solution".

Under the unsolicited proposed concession, IMS offered to invest US\$38.3 million over a period of 17 years, to take over control of the existing toll plazas, upgrade, enhance and expand, as well as construct more plazas, in order to arrive at a total of 25 tolling facilities under the deal.

Currently, government through the Road Development Agency (RDA) has contracted the National Road Fund Agency (NRFA) to manage and collect revenue from toll plazas, but last Friday when Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairperson Howard Kunda asked NRFA chief executive officer Wallace Mumba to clarify if it was true, and why government was considering entering into a concession with a private company to collect toll fees, the agency boss denied having any such plans.

"Chair, I would like to mention that as management of NRFA and including the board of NRFA, we do not have that kind of intention in place. Essentially as an agency, we have continued collecting the revenues," responded Mumba.

THE DEAL

However, an investigation has revealed that in fact, the deal was made through a single sourced procedure, and against the Road Development Agency's proposal to subject the tender to competitive bidding.

"RDA received an unsolicited proposal from Messrs Lamise Trading Limited in association with Kapsch on August 21, 2017 for a Public Private Partnership (PPP) for an Advanced Road Safety Management and Tolling Solution and Related Services. Following a preliminary review of the proposal, RDA sought authority from the PPP Council to invite competing



proposals as required under Clause 42 (6) of the PPP Act No. 14 of 2009," read part of the negotiation agreement obtained by News Diggers! Single sourcing was allowed on grounds that the company that sought to takeover the running of toll plazas needed to also be in charge of the vehicle registration under another concession with the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA).

"It was, however, determined by the PPP Unit that no competing proposals would be invited as required under Clause 42 (6) of the Public-Private Partnership Act No. 14 of 2009 (hereinafter referred to as the "PPP Act") as the services that the proponent was proposing were specialised and could only be fully realised if the proponent was managing the vehicle registration under the Road Transport and Safety Agency, while at the same time also in charge of the toll collection system under RDA. The said unsolicited proposal was approved by the 7th Special Meeting of the Public Private Partnership Council held on 17th August 2018, pursuant to section 7 (b) of the PPP Act; and procured without competitive procedures, pursuant to section 35 (d) of the PPP Act," the agreement read.

"An inter-sectoral team comprising members from RDA, NRFA, PPP Unit, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) and Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) engaged Lamise/Kapsch in good faith discussions in line with the provision of Clause 42 section 10 (c) of the PPP Act No. 14 of 2009 to get a full appreciation of the proposal prior to making a recommendation to the PPP Technical Committee. The PPP Council approved the negotiated Concession Agreement at its 8th Special Meeting held on October 5, 2018 for implementation. The Concession Agreement was subsequently submitted

to the Office of the Attorney General for clearance prior to signature as prescribed by law."

Further, the agreement was to the effect that once implemented, government would get 70 per cent revenue from the toll plazas in the first seven years while the investor would reclaim 30 percent; in year-eight to 12, government would get 72.5 leaving IMS with 27.4; and 75 to 25 respectively in the 13th to 17th year of the concession.

IMS DICTATING TERMS

When the approved agreement was circulated among stakeholders, technocrats raised concerns that the period was long and that the proposed investment was not in tandem with the status of existing tolling infrastructure.

The stakeholders further directed RDA to re-negotiate with IMS so that the number of toll plazas covered under the concession should be reduced from 25 to 11, which would have a combined average daily traffic record of 21,795 vehicles per day.

"As directed, RDA re-engaged IMS on the above stated issues from 29th to 31st October 2018. IMS was informed of guidance to RDA to limit the concession period to a shorter Concession Period such as 7 years. In order to achieve a shorter concession period, RDA optimized the project scope with a view of limiting the required investment. Under the optimized scope of work, 14 toll sites in remote areas were removed from the scope of the project. The remaining eleven (11) sites have a combined ADT of 21,795 vehicles per day which represents 87.2% of the traffic and thus the removal of the fourteen (14) sites does not compromise the commercial viability of the project," read the negotiation agreement.

"The 11 toll plazas are Katuba, Manyumbi, Mumbwa, Kafulafuta, Chiwoko, Kamiza, Mkushi, Chilonga, Choma, Zimba-

Livingstone and Kyabankaka (Solwezi Mutanda). Based on the assumptions reached in 2(a), the following matters were further clarified as follows: (1) The above stated 11 toll plazas have been constructed and only require technological enhancements. The total capital investment required to be made by the concessionaire was estimated at US\$ 14 million. (2) Based on the above considerations, RDA determined that the concessionaire would break even within 6 years and therefore; a concession period of less than eight years was feasible. (3) Revenue Share -The revenue under the above consideration was determined to be 95 per cent to GRZ and 5 per cent to IMS."

However, IMS rejected the counter proposal, saying it was not viable. "Messrs IMS rejected the proposal by RDA to limit the scope of work to the eleven (11) toll plazas on grounds that the US\$ 12 million investment required was too little and, therefore, unattractive. Further, they indicated that the harmonization and full integration that was envisaged under the project would not be achieved under the proposed limited scope and hence the benefits would diminish significantly. IMS contended that a concession period of Seven years was not feasible taking into account the investment amount and how long it would take to recoup it. According to Messrs. IMS's determination, the minimum concession period that could be considered was 15 years. Messrs IMS further determined that reducing the concession period from 17 to 15 years profoundly reduced their return on investment from 13 per cent to around 9.5 per cent, which is the minimum return they were willing to accept on their investment," read the negotiation agreement.

GOVT CONTRADICTION

IMS and RDA have since agreed on all the terms in the "Integrated Tolling Solutions concession", apart from the concession period and the investment amount. But this is contrary to the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure Development position that the constructed toll plazas already have integrated data servers which are linked to the NRFA headquarters in Lusaka.

On November 5, 2018 when he was asked on the ZNBC Government Forum to explain why the Michael Chilufya Sata Toll Plaza cost US\$4.3 million, Minister Ronald Chitotela said "is not just a toll plaza, it is coming with a back control, a system engagement, a back control room where everything that is happening on all our toll plazas now are linked to the main server at National Road Fund Agency."

According to records at the Patents and Companies Registration Agency (PACRA), IMS was registered on June 22, 2017, situated in Makeni. Its directors include two South African nationals: Douglas Graham Davey, holder of passport number M00093122 and Coenaraad Johannes, holder of passport number M00122928. Other directors are Lebanese Walid El Nahas, passport number RL0001100 and Ziad El Nahas of passport number RL3776058.

NRFA SOURCES

EXPLAIN IMPLICATIONS

A source within NRFA told News Diggers! that express "go ahead" instructions on the said concession were coming from State House.

"This is another example of a transactions, where the Zambian Government, is selling off strategic assets or handing over control of strategic assets using concession agreements and Private public partnership. The problem is when these opaque deals are examined,

they prove to be terrible deals for the tax payers. For this deal, the logic and business arguments make no sense and defy all rational reasoning. And when we question our superiors on why this deal is occurring, when it is so bad for government and its tax payers. We are told that the instructions to make this deal go through are coming directly from the State House," source explained. The source explained that once implemented IMS would not spend anything in essence because the company would be taking over existing income generating toll facilities.

"So far 10 Toll Plazas have already been constructed at great cost with another 19 currently under construction at various stages. These plazas are already revenue generating with GRZ reporting that all tolls (inland and borders) generated K670 million in 2017 when only three key plazas were operational; and they estimated to make over K1 billion in 2018. So we can roughly estimate that the Toll Plazas are going to be generating US\$100 million a year in 2019 and keep growing based on the current infrastructure and the addition of more plazas," explained sources.

"As things stand, GRZ receives 100 per cent of the toll revenue at over US\$100 million a year, though 10 per cent is plowed back into administration and operations., But from the already existing toll plazas, IMS will receive at least US\$90 million over three years, yet they are only required to invest US\$38.3 million over three years for a 30 per cent share of the revenue over 17 years. How? In short they don't have to spend \$1 of their own money, and even if they do, their return on investment will be absurd, just from the fact they are taking over plazas with an existing revenue stream."

In a few days time, Parliament will adjourn and the year will be coming to an end. The past 11 months have not been short of scandals; corruption scandals, theft scandals, lying scandals, abuse scandals; all from one regime called the Patriotic Front.

We thought of ways in which we could summarize 2018 under the leadership of President Edgar Lungu, but there was no way we could have put it better than the Kapiri Mposhi member of parliament did. Dear readers, Honourable Stanley Kakubo has won our hearts because in his last budget debate on Tuesday, he took government through its lies, abuse of public resources and the highlights of the corruption scandals in the year.

What else have we fallen in love with about Honourable Kakubo? This lawmaker doesn't flirt with profanity or abusive language, which otherwise would compel the Speaker of the National Assembly or other parliamentarians to water down his debate with interjections. In his debate, whose viral video has been getting social media endorsement since Tuesday, the MP for Kapiri Mposhi grilled government in such a honourable way that even Cabinet Ministers were left dazzled.

"Queeestion!" is all they could say, as Honourable Kakubo exposed Finance Minister Margaret Mwanakatwe's lies over the IMF and illogical allocation of budget resources with statistical data. We would recommend to you our readers that you find this video on our social media page and watch the son of

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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Kapiri MP deserves national applause

the soil pour his heart to his country. For the benefit of those who may not have that time, here is the summary of his debate:

"You will recall madam Chairperson that in 2017, her (Mwanakatwe's) predecessor came to this House and announced what was dubbed 'Zambia Plus,' it is worth noting from the very beginning that all the targets that they set out on Zambia Plus, have failed. They've under performed on all the critical issues that they committed to the Zambian people.

You may also want to know madam Chairperson that her (Mwanakatwe's) relationship with the IMF is one of the areas that this Patriotic Front government has not been honest. In 2017, again or on the date on which the President of the Republic of Zambia declared a State of Threatened Emergency, he was quoted even in the government tabloids where he said 'the IMF can leave.' But barely two months ago,

the minister was attending an IMF meeting. As far as we are concerned, the Head of State chased the IMF, so what discussions are there?

Again at the instruction of Mr Speaker, I had the rare privilege, on behalf of the Zambian people, to sit with the IMF just in the last few weeks, and they stated quite clearly that there are no discussions of a bailout deal. But again her ministry has been misleading the nation that a bailout deal is on the horizon and it's coming. That's not true, you can't expect such kind of pronouncement from a Minister of Finance. The Zambian people, I can tell you Patriotic Front, will remember more what they are going through under your leadership or your misleadership than what we say as the opposition, because we are speaking for them.

Are we aware honourable members that when it comes to education disbursements, we only disburse as a nation, one per cent of our GDP

and we are last in the whole of Africa. Patriotic Front, what are you doing to this country? How can you be last in the whole of Africa? And yet, every single day, we get pronouncements of you saying 'the working government of' somebody's initials called 'ECL.' What kind of leadership is that? Only 1.1 per cent is what this government allocates to education, it's unacceptable.

These disbursements, madam Chairperson, is a sham! I recall, we sat in this August House, exactly a year ago, approving the 2018 budget, your government leader of government business allocated K154 million to women of this country and the young people. Do you know what happened madam Chairperson? They've disbursed zero per cent, nothing!

But then in contrast, this is what you've done. I will be kind enough to remind you. Foreign travels and allowances to top government officials, those

of you seated there, you've been able to disburse more than a 100 per cent of what was allocated in this House.

It's clear madam Chairperson what the priorities of this government are. Emoluments to yourselves, allowances in travels... which reminds me, you recently spent a lot of money to purchase an aircraft for the President. We brought it to this House, we asked, why you were buying an Aircraft for the President, you were at pains to explain, saying that the Head of State needs to stretch on the plane, really? Stretch at the expense of the Zambian people? Why should the President stretch? Prince Harry was in this country just a few days ago and he was on a commercial plane. But the President of the third poorest country in this world deserves to stretch on a plane?

I can assure you, the Minister of religious Affairs needs to guide that they will reap what they sow because it's biblical. When

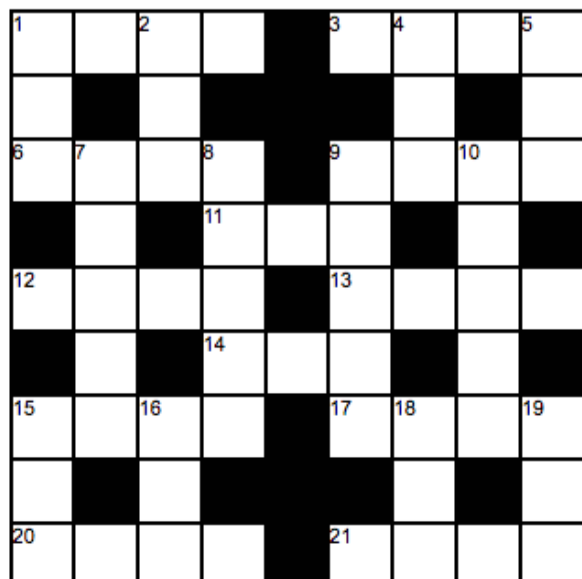
the Zambian people cry for better health, this is what the PF government does; they go and procure ambulances [and get] 70 per cent mark up for themselves. The people have no one to cry to.

Madam Chairperson, It's the first time that I am commenting on fire tenders and I hope the Minister of Finance can respond because she is responsible for disbursement. Madam chairperson, USD\$42 million at today's rate is K504 million and for emphasis, in old currency that K504 billion. Dear colleagues, that kind of money is too colossal to spend on the fire tenders and I want to demolish those that were protecting that this grave expenditure depriving the Zambian people.

Madam chairperson, K504 million actually means, especially for you my colleagues who are coming from rural constituencies, it translates into a 127 boreholes per constituency. Life changing projects, that's what they don't want because there is no money for them to get. It also translates, madam chairperson, into a 100 deep tanks for our farmers. That's what they should have done. But no, they are not that kind. They know themselves and the Zambian people are listening..."

Honourable Kakubo went on and on highlighting the ills of this PF government. This is how we would like our MPs, both on the left and right, to debate. We can only hope that those in the PF will reflect on their actions and remember this year as one which they lost to greed, corruption and lust for abuse power.

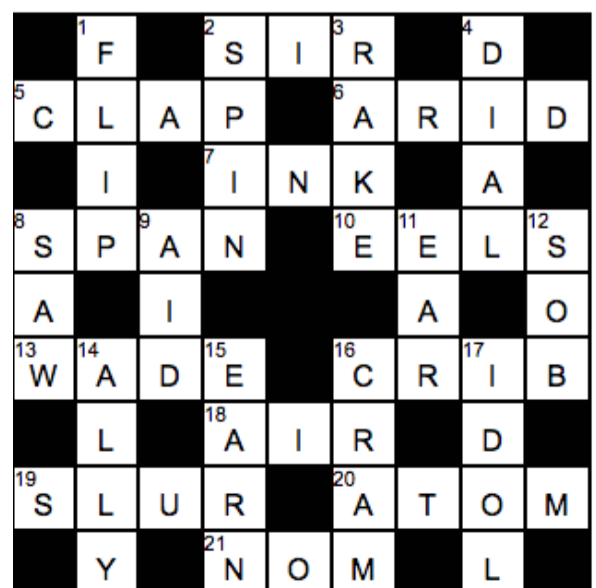
Crossword puzzle 247



"Take responsibility of your own happiness, never put it in other people's hands." - Roy T. Bennett

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1. Military installation | 1. City vehicle |
| 3. Pallid | 2. Ocean |
| 6. Picket line crosser | 4. Boxer: Muhammad ____ |
| 9. Make reference to | 5. The night before an event |
| 11. Employ | 7. Jack broke it |
| 12. Bitter | 8. Charred |
| 13. Shipshape | 9. Dollars and ____ |
| 14. Use it to catch butterflies | 10. Make fun of |
| 15. Hissy fit | 15. Unhappy |
| 17. Tool house | 16. ____ got a feeling |
| 20. Doe or buck | 18. Jump on one foot |
| 21. Moved quickly | 19. Misfire |

Solutions to puzzle 246



Reader's feedback

UPND on ConCourt eligibility ruling today

Lungu should go on a permanent vacation

Dear Editor,
 "It's even better for UPND if Lungu is not disqualified, because it would be much easier to defeat him in 2021." - Mushili Mponda

"This dude has zero popularity! I meet extremely few people that can stand this guy and I am on the CB." - Mwimanenwa Kamona

"Let him be declared eligible; the writings are on the Wall. Izibika. RB can't go down alone!" - Bornface Tembo

"Listen, those judges know if they rule against Lungu, they are basically signing their own death warrants so the people need to show them who actually has the power; whether Mr Lungu stands or not." - Maimbolwa Kamanga



Editor,
 "How I wish if he could go on a permanent vacation only to return in 2021 so that we can send him into retirement." - Jack Solozzo

"He can take as many vacations as he wants; we are used of him not being around." - Norah Mumpampa

"Let him go for good if he wants." - Joshua Mulungushi

"Let him go forever, we don't need him!" - Mwaka Adam Sichone

"Every after cutting deals with Findlay, ni vacation! Awe mwandi, how I wish you could go on vacation for one year or even returning back in 2021 to come & announce Election Day." - Keith Moono

"Let him address the nation before proceeding on another vacation." - Jordan Ngulube

"Zambians, wake up! Mr. Lungu & his regime are too wasteful & do not care. Why do people vote for them in by-elections?" - Chanda Pochoko

"With or without vacation, no difference!" - Belinda Hamwaba Chikonga

"Whether on leave or not, no impact!" - Trevor Shachabinda

Transfer of over 200 traffic cops to general duties 'long overdue'

Editor,
 "Good news; let it be an on-going exercise." - Geoffrey Samusungwa

"Great news! These thieves must now get hungry and let's see what they will drive!" - Shepherd Shadunka

"It's been long overdue. This should be done annually." - Kennedy Muyombo

"It's long overdue and this should be done after three months because it's a breeding ground for corruption." - Ceasor Kaonga

"This is just a drop in an ocean! Even those on general duties are corrupt." - Benny Katongo

"You can't transfer a problem; the corruption is inherent in the officers." - Shiwezwa Hiitengwa-muntu Mwenda'lubi

"What is the difference? Removing a bad egg from here and replacing it with another bad one." - Masauso Tembo

"If my only punishment would be transfer

to another unit, why would I stop? In fact, even in the general duties, I will find something to do and get me

transferred back to traffic if that is where I intend to end up." - Solomon H. Phiri

'Only wise Zambians can understand Elias Chipimo'

Editor,

"Only people with wisdom will understand you because the majority are thinking backwards." - Philip Kaseba

"We've surely had enough of the PF hunger manufacturing machine." - Collins Mushokabanji

"True, I concur with you! Mediocre governance springs high when the wise decide to be silent." - Pious Emmanuel Sungah

"This man is full of wisdom." - Muyu Niambay

"Yet again, many have missed Chipimo's point. For now, it's not about his political position, but the prevailing conditions in the country. Let us open our eyes and condemn that which is not right." - Simwami Siawwapa

"Sayings of the wise can only be understood by the wise. It's like those who have never been to developed societies would never understand those who have lived in developed societies; when the exposed speak, the primitive ignore and share their ignorance." - Nathans Mata

By Daniel Chansa in
Chingola

Police in Chingola say they can't give the opposition United Party for National Development a permit to hold a card renewal exercise because the opposition party is having intra-party differences.

The UPND had applied for a police permit to have its card renewal exercise in Nchanga Constituency of Chingola District on Saturday December 8, 2018.

But the Nchanga officer-in-charge, a K. Ngulube, wrote to the Chingola District commanding

Chingola police deny UPND card renewal permit due to "intraparty differences"

officer saying the UPND could not be allowed to hold the event because it was having intra-party differences.

"We wish to inform you that the United Party for National Development in Chingola district under Nchanga Constituency,

have notified this office to have a party card renewal exercise on December 8, 2018 at the Tours Nest Nchanga starting at 14:00 hours to 18:00 hours. However, we object that they hold such a meeting. This is due to the intraparty differences in the UPND

in Chingola District. Therefore, we will not approve, because the same may be a recipe for public disorder. We, therefore, intend to inform them about our observation," wrote Ngulube.

UPND Copperbelt Chairman Elisha

Matambo, however, said in an interview that it was unprofessional for police to discuss party politics.

"Since when did the police start to be involved in party politics. Why should they act like a branch of the PF? We know that

the police just want to deny us having these exercises because of the massive support we have now on the Copperbelt. So we know even the police are now scared of the UPND, but that should not be the case. Police should be there to protect everyone," said Matambo.

"Yes, differences in any party are there. That should not bother the police. Even in PF where they are having elections, we have seen punches and even their elections suspended but did the police stop them with other meetings? Let the police do their job and not join politics."

Govt permits three firms to import GMOs

By Diggers Reporter

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has granted three distributors permits to import products that may contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The three companies are Cold Chain, Horizon and Innscor who were among 12 retailers, wholesalers and distributors that applied for new and renewal permits.

At a media briefing, Thursday, NBA chief executive officer Lackson Tonga said the decision was arrived at after a risk assessment was conducted by the scientific advisory committee.

He said the committee recommended to the board for permits and assured citizens that the various products were safe for humans, animals and the environment. He explained that of the permits granted, a named distributor would import about 80 percent of the products that they initially applied for, while the other 20 percent had been rejected.

Tonga said this was because they may contain genetically modified soyabean product, which is believed to have been made through newly developed technologies which are not covered by the Biosafety Act.

He said the authority had continued its spot and compliance checks and during the operations one distributor and four retailers have been asked to remove all the Genetically modified products from the shelves.

But in a statement on Wednesday, Zambia National Farmers' Union president Jervis Zimba condemned ongoing manoeuvres by some quasi-government institutions to re-introduce GMOs into the country. Zimba revealed that the Union was aware of the manoeuvres being propagated by some quasi-government institutions, but warned against re-introducing the GMOs as it will have devastating consequences on the local market.

"ZNFU is aware of manoeuvres by certain quasi-government authorities that are trying to propagate the importation of Genetically Engineered Foods into the country. These authorities are trying to scheme ways of legitimising Genetically Modified Foods in the country at the expense of what we have safeguarded for years," stated Zimba.

Matibini's failure to declare Roan seat vacant illegal, says PF SG

By Zondiwe Mbewe

PF Secretary General Davies Mwila says Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini's decision to refuse to declare the Roan Constituency seat vacant, is illegal as it violates Article 72 of the Constitution.

And Mwila says Dr Matibini's refusal to declare the seat vacant on the basis that he wanted to give the Courts freedom to deal with Chishimba Kambwili's appeals conclusively, is unreasonable, illegal and amounts to use of discretion that the Speaker does not possess.

Mwila is therefore seeking an order, directing the Speaker to declare Kambwili's Roan Constituency seat, vacant.

In an affidavit in support of application for leave to commence judicial review filed in the Lusaka High Court, Wednesday, Mwila who is an applicant in this matter and Attorney General as a respondent, stated that on July 22, 2017, the PF Central Committee resolved to expel Chishimba Kambwili from the party.

He stated that the decision was communicated to Kambwili by a letter dated July 24, 2017.

Mwila stated that by a letter dated July 26, 2017, the Speaker was informed of the decision to expel Kambwili and requested that he declared the Roan Constituency seat vacant.

He stated that in the same month, Kambwili challenged his expulsion in the Lusaka High Court, saying the due process was not followed by the Central Committee when the decision was made to expel him, but consequently, an application was made to dismiss his matter for want of prosecution, and it was dismissed in a ruling dated October 25, 2018.



Mwila further stated that he wrote another letter to the Speaker on October 26, 2018, requesting that the Roan seat be declared vacant since there was no matter pending determination before the High Court in respect of the decision to expel Kambwili from the party. He disclosed that by a letter dated October 31, 2018, authored by Dorothy Kapumbu on behalf of the Speaker, Dr Matibini, citing Article 72(5) of the Constitution, refused to declare the seat vacant, "This was on the basis that: (a) the Court has not pronounced itself on the merits of the case to confirm the expulsion or otherwise; and (b) in any case there was an appeal against the dismissal of the case pending before the Court of Appeal," read the affidavit in part.

Mwila further disclosed that in response, he wrote another letter to the Speaker, reiterating his request to have the seat declared vacant and pointed out that the appeal pending before the Court of Appeal was in respect of the dismissal of the case and not the expulsion, but his request was again rejected.

"The Speaker writing through Dorothy Kapumbu refused to declare the seat vacant and reiterated that the matter had not been determined on the merits. And that since Kambwili may

succeed in his appeals, the seat cannot be declared vacant in order to 'give the Courts latitude to deal with the matters conclusively,'" read the affidavit further.

Mwila stated that he believed that the dismissal of Kambwili's matter entailed that there was no challenge currently pending before the Courts.

"I am advised and do verily believe that the route honourable Kambwili has chosen to appeal the dismissal rather than commence a fresh action entails that his seat is liable to be declared vacant," read the affidavit.

Mwila is seeking the following reliefs: a declaration that there is no suit on the part of Kambwili for Roan Constituency pending before the High Court to challenge his expulsion; an order of certiorari, removing the decision of the Speaker to declare the Roan seat vacant; and costs.

The grounds on which Mwila is seeking the relief are that; the decision of the Speaker to refuse to declare the Roan seat vacant is illegal as it is in contravention of Article 27 of the Constitution and; that the decision of the Speaker to refuse to declare the seat vacant in order to give the Courts latitude to deal with the matters conclusively, is unreasonable and illegal as it amounts to use of discretion that the Speaker does not possess.

US-China trade wars will slow down Africa's economic growth - Rupiah

By Abraham Kalito

The on-going trade wars between the Western countries and China meant to impose barriers on trade will ultimately have major implications on Africa's economic growth, says former republican president Rupiah Banda.

Speaking during 135th Trade and Development Bank (TDB) Board of Directors meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Banda said Africa, including the global economy, would experience sluggish trade, which he projected to further contract due to the ongoing Sino-US trade wars.

China and the US are currently locked in a full-scale trade war as both sides are entangled in trade tariff disputes on various goods flowing from either direction.

In July this year, US President Donald Trump's administration released a list of proposed tariffs on US \$200 billion worth of goods, ranging from auto parts to construction material.

The White House on July 6 imposed a 25 per cent tariff on US \$34 billion of imports from China, especially manufacturing components, which Beijing promptly matched with tariffs of its own,

including on U.S. soya beans.

In a statement issued by First Secretary at the Zambia Embassy in Ethiopia Inutu Mwanza, Banda observed that tariff dispute will have adverse effects on African economic growth as most economies on the continent are commodity-dependent.

He observed that there was need for African countries to reduce dependence on exports of primary products, but to instead add value to products and improve the diversification of economies.

"Zambia's fourth president, His Excellency, Mr. Rupiah Bwezani Banda, says the ongoing trade wars between the Western countries and China meant to impose barriers on trade have major implications on Africa's economic growth. Speaking during a special High-Level Stakeholders Appreciation and Engagement dinner on the occasion of the 135th Trade and Development Bank (TDB) Board of Directors meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the former president said the global economy, too, is likely to experience a period of sluggish trade, with risks of further slowing down as a



result of the trade wars. Prominent among the people who attended the dinner were former Ethiopian Prime Minister Desalegn Haile Mariam; Ethiopian Minister of Finance and Economy, Ahmed Shide; Ethiopia's first female Chief Justice Meaza Ashenafi; National Bank of Ethiopia Governor, Abdallah Hamdok and Abdallah Hamdok, a member of the TDB eminent panel of experts. Mr. Banda co-chairs the Eminent Panel

of Experts on the TDB board with the President of Seychelles, Mr. Danny Faure," read Mwanza's statement.

"The former president emphasised the need for African countries to reduce its dependence on exports of primary products, but add value to products and improve the diversification of its economies. Mr. Banda said faster integration of African economies focused on inter-African trade, removing barriers

to mobility of persons and capital investing in infrastructure was one sure way of guaranteeing the continent's economic growth. He urged African Union member-states to embrace the Continental Free Trade area (CFTA), the Tripartite Agreement between COMESA, SADC and EAC, which is expected to trade from Cape Town to Cairo. The former president further urged African countries to come up with export-processing zones like the

Lusaka Multi-Facility Economic Zone (MFEZ), which was focused on producing clean energy, while at the same time promoting tourism through a national game reserve linked to the facility."

Banda added that the Trade and Development Bank was actively engaged in intra-African trade and currently had an asset base amounting to US \$ 5.4 million.

"On the Trade and Development Bank, Mr. Banda said the bank was actively engaged in the African trade space with the total asset base amounting to US \$ 5.4 million as of 30th December, 2017. And Mr. Banda commended the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the young and dynamic leadership that has embraced gender parity. He said Africa was watching with great interest the transformation that was taking part in Ethiopia," read the statement.

The 135th Trade and Development Bank (TDB) meeting was being held under the theme: "Integrating and Advancing the region's economies."

Mansa police arrest 16-yr-old mother for selling baby

By Abraham Kalito

Police in Mansa have arrested a 16-year-old mother, Silvia Lawrence of Chamalawa village, Chief Mabumba in Mansa District, for human trafficking and subsequently selling her one-month-old biological daughter to Abigail Chama, aged 25, a traditional healer of the same vicinity.

The 16-year-old mother was arrested together with her brother Mulenga Lawrence, aged 26, of the same village after police received

a tip-off from concerned villagers that the two intended to sell the baby to a traditional healer.

In a statement, Wednesday, Zambia Police Spokesperson Esther Katongo said Lawrence had agreed to sell her baby for K1,500 and an ITEL phone.

"Police in Mansa today 5th December, 2018, arrested three people for the offence of human trafficking. Those arrested are Silvia Lawrence, aged 16, of Chamalawa village, Chief Mabumba of Mansa District,

her brother Mulenga Lawrence, aged 26, also of Chief Mabumba and Abigail Chama, aged 25, of the same village, who is also a traditional healer. This was after police received a report from a concerned member of the public that there were people planning to sell a baby in Namwandwe area of Chief Mabumba. When police rushed to the scene, they discovered that Silvia Lawrence had already sold her biological baby aged one month to Abigail Chama, a traditional healer with

the help of her brother Mulenga Lawrence at K1,500 and had already been paid K1,100 and an ITEL phone," read the statement.

"The two suspects were apprehended in Namwandwe area as they were planning to go to Mupita village along Tuta Road where they came from, and initial investigations have revealed that the duo planned to deceive their relatives that the child died whilst in Mansa. The suspects are detained in police custody yet to appear in court."

Putin threatens to develop nuclear missiles banned by US-Russia treaty

A defiant Vladimir Putin on Wednesday threatened to develop nuclear missiles banned under a treaty with the United States after Washington gave Moscow a deadline to comply with the key arms control agreement.

The latest spike in tensions came a day after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington would withdraw from a major Cold War treaty limiting mid-range nuclear arms within 60 days if Russia does not dismantle missiles that the US claims breach the deal.

Putin dismissed Pompeo's statement as a smokescreen, saying Washington had already decided to ditch the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF).

"They thought we would not notice," the Kremlin chief said, claiming the Pentagon has already earmarked an amount for the development of missiles banned by the treaty.

"We are against the destruction of this treaty. But if this happens, we will react accordingly."

Putin said about a dozen countries were now producing mid-range missiles of the type banned by the INF treaty.

"Apparently now American partners believe the situation has changed so much that the United States should also have such weapons.

"What will be our answer? A simple one: we will also do this," Putin said.

- 'Head off arms race' -

In Brussels, EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini urged Russia and the US to save the treaty, warning that Europe did not want to become a battlefield for global powers once again, as it had been during the Cold War.

"The INF has guaranteed peace and security in European territory for 30 years now," Mogherini said as she arrived for talks with NATO foreign ministers.

In October, President Donald Trump sparked



concern globally by declaring the United States would pull out of the deal and build up America's nuclear stockpile "until people come to their senses".

Putin at the time warned that abandoning the treaty and failure to extend another key arms control agreement known as the New START, would unleash a new arms race and put Europe in danger. On Monday, the US leader

said he wants talks with Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping "to head off a major and uncontrollable arms race". Valery Gerasimov, head of Russia's General Staff, said that Moscow would increase the capabilities of its ground-based strategic nuclear arms.

"One of the main destructive factors complicating the international situation is how the US is acting

as it attempts to retain its dominant role in the world," he said in comments released by the defence ministry. "It is for these purposes that Washington and its allies are taking comprehensive, concerted measures to contain Russia and discredit its role in international affairs."

- 'Ballistic missiles' - Signed in 1987 by then US president Ronald Reagan

and Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, the INF resolved a crisis over Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals. But it was a bilateral treaty between the US and the then Soviet Union, so it puts no restrictions on other major military actors like China.

Pompeo said at a meeting with fellow NATO foreign ministers on Tuesday that there was no reason why

the US "should continue to cede this crucial military advantage" to rival powers. NATO said it was now "up to Russia" to save the treaty.

The Trump administration has complained of Moscow's deployment of Novator 9M729 missiles, which Washington says fall under the treaty's ban on missiles that can travel distances of up to 5,500 kilometres (3,400 miles)

The nuclear-capable Russian cruise missiles are mobile and hard to detect and can hit cities in Europe with little or no warning, according to NATO, dramatically changing the security situation on the continent. US-Russia ties are under deep strain over a number of crises including accusations Moscow meddled in the 2016 US presidential election.

The two Cold War enemies are also at odds over Russian support for Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria's civil war, and the conflict in Ukraine. Washington on Tuesday promised Russia more "pain" if Moscow did not release three Ukrainian vessels and 24 sailors captured off Crimea last last month. **AFP**

Malaysia torches 2.8 tonnes of African pangolin scales



Malaysia on Thursday torched nearly three tonnes of seized scales of endangered pangolins worth \$9 million in a bid to deter illegal wildlife trafficking from Africa.

The Southeast Asian nation is battling to clamp down on rife trafficking through its borders of the ant-eating mammals, whose scales are highly valued in traditional Chinese medicine.

"Such a huge seizure and torching of it is definitely a blow to smuggling syndicates," Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim, the director-general of the Wildlife and National Parks Department told AFP.

Some 3,000 pangolins would have been killed to obtain the 2.8 tonnes (2,800 kilograms) of scales, Abdul Kadir estimated.

The scales were confiscated by customs officials at Malaysia's Port Klang between May and September 2017.

The animal parts arrived in three

different shipments from Ghana and Cameroon, and had false local addresses, officials said.

"Forensic examination of the scales showed that it is from the African species," said Abdul Kadir.

The scales were incinerated at a private waste disposal plant in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Seized pangolin scales are usually meant for foreign markets including China and Vietnam, where raw pangolin scales are sold for large profits in traditional Chinese medicine.

Last year Malaysia torched eight tonnes of pangolin scales, Abdul Kadir said, adding that wild pangolins in Malaysia have become a rare sight due to rampant hunting and deforestation. Pangolins are also heavily poached for their meat which is considered a delicacy while products obtained from the animal are thought to increase blood circulation and lactation. **AFP**



L: Leila George arrives at the premiere Of Universal Pictures' "Mortal Engines" at Regency Village Theatre on Wednesday, R: Robert Sheehan arrives at the same event in Westwood, California - AFP

Lil Wayne teams up with Tidal for tour

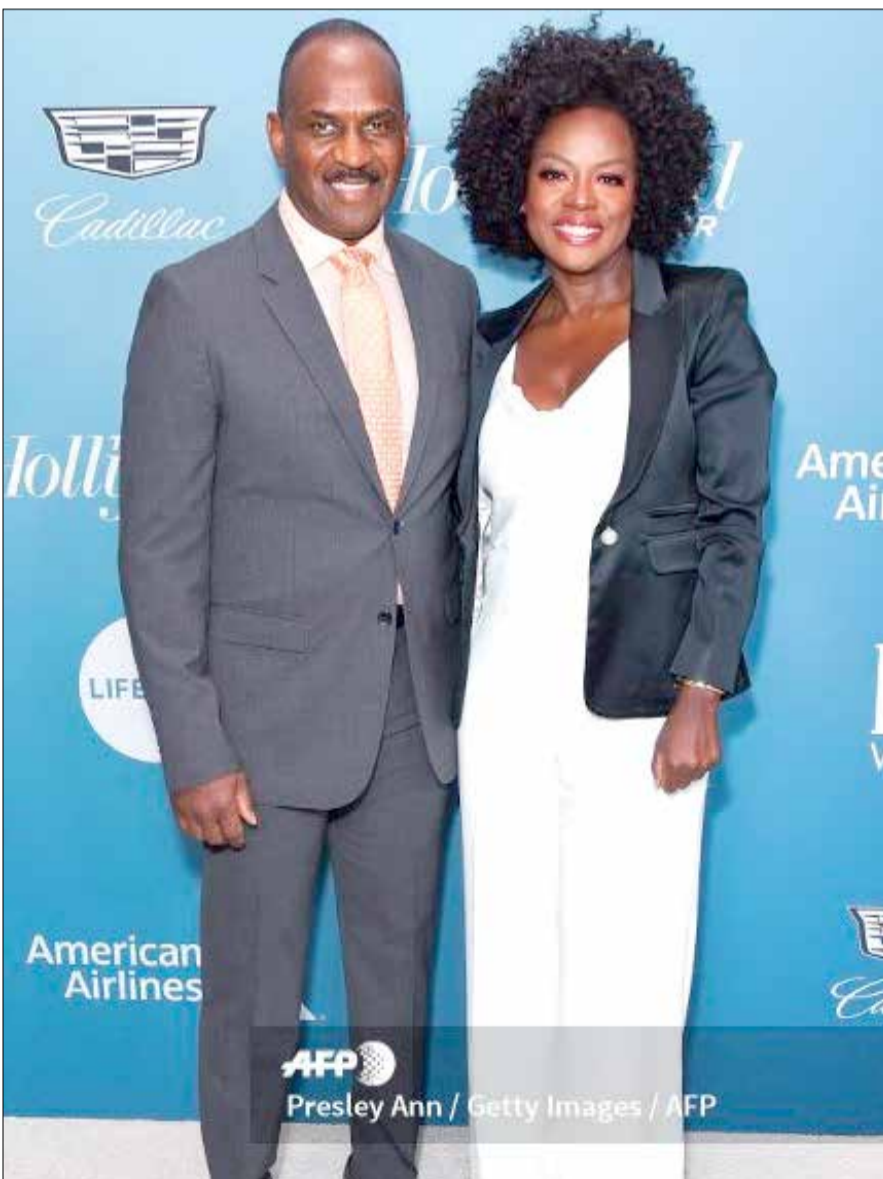
After many years of not releasing The Carter V album, it has been an extremely good year for Lil' Wayne! With the release of it, there has been such good feedback and it just

won't stop. With many performances after the album dropped, the "Uproar" rapper announces his I Ain't Sh*t Without You tour with Tidal, but needing the fans to help him on picking four cities he

will be touring in with a teaser. He will be teaming up with Tidal with the tour as you can see but by not giving much information. He states in the video, "It's going to be a

real intimate setting, some different shit... It's gonna be intimate but I'm still gonna go crazy, you might get to hear some shit you never heard, some shit people may never hear."

You can vote by clicking here on the Tidal website, and the winners will be announced on Monday, December 10. Whoever can't attend it will be live-streamed via Tidal. **THE SOURCE**



Julius Tennon and Viola Davis attend The Hollywood Reporter's Power 100 Women In Entertainment at Milk Studios on Wednesday in Los Angeles - AFP

Ellen DeGeneres grills Gwen Stefani over Blake engagement rumors

Will Gwen Stefani soon say "I do" with Blake Shelton? The "Make Me Like You" singer and her Voice beau, who have been going strong for over three years, have been the subject of engagement rumors for quite some time now. So, when Stefani appeared on Tuesday's episode of The Ellen DeGeneres Show, talk show host Ellen DeGeneres couldn't help but grill her pal on her relationship. DeGeneres started off by asking Stefani about Shelton's Sexiest Man Alive title, which was recently awarded to by Idris Elba. "When the title came upon him, did you notice he became better in bed?" DeGeneres asked. Shocked by the frankness of the inquiry, Stefani shouted, "Oh my god! That was so crazy!" And then, just when the singer thought she'd escaped the heat of the conversation, DeGeneres said, "So, Blake told me that y'all are engaged now. So, yes he told me you're engaged, so let's talk about that." Stefani immediately tried to shut down the rumor, shaking her head,

"No we're not! What are you talking about?! We're not! He's my boyfriend." "Every time I come on here I think it's gonna be like, I got this, you know. But I don't, I don't. But I do like talking about him!" Stefani said. "He's awesome and we got to do a video together. See how I did that?!" The musical couple recently shot a music video together for their holiday duet, "You Make It Feel like Christmas," even though the country star isn't a fan of filming them. Originally Shelton only agreed to participate with a little performance, but Stefani was able to convince her boyfriend to get more involved in the project. Stefani and DeGeneres' conversation turned more serious later on, resulting in Stefani reaching for a tissue as the women chatted about their friendship. At one point, DeGeneres recalled Stefani playing her a song in a bathroom that turned into a huge hit. "Gwen deserves everything she has, she deserves this love, she deserves the life that she has and the career, because she went through a lot," DeGeneres told the audience. **ENews**

Lionel Messi "only has one skill", according to Brazil legend Pele, with fellow Argentine Diego Maradona "much better" than the Barcelona talisman.

Having starred for the Liga heavyweights for well over a decade now, a mercurial talent of the modern era is considered to have established a standing as an all-time great.

There are many who consider Messi to be the finest player to have ever played the game, with a five-time Ballon d'Or winner boasting countless records and a stunning strike rate.

Pele, though, has suggested that the 31-year-old is one-dimensional and too reliant on his left foot to be compared to other iconic figures at the top of the world game.

A man who netted over 1000 goals in his career and won the World Cup on three occasions told Folha de Sao Paulo: "How can you make a comparison between a guy who heads the ball well, shoots with the left, shoots with the right and another

'Messi has one skill!' - Pele places himself, Maradona above Barca ace

who only shoots with one leg, only has one skill and doesn't head the ball well?"

"How can you compare? To compare with Pele, it has to be someone who shoots well with the left, shoots well with the right, and scores headers."

While placing himself above Messi in the all-time pecking order, Pele has also suggested that a number of other players sit above the Blaugrana star.

Fellow Argentine Maradona is considered to be one of the best ever, while iconic figures from Germany and the Netherlands are also held in the highest regard.

Pele added: "As far as I'm concerned, Maradona was one of the best players ever. If you ask me, 'Was he better than Messi?' Yes, he was. Much better."

"[Franz] Beckenbauer, [Johan] Cruyff were also



excellent players."

While Pele may not be Messi's biggest fan, there is no questioning his achievements since bursting onto the scene at

Barca.

A remarkable tally of 567 club goals have been recorded in 653 appearances, with another 65 netted in 128 outings

for his country.

Messi has also won five Golden Balls, nine La Liga titles, four Champions League crowns and three Club World Cups.

International honours have proved elusive, though, having suffered final heartache at the World Cup and Copa America. *Goal.com*

Woods keen to be playing captain at Presidents Cup



Tiger Woods said Thursday he was keen to be a playing captain at next year's Presidents Cup, and he will draw on his recent Ryder Cup experience to help him out. Woods will captain the US in the 2019 edition of the matchplay team event at the Royal Melbourne

-- Australia's oldest golf club -- with Ernie Els captaining the Internationals.

The former world number one made a successful return to golf this year after missing most of the previous two seasons through injury.

It has propelled him to 14 in the

world from outside the top 500 and he wants to ensure he is among the eight top-ranked Americans who will gain automatic selections for next year. If not, he could still play as one of four wildcard picks made by himself in consultation with his vice-captains. *AFP*



Henry, Vieira clash postponed amid security concerns

Two more Ligue 1 games scheduled for this weekend, including the clash between Thierry Henry's Monaco and local rivals Nice, have been postponed, the French league (LFP) said Thursday, amid fears of more violent "yellow vest" protests in France over rising living costs.

The LFP said Friday evening's game at the Stade Louis II had been called off following a request by the government in the Mediterranean principality, "in collaboration" with authorities in the neighbouring French Alpes-Maritimes prefecture, which includes Nice.

Sunday night's encounter between Saint-Etienne and Marseille has also been postponed on the request of local authorities.

The latest postponements come after Paris Saint-Germain's game against Montpellier and Lyon's trip to Toulouse -- scheduled for Saturday -- were both called off due to security concerns, and the possibility remains that all other French top-flight games could be postponed too. *AFP*

By Alex Chilumbwe

The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) has congratulated the four Zambian representatives in the CAF Inter-Club championship for qualifying to the second stage of competition. FAZ communications manager Desmond Katongo said that the association was particularly delighted with

FAZ congratulates CAF envoys

the performance of the four clubs in both their away and home matches. In a press statement availed to the media in Lusaka, Thursday, Katongo hailed the Zambian Super League for producing players that can compete on international level adding

that the league was among the best on the continent. "We are extremely happy with our flag carriers in both the CAF Confederations Cup and Champions League. They have done the Association and the nation proud. These results are a clear

testament that our football has continued to grow both at domestic and international level. It is also an indication that the Zambian league is among the best on the continent," he said. Katongo further reaffirmed the association's

commitment towards taking the Zambian game forward.

"We will continue to support our local clubs in the best way possible. Our decision to restructure the Zambian league is one of the avenues that we want to use to take the game a step further. The Association will not relent until this obligation is fulfilled," Katongo said. He added that the association was hopeful that Zambian flag carriers will continue representing

the country diligently by embarking on strides that can drive the Zambian game further up.

"The Association wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Management of Zesco United FC, Nkana FC, Green Eagles FC and Green Buffalos FC for their continued support towards the development of the Zambian game. We further wish to congratulate the players and technical benches for a job well-done. We are hopeful that the strides these clubs are making on the continent drive our game further up," said Katongo.

Herrera shouldn't be at Man Utd if he can't pass - Scholes

Paul Scholes has questioned the quality of some of the Manchester United squad and, highlighting Ander Herrera, claims they shouldn't be at the club if they can't play simple passes.

United were held to a 2-2 draw against Arsenal at Old Trafford on Wednesday night in which they were twice forced to come from behind.

Goals from Anthony Martial and Jesse Lingard helped rescue a draw for Jose Mourinho's men, although they remain way off the pace in the hunt for a top-four finish and currently sit eighth in the table.

And Paul Scholes and Rio Ferdinand are clearly unimpressed with matters at Old Trafford, with United now having gone four leagues games without a win.

And having been shown a clip from Saturday's 2-2 draw with Southampton, Scholes was left baffled by the player's apparent struggle to play a pass to team-mate Paul Pogba.

"You have to question the quality of the player," Scholes said on BT Sport.

"Rio asked the question there when he said: 'Is Ander Herrera capable of playing that ball to Pogba?' Now, he's in 15-20 yards of space, it's probably a 30-yard ball - a simple ball - if he's not good enough to play that ball then he shouldn't be at this club."

Ferdinand, meanwhile, blamed a lack of confidence for the players' poor showings in recent times, claiming it can make the simplest of tasks seem daunting.

"It is an easy ball and when you hear Paul Scholes say that... he was a player who could put the ball on a sixpence from anywhere on the pitch, but when you look at that pass it's not a difficult ball to play. I think it's confidence," the former United and England centre-back said. *Goal.com*



LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers reacts after his blocking foul during a 121-113 win over the San Antonio Spurs at Staples Center on Wednesday in Los Angeles, California - AFP

Bilton notes bias in CAF refereeing

By Alex Chilumbwe

Green Buffaloes football coach Bilton Musonda says there were notable instances of bias from officials in the

second leg of the CAF Confederations game that his side played against Al-Merrikh of Sudan in Juba on Wednesday.

Musonda said it was evident even to any soccer fan that watched the game that the officials denied his side a number of fouls that

were committed by the Sudanese side.

In a recorded statement availed to the media yesterday, Musonda expressed happiness and satisfaction that his side did not concede in the draw that the two sides played out to.

"There was a little bias that favoured the Sudanese side but I did not lose my head over them. I also advised my players to simply play their game with hundred percent discipline. They ended up playing even better than they did in the home match of the first leg," he noted.

Musonda also noted that his side had greatly improved tactically as compared to how the

team was in the 2018 Super League season.

"My team has improved tactically compared to how it was during the 2018 super league season. Most of my players have learnt how to keep the ball and are making impressive judgement on where to pass the ball and how to finish the game with a clean sheet. It is something that I hope they will keep learning as we await to play the Arabs who are tactically great in the second round of the competition," said Musonda.

The combatants will play CS Sfaxien of Tunisia in the next stage of the competition.

U-20 beats Congo DR 2-0 in Kitwe

By Alex Chilumbwe

Benson Kolala's 17th minute goal and Prince Mumba's 24th strike were enough to guide the Zambia Under-20 national team to a 2-0 triumph over Congo DR at the on-going Mopani Mines COSAFA tournament at Nkana stadium yesterday in Kitwe.

It was a thunderous start for both teams with Congo DR threatening a goal opportunity in just three minutes of action through Batista. As players settled, Zambia made its first real attempt at goal 15th minute, but Edward Chilufya's

shot narrowly went wide.

The young Copper Bullets made more attempts to attack with decent defending tactics that attracted no foul. In the 17th minute, Zambia found the back of the net through Benson Kolala who connected from a good aerial pass.

It was not long after Kolala's goal that Prince Mumba who scored a brace in the opening match against Malawi, doubled the lead for young Chipolopolo in 24th minute.

Congo DR lads pressured the Zambian defence towards the

end of the first half until Gideon Miyanda got red carded for a foul against Jackson Muleka in the 34th minute.

In the second half, Lameck Banda nailed a thunderbolt from outside the 18 box but the Congo DR goalie parried it for a corner in the 50th minute. Banda however got withdrawn for Mwiya Malumo in the 63rd minute following an injury.

In the 75th minute, Klings Kangwa was withdrawn for Clinton Mabula but the substitution added little value as the game ended 2-0.

Mauro Icardi said he was relishing the chance to measure himself against Cristiano Ronaldo for the first time as Inter Milan travel to Turin on Friday looking to inflict the first defeat of the season on Italian champions Juventus and keep the Serie A title race alive.

Juventus have set a frenetic pace this season since signing Ronaldo, making a record start with 40 points after the first 14 games in Serie A.

Napoli are second -- eight points behind Juventus -- with Inter Milan 11 points adrift of the champions in third.

A defeat for Inter in the 'Derby D'Italia' between the two northern giants would likely be a killer blow to their ambitions and leave Juventus free to claim an eighth consecutive title.

"I've played (Juventus)

Icardi eyes Ronaldo match-up as Inter Milan bid to halt Juventus

many times but this is the most important since I've been here," said Icardi.

"I won't settle for a draw. We must go there without fear.

"I can't wait to play against Cristiano Ronaldo, it will be a pleasure to have him up front. But he's not my problem, (defenders) Stefan de Vrij and Milan Skriniar are there."

The 25-year-old Icardi has been in fine form this season, scoring eight Serie A goals and 11 in all competitions, with Ronaldo, 33, having bagged 10 in Serie A and 11 in total for Juventus.

Inter's last win in Turin dates back to November 2012. **AFP**



U20 beats DRC 2-0

Story page 15



AFP Forum
Naomi Baker / GETTY IMAGES EUROPE / GYI

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Lara Gibson of Cambridge is tackled during the Oxford University and Cambridge University Women's Varsity match at Twickenham Stadium yesterday in London, England - AFP

Leicester City crash helicopter rotor pedals failed

Disconnected cockpit pedals caused the helicopter crash that killed the Thai billionaire owner of Leicester City football club and four others on October 28, a British investigation found on Thursday.

The death of Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha shocked global sport and left the small central English city in mourning two years after the club's improbable first and only top-level championship title.

The helicopter, decorated in the blue and white colours of the team, spun out of control on takeoff moments after it cleared the stadium's roof.

Vichai attended most Leicester home matches, landing and taking off from the centre of the pitch. **AFP**