



PF CAMPAIGNS SPLIT OFFICIALS

Lusambo rejects Mayor Chanda for C/belt chair

By Daniel Chansa in Ndola and Sipilisiwe Ncube in Lusaka

Kabushi PF member of parliament Bowman Lusambo has advised party members on the Copperbelt to vote for someone who is not serving as mayor or member of parliament to the position of party chairman saying they will have divided attention. Lusambo has since thrown his weight behind Mike Manda.

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An inmate (above) watches as Inspector General of Police Kankanja Kakoma (l) dances with a female inmate when the Service Chiefs paid a Christmas visit to Lusaka Central Correctional Facility on December 25, 2018 - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Skin me alive before you abolish meal allowance, Kambwili tells Nkandu Luo

By Mirriam Chabala

Nkandu Luo should come and skin me alive first before she

abolishes meal allowances, NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili has dared.

And Kambwili charged that President Edgar Lungu was allowing such alien decisions under the influence of alcohol.

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EAZ becoming a PF surrogate - Musenge

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Ndola indecent assault victim goes 'missing'

By Daniel Chansa

Chief Justice Irene Mambilima is also a foreigner who is aiding and abetting an identity thief, which makes her a criminal, New Labour Party president Fresher Siwale charged yesterday.

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There's nothing wrong with smoking marijuana, Lusaka man tells court

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By Zondiwe Mbewe

The Lusaka Magistrates' Court has sentenced a 28-year-old man of Chipata Overspill to six months' simple imprisonment for trafficking and unlawful use of marijuana. This was after the accused, John Frazer Mwamba, informed the court that he didn't see anything wrong in smoking marijuana as it was for medicinal purposes, adding that if he can't be handled in Zambia, it was best to send him to a country like Jamaica where he can be allowed to smoke. In this matter, Mwamba was facing two counts of trafficking and unlawful use of marijuana. It was alleged in the first count that on December 8, this year in Lusaka, Mwamba did traffic in psychotropic substances

There's nothing wrong with smoking marijuana, Lusaka man tells court

namely, 1.1 grammes of marijuana, a herbal product of cannabis sativa without lawful authority. In the second count, it was alleged that on the same day, Mwamba did use 0.9 grammes of marijuana without lawful authority. Mwamba was allegedly taken to the police by his mother after he became unruly, threatening his members of the family that he will beat them. And when the matter came up for plea before Magistrate K Sakwanda, he admitted the charges. Facts of the matter are

that on December 8, DEC officers received information that there was an accused person in custody at North Gate Police Post who was found dealing in suspected drugs. DEC officers then proceeded to the said place where Mwamba was handed over with the said exhibits and he admitted ownership. The suspected drugs were taken to UTH Food and Drug control Laboratory where the Public Analyst identified and confirmed the drugs to be marijuana. The accused gave a free and

voluntary reply admitting the charge and was formally charged and arrested for the subject offence.

Asked by the court whether the facts were correct, Mwamba replied in the affirmative. He, however, added that much as he had pleaded guilty, he did not see anything wrong in smoking the drugs because he was using them as medicine. When the court interjected, asking him whether he was aware that it was an offence to smoke marijuana, Mwamba said, "If you can't handle me here, it's better

you send me to a region where I'm allowed to smoke, a country like Jamaica. When I smoke, I manage to find my way home. If I don't smoke, I have stomach pains," Mwamba said. In her ruling, Magistrate Sakwanda noted that she gave Mwamba an opportunity to mitigate, but he had nothing to say. She added that although she had put into consideration the fact that the accused was the first offender, what he did was wrong and he was not remorseful. Magistrate Sakwanda, therefore, sentenced him to

six months imprisonment. "You have not shown any remorse for your actions. Whatever type of medication you use, you need a prescription from the doctors. The drugs you used as medication are not allowed in Zambia. Just to show that what you did was wrong and to deter you from committing the same offence; I sentence you to six months simple imprisonment in count one and four weeks simple imprisonment in count two. The sentences are to run concurrently," ruled Magistrate Sakwanda.

UPND won't tolerate foreigners owning land in Zambia - Bauleni

By Zondiwe Mbewe

UPND chairman for lands Adrian Bauleni says under a UPND government, the current happenings where foreigners are grabbing land across the country will cease because ownership will exclusively be for Zambians. And Bauleni says the UPND shall not tolerate foreigners coming into the country to mine precious stones uncontrollably. In the UPND's weekly newsletter to News Diggers! Bauleni stated that UPND was aware of the importance of land anywhere in the world, adding that it would be preferable to remain poorer than have the land taken away by foreigners. "Land is the greatest natural asset to mankind. Therefore, without land, it inevitably constitutes the dead-end for any nation and could easily lead to extinction of any human race. Therefore, it would be preferable to remain poorer rather than the land being taken away by the foreigners, the way it is currently obtaining in our country, Zambia. In our local situation, we might not be feeling the impact of the seemingly Chinese slow pace of land alienation. But the real gravity of it would be felt by the future generations of our people in no distant future," he stated

Bauleni stated that in order to tackle land regime dispensation in Zambia, the UPND government would ensure that land ownership became exclusively for locals without exception. He added that whatever was obtaining currently where foreigners, mainly the Chinese, had the upperhand in grabbing land across the country would immediately cease. And Bauleni stated that UPND would stand by traditional rulers as partners in land governance, adding that the party's overall land policy was to support and consolidate the authority of traditional leaders in the management of customary land. "They are the custodians of our land and collaborator with the central government, even during the colonial days. Why should they be marginalized this time around and yet they were respected by the colonialists? The UPND government, therefore, pledges to stand by the traditional rulers as partners in the land governance in our country," Bauleni added. "The UPND government will, however, endeavour to enhance the authority on the customary land of the traditional rulers by redefining and putting in place systems and procedures in the collaborative process in

relation to the central government and other agencies that would be directly and indirectly linked to customary land administration. The mutual consultations would be the order of the day between the central government and the traditional authority over the customary land." Bauleni further stated that the UPND government would not tolerate the displacement of citizens from their ancestral land. "This has been ongoing under the PF government to displace and evict the citizens from their ancestral land, usually in preference to the foreigners. This is abominable, and will not be tolerated any further by UPND, especially in the circumstances of the abundance of land in the country. As a UPND government, we will endeavour to end the trend in order to keep the overall citizenry at peace and avert the story of recurrent displacement and evictions of our citizens," he pledged. Meanwhile, Bauleni stated that the UPND shall ensure equal distribution of land among Zambians, particularly women and the youth, as they constitute the majority of poverty-stricken citizens. He stated that the party would further carry out a land audit in order to know how much land constitutes Zambia.

Bauleni stated that the party shall further review the Presidential powers over land. "The UPND government shall review the executive powers of the President over land in Zambia. The clause that stipulates that all land is vested in the President on behalf of the people of Zambia shall be reviewed critically. Unfortunately, the clause has been abused by the sitting presidents instead of engaging the traditional rulers and the affected citizens in certain parts of the country, the executive powers have been excessively used to secure land anywhere

in the country. This is particularly common on the issues involving investors," he stated. Bauleni noted that with UPND in power, it shall endeavour to get to the root cause of the failure to resolve the boundary disputes among chiefdoms. He further pledged that a UPND administration shall not tolerate foreigners who came in the country to mine precious stones uncontrollably. Bauleni stated that to strengthen the Office of Land Commission and the Lands Tribunal, the UPND would appoint a special committee to

study what goes on in the two offices.

"There is imperative need to critically analyse the Office of the Commission of Lands and to strengthen the operations of the Land Tribunal. The two offices should be seen to operate independent of the external forces within the government circles. In order, therefore, to ensure smooth work culture by the two offices, there will be need to appoint a special committee for the purpose of studying what goes on in those offices. There is suspicion that there is corruption in the Ministry of Lands," stated Bauleni.

Chipata court jails three for unlawful possession of ivory

By Geoffrey Zulu

The High Court, sitting in Chipata, has jailed two men to seven years' imprisonment with hard labour for illegal possession of eight kilogrammes of ivory and leopard skin. In a press release, Wednesday, Ministry of Tourism and Arts public relations officer Sakabilo Kalembwe stated that another man was sentenced to six years' imprisonment with hard labour for illegal possession of ivory weighing up to two Kgs.

"The three men were tried and convicted by the Lundazi Subordinate Court and committed to the High Court for sentencing. The High Court, sitting in Chipata, sentenced Oscar Nyirongo, aged 38, to seven years' imprisonment with hard labour for the eight kilogrammes of ivory, contrary

to section 130 (2) (a) of the ZWA No. 14 of 2015," Kalembwe stated. He further explained that, similarly, the Court sentenced Gabriel Nkhoma to seven years' imprisonment with hard labour for unlawful possession of prescribed trophy, namely one leopard skin, contrary to section 130 (2) (a) of the ZWA No. 14 of 2015.

And Morgan Ngulube was also sentenced to six years' imprisonment with hard labour for ivory weighing two Kgs contrary to section 130 (2) (a) of the ZWA No. 14 of 2015. The illegal possession of prescribed trophies, such as ivory, rhino horn, lion, cheetah and leopard skins are serious crimes in Zambia and attract penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment with no option of a fine, according to Kalembwe.

By Milimo Namangala

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) has urged the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ) to seriously introspect the new Council members to avoid a situation where the professional institution is rendered a PF surrogate. And the NDC say State House's launching of an inquiry into the privatization of public enterprises under the MMD regime is unnecessary and untimely. In a statement issued, Wednesday, NDC secretary general Mwenya Musenge warned the EAZ not to render itself a Patriotic Front (PF) surrogate by pushing a pro-PF agenda. "As NDC, we are not amazed that State House is now using professional bodies, such as the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ), to discuss the privatization of former State assets. As NDC, we have fears that the EAZ will soon lose its relevance and respect if they do not tread cautiously," Musenge warned. "We call upon genuine members of the EAZ to seriously have an introspection of the new EAZ council. We foresee a situation where the EAZ will soon be a surrogate of the PF looking at the partisan lines some of its executive members are tolling." And Musenge said that State House's launching of an inquiry into the privatization of public enterprises under the MMD regime is unnecessary and untimely. On Tuesday, President Edgar Lungu's Special Assistant for Press and Public Relations Amos Chanda called for a

EAZ becoming a PF surrogate - Musenge

public and judge-led inquiry into the privatization of companies where an opposition politician was implicated. But Musenge said that government was better off spending resources on more pressing matters as opposed to wasting public funds on the inquiry. "As NDC, we feel the probe into the sale of state parastatals will not yield any results. Such an inquiry into the matter will merely be an academic excise and a waste of public resources. Colossal sums of money that could be spent on such an inquiry could be diverted to needy areas such as the health and educational sectors," Musenge argued. "Moreover, we feel most of the documents in the privatization of state firms cannot be traced. It's now almost 20 years after the MMD government concluded the said excise. Worse still, most of the people behind the sale of former government firms have either died or relocated from Zambia." Musenge charged that State House has ulterior motives for making the inquiry and intends on denting the image of the opposition. "We feel State House deliberately wants to dent the image and reputation of certain persons linked to the privatization of government assets. All this is

meant to disparage the image of a well-known opposition political figure," Musenge stressed. "This witch-hunt being promoted by State House is petty and extremely preposterous! It is unfortunate that such cheap talk is coming from the Presidency, undoubtedly, the highest office in the land. Zambia has a lot of urgent matters to resolve. State House could do well, for instance, to discuss the plight of starving villagers in Lumezi District living on raw mangoes." He also pointed out how President Lungu can focus on fighting corruption in his Cabinet and utilize the FIC Trends Report where most Cabinet Ministers were cited. "The Presidency can go further to discuss how President Lungu is fighting corruption in his Cabinet. Zambians want to know, for instance, what Mr. Lungu is doing about the latest Financial Intelligence Report handed over to him by the FIC. Several Cabinet Ministers are cited in this dossier," he narrated. "The country may also want to know how far the probe into the infamous procurement of the fire tenders has reached. The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has been investigating some named Minister over

wealth suspiciously acquired. We want to know if President Lungu has received and studied the file presumably handed over to him from the ACC. The Presidential handlers should use this period to organize a meeting with the Zambia Chambers of Mines to discuss the pending job cuts in the extractive sector." Meanwhile, Musenge, a former PF Copperbelt Province Minister, also warned Chanda not to get involved in politics, which should be left to politicians instead. "We want to caution the Presidential Spokesperson Amos Chanda NOT to use his office to fight proxy political battles. Mr. Chanda should leave political battles to politicians and he should be above partisan politics," cautioned Musenge. "The people of Zambia are not interested to know, for instance, how President Lungu used the monies he got from the sale of Zambia Cold storage. We believe that Mr. Lungu and others in the privatization team of state enterprises did a professional job in whatever undertakings and decisions they made. If those in the privatization team were involved in illicit acts, previous administrations could have probed those linked to the sale of parastatals."

Ndola indecent assault victim goes missing

By Daniel Chansa

The complainant in a case where five Ndola women inserted a bottle of beer in her vagina as punishment for allegedly going out with a married man has gone missing. It is alleged that on December 1, 2018, Precious Kapambwe 25, Bridget Chisha 21, Magrette Mwansa 25, Catherine Banda 29 and Maureen Mutale 29, jointly and while acting together did abduct the victim in order to put her in danger of being subjected to grievously bodily harm. In count two, the five are charged with indecent assault. When the matter came up for trial before Ndola Chief Resident Magistrate John Mbuze, the state informed the court that the complainant had gone missing and demanded that the arresting officer explains her whereabouts. When arresting officer Francis Banda took the stand, he told the court that he had received a call from the victim, using a strange number, who informed him that she was in Lusaka and planned on never returning to Ndola. But her father, Sheikh Mwanakambwila, told the court that he was unaware of his daughter's whereabouts. "I did receive the summons for the witnesses and only managed to find one witness, the father to the complainant who indicated that the Complainant left home and he is not aware of her whereabouts. However, I managed to inform the father to be before court, as at now, I am not in the position to know where the Complainant is. Some few days, I received a strange number who called on my line and I spoke to the Complainant who indicated to me that she is in Lusaka and that she was not willing to appear or attend court, [for] reasons best known by her self. She further indicated that she is in Lusaka and will never come back in Ndola," the arresting officer, Francis Banda, told the court. But the state insisted that the witness was interfered with. "We are convinced that the witness was interfered with. There is no any

other way, apart from interference," the state said. At this point, the state applied that the father, who was before court, explains the whereabouts of his daughter. However, the defence team tried to object to the application but Magistrate Mbuze ruled that the father, despite being a main witness, should explain only about where the victim is. "I don't know where my daughter is. I don't know where she is and am still looking for her. She left home on December 7. That is the last time I saw her," Sheikh Mwanakambwila, who is a tomato trader at Main Masala, said. The state insisted that the witness was interfered with and applied that the bail given to the three accused be revoked. In his ruling, Magistrate Mbuze said if the witness would not be present at the next hearing, he would compel the state to proceed without her. "I will grant two conditions, one to issue summons to the witness, or two will compel the state to proceed without the witness. I will grant one adjournment. This matter will come up on January 7, 2019 for trial. The three will have their bail extended while the two will remain in custody," said Magistrate Mbuze. It is alleged that on the material day, in Ndola's New Mushili township, the victim was having drinks at Star Point bar at Masala main market with Harrison Mwanza, the husband to Kapambwe. Whilst at the drinking place, Kapambwe showed up in the company of her other four friends. It is alleged that upon seeing his wife, Kapambwe's husband ran away, leaving the victim alone. Kapambwe then picked the victim by force and took her to home where she was allegedly forced to undress. In the video that went viral on social media, the women are seen holding the victim's hands and legs while others are placing a bottle of castle beer in her vagina. The women are also heard warning her to stay away from married men as another captures the ordeal on her phone.



Lusaka central Correctional Facility inmates and prison wardens sing during the Service Chiefs special Christmas visit on December 25, 2018 - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Failed alliances create worst enemies, warns Nason Msoni

By Sipiliwe Ncube

All People's Congress (APC) president Nason Msoni has warned political parties forming alliances to always bear in mind that their next most bitter enemies are those that fallout from a failed alliance. In a statement, Msoni noted that any reckless premature endorsements are a sure death nail of any progressive alliance. "Political alliances are formed for various political reasons but fundamentally they're formed to help leverage the political equation and ultimately takeover power. Ideally political alliances are a product of introspection after recognising the structural weaknesses in the constituent individual political parties and ultimately deciding to come together to fix and mend the deficit and become stronger to challenge the opponent. Political alliances are exceptionally sensitive to the environment in which they exist and therefore require

more reasonableness, maximum restraint and sensitivity relative to the other partners in the alliance," Msoni stated. "Political parties going into political alliances should always bear in mind that their next most bitter enemies are those that fallout from a failed political alliance than possibly even the opponent they have been scheming to remove from power. This happens when the much anticipated political alliance goes horribly wrong. Reckless premature endorsements are a sure death nail of any progressive alliance and this is precisely what has suffocated most promising political alliances in Zambia in the past leading to the assertion that political alliances don't work in Zambia." He observed that alliances affect the recruitment of other alliance partner's members. Msoni advised that political alliances must be built on the premise of

a genuine spirit of give and take. "Political endorsements in political alliances of individual political leaders tend to undermine the collective effort of other political leaders giving the impression that the formation has become a conveyer belt rather than a mutual front of leaders determined to fix the wrongs. Political alliances must be built on the premise of a genuine spirit of give and take. Political alliances do not offer an easy opportunity for recruitment of other alliance partner's members that effectively kills off the trust. Political alliance partner members ought to avoid making political statements that suggest that they're pursuing a double agenda whilst still in a subsisting political alliance. The PF and MMD faction alliance has run into trouble because of mistrust. The MMD faction has gone into a veiled attack on their political Partner and ally PF because they feel used, cheated and short changed," stated Msoni.

Sipilisiwe Ncube in Lusaka and Daniel Chansa in Ndola

Kabushi PF member of parliament Bowman Lusambo has advised party members on the Copperbelt to vote for someone who is not serving as mayor or member of parliament to the position of party chairman saying they will have divided attention.

Lusambo has since thrown his weight behind Mike Manda, saying the Copperbelt deserves to be led by mature, committed and down to earth people. But Luanshya Mayor Nathan Chanda's supporters have warned Lusambo not to breed confusion in the province by supporting his preferred candidates in silence.

"As we now focus on the elections for the Copperbelt Provincial Executive due to take place this weekend, allow me to share with you why I believe the new Provincial Chairman must be no other than Mike Manda. I therefore declare that Team Mike is the only way the party will move forward in the province. As a key member of the PF in the Province, I wish to remind the entire electoral college to vote for a group of men and women that are loyal to President Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the party and will work to ensure the growth and sustainability of the PF on the Copperbelt. As you all know, the Copperbelt is the

Lusambo de-campaigns Luanshya Mayor ahead of Copperbelt intra party elections

heartbeat of the PF and it therefore follows that those elected to lead this mighty party should be men and women who are mature, committed, down to earth with proven abilities to mobilise the grassroots. In my long years in politics, the Almighty God has blessed with a good ability to read the political seasons and I can confidently declare that Mike is headed for a landslide victory," Lusambo stated in a statement which he posted on his Facebook page ahead of the intra-party elections slated for this weekend.

"Due to the complexity of the Province, there is need to usher in a leader who

can easily bring different people together in one boat and Mike qualifies. The next leader of the party in the province should be one who can influence the growth of the party in these two different regions and Mike qualifies. Due to the heavy work load, the Provincial Chairman for the party on the Province should be one who is a full time worker and 100% dedicated to the cause of growing the party in the province. The party does not need a part time Chairman who will offer it divided attention. As stated above, the position of Provincial Chairman can be taxing on one's time. It is therefore important that one is given

this responsibility to lead the party in the Province is not a serving Member of Parliament, a Councilor or even a Mayor. This is critical because a Chairman who has other equally important assignments such as attending Parliamentary sessions or Committee meetings in Lusaka and traveling around the country and the world as assigned by the Speaker will devote little time to organizing the team."

Lusambo also urged members to vote for Kitwe Mayor Christopher Kang'ombe as provincial deputy chairman, against Chifubu PF member of parliament Frank Ng'ambi

who is aspiring for the same position.

"This is why Mr Manda will be deputized by Kitwe Mayor His Worship Christopher Kangombe, a proven community leader who will use a bottom-up approach in addressing the concerns from members, this way, it will guarantee that every PF member on the Copperbelt will have a say on how the party is functioning," stated Lusambo.

But Nathan Chanda's supporters have warned Lusambo against bringing confusion in the Copperbelt Provincial PF elections.

A member of Chanda's campaign team, Felix

Mumba, has warned that Lusambo will not be entertained.

"The directions and instructions are clear that ministers should not be part of these elections. Yes, Bowman is MP for Kabushi but we won't allow his campaigns to divide the Copperbelt. Let him support whoever he wants in silence. He does not know anything about Copperbelt. We fought for the party and we will fight for it. So ba Bowman, don't push us very much. Stay away from the Copperbelt," warned Mumba.

"It is the interest of the party first and not individuals. We love the party and we will defend it in anyway. So those that think and want to divide us should not push us."

Mumba said this after holding campaigns in Bwana Mukubwa constituency.

Skin me alive before you abolish meal allowances, CK tells Luo

By Mirriam Chabala

Nkandu Luo should come and skin me alive first before she abolishes meal allowances, NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili has dared.

In an interview, Kambwili condemned Higher Education Minister

Professor Luo, who recently told a CBU student of her plans to stop paying students meal allowances effective January 2019.

Kambwili charged that President Edgar Lungu was allowing such alien decisions under the influence of alcohol.

"The problem that my sister, Nkandu Luo, has is that she wants to do things alone without consulting and I feel sorry for President Edgar Lungu, who is easily convinced. But I know how they convince him, they go to tell him some of these things when he's taking his wine, and when you are under the influence of alcohol, you don't think straight. There is just no way a reasonable President can accept that meal allowances for students should be scrapped off. Do you know where some of those students come from? Some of those, their parents cannot even raise a K10 per month. All they do is to farm, they grow maize, which they pound to make mealie-meal and grow vegetables in the yard, and that's what they feed on. So, where do you expect them to get the money to feed the children at the university? Come on, Nkandu Luo! Put a sock in it! But I will tell Nkandu Luo, she should come and skin me alive first before she removes meal allowances," Kambwili dares.

He asked Prof Luo to resign on moral grounds.

"Nkandu Luo should resign on moral grounds! Meal allowances in universities are paid all over the world for those who are on bursary. And this time, we have changed; it's on longer bursary, it's actually a loan, which will be paid back. So, that is just inefficiency of this government because they have over-borrowed

and the government is broke! They should not hide into the fracas that the students cause as a result of delayed meal allowances. Nkandu Luo will go down in history as the worst Minister of Education this country has ever seen! She should know that the beginning of the fall of government is arrogance, and my sister, on this one, awe baya sana! (She has gone too far!) She should not think that she can hold Zambia to ransom, her children are educated, she's educated and she was educated through the same bursary and she used to receive meal allowances. So, why would she want other children not to receive meal allowance?" Kambwili asked.

"But I will forgive Nkandu Luo because she has a President who agrees with everything. I am sure they went to tell him [about this] when he was having his wine, and when he's having his wine, he agrees with everything! Ask Edgar Lungu how was he educated himself? He was at the University of Zambia, he was on bursary, he was being paid meal allowances and he should not forget that when there was noise for meal allowances, he also participated in those demonstrations so that they are paid. So, what is good for the goose should be good for the gander. Parliament will not allow the abolition of meal allowances for students. We are going to fight tooth and nail and I want to warn

Nkandu Luo that they will see demonstrations that they have never seen in this country if they go ahead and remove meal allowances for the children."

Kambwili urged government to ensure that it was meeting its social obligations even as it was paying off the country's huge debt.

"It is not about the demonstrations by the students, the truth of the matter is that this government has got no money! And I have warned people, and I want to say this again: very soon you will see teachers will not be paid for one or two months under this administration. The government is just broke...in next year's (2019) budget, they have provided K23 billion to pay debts! This is more than the total budget for the health sector, but they have provided for it to pay debts and they are going to borrow K28 billion. Meaning, therefore, that they are borrowing to pay debt! So, Nkandu Luo must not use the demonstrations to abolish meal allowances because demonstrating is a human right to express your anger, and she cannot sit on the rights of those students. The most unfortunate part is that students go to the extent of stoning innocent vehicles, and that I do not support. But to do a peaceful demonstration to show that their meal allowances have been delayed is a human right, it happens all over the world," said Kambwili, who is also the Roan PF member of parliament.

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President Edgar Chagwa Lungu (third from right) with other Heads of States and Representatives of Governments takes a family photo at the Presidential Palace in Brazzaville Republic of the Congo on Wednesday, December 26, 2018 during the Joint Southern African Development Community (SADC) and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Summit - Picture by Salim Henry

Govt terminates contract with contractor hired to build health posts in Muchinga

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Ministry of Health has terminated a contract with a contractor who was engaged to construct 51 health posts in Muchinga on reasons that he had challenges with the host government. Speaking at a ground breaking ceremony to signal the commencement of the construction of a first level hospital in Shiwangandu, Wednesday, Health Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya also revealed

that government is constructing a state of the art second level hospital in Chinsali. "The honourable minister did mention the issue of health posts, yes [but] unfortunately the contractor who we had mandated to build 51 health posts in Muchinga had a challenge with the host government and we had to terminate the contract on mutual agreement. So the health posts have not been completed in

Muchinga Province and in Shiwangandu only two have been done. I want to assure you honourable minister and through you the people of Muchinga that come December 28th this Friday, the contractor who has been assigned to continue building health posts will be in Northern Province and Muchinga to just ensure that everything is in place and map the programme so start constructing within January," Dr Chilufya said.

He said providing health services under his ministry would not only be based on infrastructure expansion but also on taking the services closer to the people. "We are determined as a government to ensure that all Zambians access health services across the ... We will therefore ensure that Muchinga Province has enough infrastructure for people to access health services closer to where they are. Health service will not only be

based on infrastructure expansion, there must be services closer to where the people live, the quality must be very high, it must be affordable it must not result in financial catastrophe. So we are building health posts, we are building hospitals and mini hospital centres, we are building big hospitals," Dr Chilufya said. He further said that the new Chinsali second level hospital will also be a training facility for nurses and medical degree doctors.

that we deploy medical staff," he said.

And Shiwangandu PF member of parliament Stephen Kampyongo said he was grateful that government had decided to reactivate the construction of health posts project which had stalled for too long.

"In terms of the health facilities that you are bringing, you will be saving lives. It's the same with Kanchibiya where we have got areas which are cut-off sometimes during the rainy season

and the facilities which are there are just not good enough and the population is growing. And so we are grateful that within the strategic plan of your ministry, you have factored in Muchinga Province out of the ten provinces. We are looking forward and we shall cooperate with you to make sure that the projects that are being undertaken are done on time and that the contractors you are giving us are monitored because we have been disappointed in some cases. We of course know that the 650 [health posts] which we have been crying for, it was circumstances beyond the ministry's control. So we are grateful that you have reactivated that project so that those few which remained can also be completed," said Kampyongo.

Christmas accidents drop in 2018

By Geoffrey Zulu
The Zambia Police Service has recorded a total of 125 road traffic accidents during this year's Christmas period, from December 24-26, 2018, compared to 234 road traffic accidents recorded over the same period last year, a reduction of 109. In a press statement issued, Wednesday, Zambia Police Public Relations Officer Esther Mwaata Katongo stated that out of 125 road traffic accidents recorded during the Christmas period this year, 12 were fatal road traffic accidents in which 13 persons were killed; 15 were serious road traffic accidents in which 22 persons were seriously injured; 26 were slight road traffic accidents in which 31 persons were slightly injured, while 72 were damages only road traffic accidents. She explained that the reduced numbers in road accidents was mainly attributed to improved compliance of motorists to road safety due to increased presence of road traffic officers during this

year's festive season.

"There was a great improvement in compliance levels by motorists and other road users due to increased presence of traffic police officers and Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) officers on major roads. These joint operations have continued. In 2017, during Christmas period, there were 164 casualties compared to 66 casualties in this year's Christmas holiday," Katongo disclosed.

She narrated that there was also a corresponding decline in the number of fatal accidents during the period under review compared to last year.

"In 2017, during the same period, 18 fatal road traffic accidents were recorded in which 22 persons died showing a decrease in persons killed by 9; 32 were serious road traffic accidents in which 52 persons were seriously injured last year showing a decrease in seriously injured persons by 30," Katongo stated.

"116 were damages only road traffic accidents in 2017 compared 72

damages only road traffic accidents recorded during this year's Christmas period."

She further stated that 68 were slight road traffic accidents recorded in 2017 with 90 persons sustaining slight injuries compared to 26 slight road traffic accidents recorded in 2018, with 31 persons sustaining slight injuries, showing a decrease by 42 slight road traffic accidents and a further decrease in people slightly injured by 64.

On reported criminal activities, Katongo revealed that this year's Christmas period was generally peaceful, however, 70 cases of assault occasioning bodily harm (OABH) were recorded; 18 cases of theft recorded; 11 related to malicious damage to property; eight cases of breaking into a building and committing a felony therein, while seven cases of threatening violence were recorded; six for burglary and theft; five for house breaking and theft and another five cases recorded for unlawful wounding.



NDC
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS
The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom
 Why we deserve your vote



NDC Will NOT Pull Out of the Opposition Alliance!

By Mwenya Musenge

There has been so much talk on the newly formed alliance by ten genuine opposition political parties.

Admittedly, the coming together of opposition parties who have formed a consortium to speak with one voice on pressing national issues has sent shivers in the ranks and files of the pf.

It's definitely game over for the Pf.

The opposition alliance has genuine men and women who are determined by ensuring that the political plating field is levelled for all political players.

Already, some hudlums from the pf have branded the consortium as a congregation of desperate men and women.

These charlatans have gone further making weird predictions that the alliance will soon crack.

Over the last couple of weeks, our secretariat has received numerous queries over the said alliance.

Our supporters want to know what the alliance is all about.

We have explained to them that we have teamed up with other political groupings to speak out with one voice on matters of national interest.

We have explained to them that the challenges Zambia is facing can only be resolved by the opposition speaking with one voice on the same round table and common umbrella.

We have told them that for as long as we do not put our efforts together in fighting this brutal regime, our efforts will be put in vain.

This week, we shall thus, take time discuss this well meaning alliance.

After all, they might be kidding, Dr. Kaunda must have been saying to himself.

Are we really serious being in the alliance? Yes we are.

We firmly believe that this alliance shall not fold. It shall not crumble. It is genuine and solid.

We shall remain strong and steadfast. Money, bicaring, greed for power and positions will never preoccupy us.

As NDC, we have gone into the alliance with open hands.

Our consultant Chishimba Kambwili and Members of the Central Committee believe that the opposition alliance is founded on solid grounds on matters of common interest.

The party will continue collaborating with genuine political partners and players in finding solutions to the many challenges Zambia is facing.

NDC has refused and will never be a surrogate of the PF.

Despite the negative cheap talk from the PF, its sponsored thugs masquerading as independent media and political groupings, we shall not move out of the consortium of political parties.

Pf should discuss its own internal wrangles and stop discussing the opposition alliance.

Pf will write off the opposition alliance, but we mean well. This criticism will make us strong.

We are ready to brave the storm. Pf and its agents will try and divide the alliance, but, we are above board and will soldier on.

This is a struggle that we shall not abandon.

Pf members for now should discuss how they will oust Edgar Lungu at their 2020 party convention.

Instead of discussing and disparaging the alliance, the pf should discuss the shame and mediocrity President Lungu has brought to Zambia.

Pf members should discuss how this regime will dismantle the debt Zambia is facing.

The Pf should further discuss the stinking corruption being perpetuated by Mr. Lungu and his cohorts.

Pf hired media outlets and thugs should discuss why Zambians can not afford three meals per day.

Dr. Kambwili and the central committee fully supports the alliance.

CK and his members will not pull out of the united opposition alliance.

Dr. Kambwili is a Nationalist. He is ready to work with all and every Zambian regardless of tribe, sex and creed.

Dr. Kambwili envisages to see a better Zambia. A united and prosperous Zambia.

Dr. Kambwili will never look back. He dearly supports this working alliance of opposition parties on matters of common interest. After all, it is a better Zambia we are looking at.

The opposition alliance is a composition of men and women who have put the agenda for a better Zambia first.

United we shall stand as an opposition alliance. To our critics, we say, we mean well for our country.

As opposition groupings, our problems and challenges are similar.

We shall speak without fear or favor for the sake of

liberating our people on matters of common interest.

A people whose dignity and integrity has been thrown to the wind by this ruthless autocratic regime.

We don't need a fragmented opposition.

The pf has been winning countless by elections mainly because as opposition political parties we have not been speaking together on matters affecting us such as the Public Order Act POA for instance.

We firmly believe that a united opposition is in the best interest of our great country on matters of national interests.

We know that the Lungu regime will use all available tricks and instruments to frustrate our initiatives. But with God on our side, we shall persevere.

Negative rantings will not make the leadership of the NDC to leave the opposition alliance.

We have entered the opposition alliance with open hands and have not made any preconditions.

To our members across Zambia, we urge you to support this working group. This alliance is in the best interest of the country in order to resolve matters that make it difficult for the NDC to operate freely in the country.

NDC members should continue with their mobilization activities recruiting new members in all parts of Zambia in their respective localities in order to make the NDC strong.

We further urge our members to create strong synergies with political groupings within the alliance in their different locations on matters of common interest to our political landscape.

We urge you our members to use each and every platform to tell the electorate that by removing obstacles created by the pf, victory by the NDC is assured in 2021.

Tell the Zambian people that in the NDC, this country still has men and women of integrity who are more than resolved to change Zambia.

Tell the people of Zambia that the opposition alliance on matters of national interest is here to stay.

Tell the people that Dr. Kambwili, Hakainde Hichilema, Charles Milupi and all leaders of the alliance have agreed to work together on matters of common interest to our country.

2019, will be a very interesting year politically. The NDC will go to great heights. We expect many Zambians to join us as we call for reforms in the media, police, judiciary and in the fight against corruption.

Viva NDC, viva opposition alliance.
Courtesy. NDC Media Department.

By Mirriam Chabala

The three Church Mother bodies have asked political leaders to swallow their pride and commit to the national dialogue process that is set to put the country on a new path of forgiveness and peace building this festive period.

In a statement signed by leaders from the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), the Church called on leaders to emulate Jesus Christ, who accepted to be born in a manger, despite being God's only son.

The Church prayed that the celebration of the birth of Christ would renew the hearts of all Zambians and awaken in them a deep desire to build a better country where there would be genuine love

Church Mother bodies counsel politicians ahead of dialogue

for each other and solidarity regardless of one's tribe, political affiliation and creed. "As the nation prepares itself to embark on a process of national dialogue and reconciliation, we upon all stakeholders to pray for the gift of true peace in our families, communities, workplaces and in our country. May the celebration of the birth of Christ, the Saviour renew our hearts and awaken in us a deep desire to build a better country where there will be genuine love for each other and greater fraternity

and solidarity regardless of one's tribe, political affiliation and creed, a Zambia that will guarantee and bring joy and hope to everyone. This will not be possible unless we cultivate a culture of true dialogue that is aimed at genuine reconciliation at personal, communal and national level," the statement read.

"As Jesus humbled himself by accepting to be born in a manger, we call upon our political leaders to swallow their pride and remain committed to the series of

talks that are geared to set this nation on a new path of forgiveness, peace building and national cohesion. We also call upon all Zambians to actively participate in this process and render their material and spiritual support. We believe that the birth of Jesus signified a new beginning in human history, an event that transformed the world and opened the way to salvation. Let us ensure that the forthcoming national dialogue and reconciliation process will truly become a new beginning towards

building a more unified, peaceful and prosperous Zambia."

The Church Mother bodies also called on Church leaders to preach the message of God's love for all humanity this festive period.

"There are so many issues our people are going through, among them economic hardships, poverty, lawlessness, crime and moral decay in their communities. These are just some of the many challenges our people are faced with on a daily basis. While some are up to the

challenge by doing everything they can to survive under such circumstances, others are tempted to give up on life because the burdens are too much for them to bear. This Christmas period is the time the Church should utilize to remind Christians that God's love through his son Jesus Christ is greater than the challenges they are facing," the Church Mother bodies stated.

"Jesus came in human form by being born around this period to save humanity by dying for our sins. Let us therefore, as Church preach the good news of love that covers all obstacles people face. It is also an opportune time for members of the Church to express their God inspired love for the poorest of the poor and all those who are in need. They can do this by providing food to the hungry, clean water to those who are thirsty, clothing to those who are naked, shelter to the homeless as well as visiting and praying with the sick and those in prison."

The statement also called on men and women in uniform to carry out their duties professionally in their quest to provide security to both citizens and the nation at large.

"Our emphasis is on the Zambia Police who are entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order. It is common knowledge that there are a lot of undesired scenes around this period which put the lives of law-abiding citizens at risk. We are aware of what is expected of you in ensuring that you maintain peace during this season. We appeal to you to remain professional and ensure that human dignity and human rights are respected. By this we are not condoning lawlessness for such behaviour is not of God," the statement read.

Meanwhile, the Church Mother bodies called on Zambians not to waste their lives this festive season.

"To the general citizenry, Christmas is about Christ, nothing more and nothing less. Christmas is not about involving our lives in activities that leave us weak and vulnerable such as over-drinking and substance abuse. Our appeal, therefore, is that citizens should celebrate Christmas with responsibility. Let us take care of our families and loved ones. Let us avoid spending all we have and forgetting about the needs of tomorrow. We should always remember that we have responsibilities waiting for us tomorrow such as paying for our children's school fees, bills to settle and many other things which we are responsible for. Instead of spending everything on luxuries and less important things, let us reflect on the real meaning of this period. Christmas is about the gift God offered to humanity through the giving of his son Jesus Christ, the One who shed His blood at Calvary and paid the full price for our sins so that we might experience eternal life with him by placing our simple faith and trust in his work on the cross," read the statement.



DANGOTE

Dangote industries Zambia limited.

Registration no:70044

Tpin:1001878318

Ndola factory

P.oBox 71082

SENIOR CHIEF CHIWALA AREA

PLOT 1676,NDOLA, ZAMBIA

TELEPHONE:+260971243770

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Please be informed further that the company reserves the right to cease and dispose - off such hauled cargo and prosecute perpetrators of such illegal activities in accordance with the Zambian Law.

All power should be checked. No one should exercise power that cannot be checked. When that happens in any system, you must know that the system has crossed from the civilized exercise of power to tyranny.

The freedoms that we enjoy today are not a luxury; they are a necessary ingredient for civilized co-existence. The people have the right to information and those that provide this information deserve to be protected. There can be no democracy without a free press.

A lot has happened in the recent months, concerning the Judiciary, but our hands have been tied. We deliberately opted to stay away from the debates and observe where it was all going to end. Unfortunately, we can't stay quiet no more because what has happened to one journalist today will happen to us tomorrow.

The jailing Derrick Sinjela, the Rainbow newspaper Editor-in-Chief, is a sad development for, not only the media fraternity, but the country as a whole. The processes that has resulted in the incarceration of this journalist is one that has to be discussed and examined very carefully. Our say on this issue has nothing to do with the judgment in the Savenda Vs Stanbic case, nor particulars in the contempt case involving our fellow scribes. What we would like to comment on is the route that a selected group of judges has taken in trying to demand respect

Jailing Sinjela will not restore the lost public confidence in Judiciary

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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Temp 8, Alex Chola Road, Nyumba Yanga, Lusaka.
PO Box, 32147. Cell: +26077122344/0965815078
Email: editor@diggers.news/mukosha@diggers.news

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for the Judiciary from members of the public.

We are afraid, and it appears to us that, the judges who felt personally insulted by Editor Sinjela appear to have used their powerful positions in the Judiciary to punish an individual for offending them.

We are not lawyers, but surely there is something very troubling about this issue. One of the principles we know that govern the way courts operate is that no one should be a judge in his or her own case. If you are the aggrieved person, there is no way you can be expected to be fair when judging your aggressor.

Anyone who observed proceedings that resulted in the imprisonment of Editor Sinjela will have to agree that the judges were very angry. They seemed to have taken personal

offence, maybe rightly so, against the accused. But the trouble is that it became obvious that they were going to use the stick in their hands to teach someone a lesson.

Well, clearly, they have taught Editor Sinjela a lesson. But one has to wonder how helpful this is to increasing respect for our courts. Yes, people may fear, but that is not the same thing as respect. Fear may be used to subdue people's behaviour, but it cannot change perception; if anything, it only adds to the mistrust.

This is what the courts should be concerned about. It is not whether or not people fear the courts or judges; it is whether they respect the courts and what they do. How this will be achieved is to ensure that our people view the work of the

Judiciary as work in their interest.

If the judges conduct themselves in such a way that the public believe them to be acting in the best interest of the nation, the courts will not have to imprison anyone. It is the public that is going to protect the Judiciary. The public will not accept the unfair criticism of the Judiciary because they will view such criticism as attack on their interest.

Comparing the courts to parents is not the best way to illustrate the point, but it might well be helpful. If children start insulting a parent, a wise parent will not rush to whip the child without first interrogating what is going on. Could it be that the parent has, over time, failed to conduct himself or herself in a manner that should engender respect from a

child? Why would a child insult a parent who treats them well and provide for them? The point is: why would citizens insult judges, or lose respect for the Judiciary if it is serving them well? Where is the problem?

Sending Mr Sinjela to prison will not change the perception that there is something very rotten about our judicial system. Something needs to be done to restore the respect and confidence of the public in our Judiciary. The judges need to look at themselves and be very honest. Have they conducted themselves, generally, in a manner that would command respect from the public? Are they carrying out their duties with dignity and the independence that would inspire public confidence? How are they relating to the powers

that be? When there are suspicions of corruption, how are they being dealt with by the Judiciary itself?

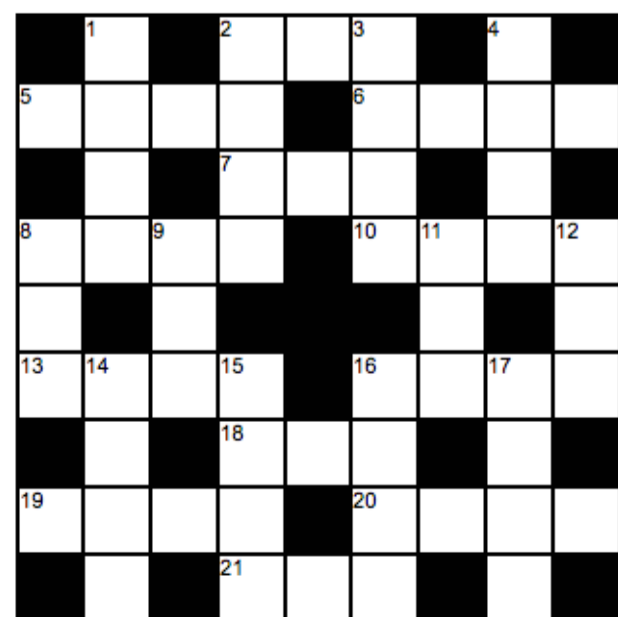
These are the questions that our colleague Editor Sinjela was trying to ask, in his own words. These are legitimate questions that have to be faced. There are no two ways about it. Making an example of Editor Sinjela will not do anything, to help our Judiciary become a better tool for fighting injustice.

Our judges must fight to restore the lost public confidence by changing their moral conduct, showing their teeth to corruption and resisting interference from the Executive; rather than targeting critics. That journalist they have jailed 18 months won't change what citizens think about the conduct of some judges.

Maybe our judges don't know how it pains when you take a matter to court and you hear that it has been allocated to judge X or judge Y. Not only do you feel like withdrawing the case, but you also feel like crying from hopelessness. That is how bad it is with some judges, such loss of integrity can't be regained through imprisoning contemnors like Editor Sinjela.

Anyway, we can only encourage Editor Sinjela to be strong and always remember that there is a Judge above all those judges who agreed to send him to prison. That Judge knows who is guilty and who is innocent; prisons have no permanent tenants, but they also don't have permanent landlords.

Crossword puzzle 260 "Everything is going to be fine in the end. Solutions to puzzle 259



“Everything is going to be fine in the end. If it's not fine it's not the end.” - Oscar Wilde

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Across</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Not quite right 5. Quick cut 6. Water drops 7. Greek H 8. Whirl 10. Operates 13. Chat 16. Filter 18. Pen filler 19. Filth 20. Capri, for one 21. Final; finish | <p>Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break abruptly 2. Not shut 3. Munich Mrs. 4. Purplish red 8. Used a chair 9. Sick 11. Slide down snowy slope 12. Take a seat 14. Fighting force 15. Flies in the wind 16. Lose taction 17. Tripped and ___ |
|---|---|



Reader's feedback

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.

ND OPINION: A vibrant opposition is as good as an efficient government

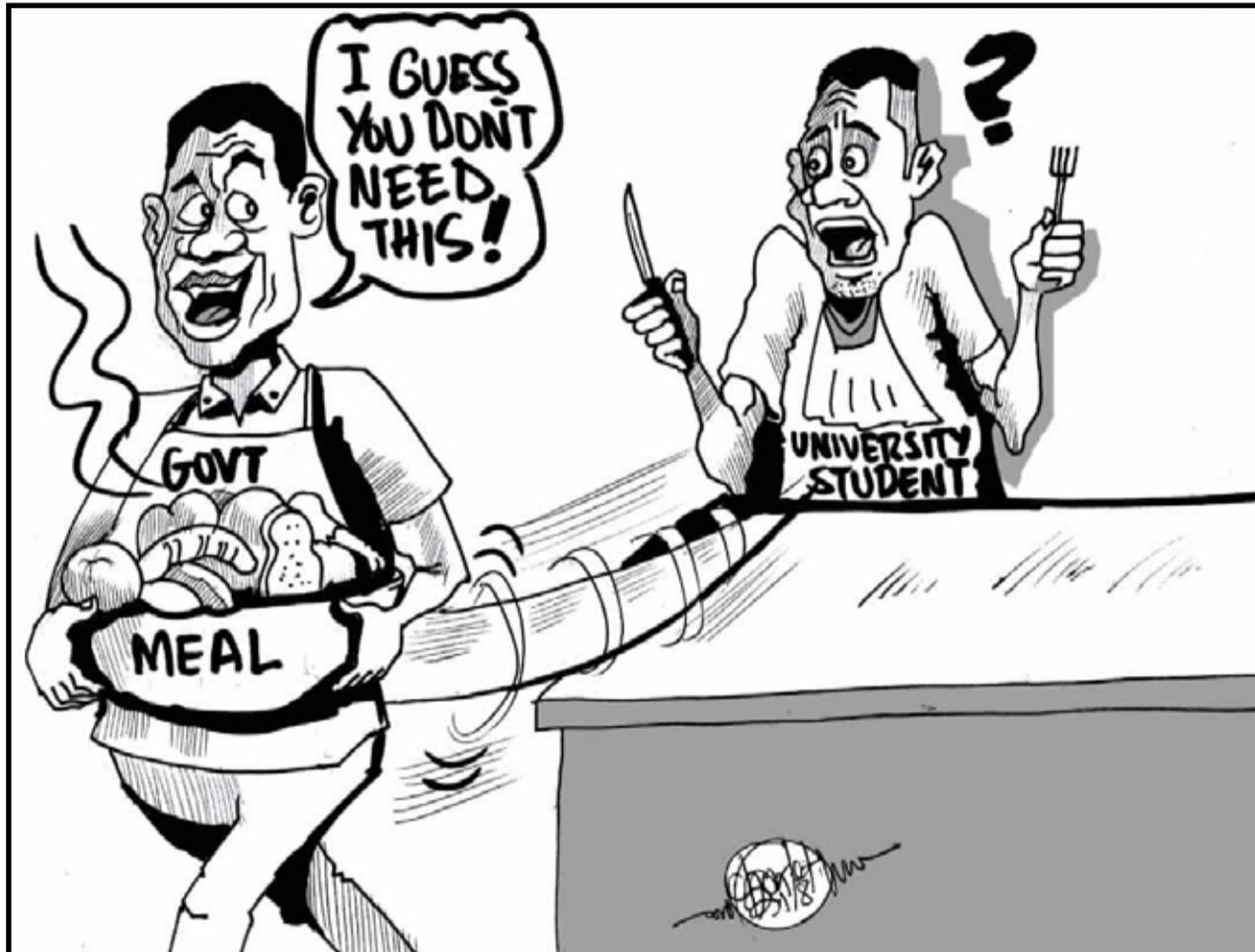
Editor,
"News Diggers! You have once more hammered the nail and you have NAILED IT! Let the

opposition alliance get this advice straight and use it! It is very good that this grouping has the support of a progressive news media in News Diggers!" - Boyd Moonga

"An excellent editorial. However, expect one or two opposition leaders to be moles for the government. They are likely to ditch the opposition alliance at an opportune time and land themselves into powerful Cabinet posts. How did Nevers Mumba, president of the-then NCC and opposition alliance spokesperson ditch the alliance and clinched the post of Republican Vice-President under President Levy Mwanawasa? Nevers betrayed his alliance partners. The Bible says those who come to power by the sword will die by the sword. Nevers betrayed the confidence of President Mwanawasa and began posturing as de-facto president, especially each time Levy was out of the country. Levy fired him in an embarrassing manner!" - Haggai Muzeya

"The opposition parties' cooperation is most welcome, but they have to do more than speech-making because fighting against a dictatorship requires a lot of courage and sacrifice. The alliance should start with a struggle to compel dictator Lungu to allow opposition meetings; the opposition won't achieve anything if they can't hold rallies or mobilize the people." - Chivunda Samusungwa

"Fools have been caught sleeping. It's good that these gallant sons of the soil have made it clear that theirs, is not a pact of disbanding their parties to form one packet, but they will be independent parties who will organise their parties individually." - Kazundulu Wachila



100% pass rate of G7 exams

Editor,

"How is that possible when a good number that sit for G7 exams can't even read!?" - Brighton Kakumya

"Children who don't know how to read and write should not proceed to grade 8 because the skill of writing and reading is taught at lower grades, therefore, if they go to grade 8, their future will be forever destroyed in terms of education. They don't teach how to read in grade 8. Help those children by allowing them to repeat." - Mwafuluka Wasilota

"Please, let us not downgrade our education

system; it is not possible for all those who sat for grade seven to have gone through to grade eight!" - Liywa Kafuba

"Just scrap it off! It does not make sense to have 100 per cent pass rate. It is a drain on our national Treasury." - Kangwa C. Mulenga

"Those with division four should not be allowed to progress!" - Gwen Chilonge Saili

"Allowing those with low marks to proceed will definitely affect the results at grade 9-level in 2020. Some of these pupils who obtain low marks are unable to read and write when they enter into grade 8." - Grace K Stevens

Govt's removal of meal allowances for university students

Editor,

"I can't support such mediocrity! I am a product of government sponsorship; I know how it feels majority of those on government sponsorship are vulnerable students from rural areas." - Mutale Nkole

"We have not even reached 2019, we are already feeling the heat...I don't know where you can run to!" - Peter Chilala

"Zambians really voted for their own suicide by putting these guys in power. Shame." - Rachelimba

"My advice to students is bury this government!" - Mukupa Mwaba

"Good move, try to fund students in trade schools and see how this nation will develop. Take bursaries to agricultural colleges and trade schools." - Takuyamabwe Chisanga

"This move will definitely help the government help more deserving students. I somehow agree with her; students can't continue like this as if we're still in Kaunda era. Government pays tuition, food and the like... next, students will demand even a clothes' allowance if left unchecked." - Ngwenya Hlazo

Russian Minister sees oil prices stabilising in 2019

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Tuesday that oil prices, which fell by more than a third this quarter, would become more stable in the first half of 2019. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other large oil producers led by Russia agreed earlier this month to cut their combined crude output by 1.2 million barrels per day from January in order to stem the fall in oil prices.

"I think that during the first half, due to joint efforts, which were confirmed by the OPEC and non-OPEC countries this December, the situation will be more stable, more balanced," Novak said in an interview on Rossiya-24 TV.

Novak also said there were no proposals for an extraordinary meeting with OPEC, and he attributed the fall in oil prices to macroeconomic factors. "Those are the fundamental factors: the decrease of demand in winter and, of course, the macro economy as we've been witnessing a decline in global economic activity at the end of the year and a fall on the stock market," he said.**REUTERS**

Nigerian army says 14 personnel killed in Boko Haram ambush

Security forces were on escort duty when they were attacked in Yobe state in the north of the country, army says.

As many as 14 Nigerian military and police personnel have been killed in an ambush by armed Boko Haram group, the army said in a statement.

According to the army statement issued on Tuesday, security forces were on escort duty when they were attacked on Monday just outside Damaturu town in Yobe state in the north of Nigeria.

The statement signed by army spokesman Colonel Onyema Nwachukwu said efforts to pursue and "eliminate" the Boko Haram group are ongoing. **READ MORE**

Unidentified gunmen kill 17 people in Nigeria's Zamfara state

Since the group launched its campaign in 2009, Boko Haram has killed more than 20,000 people and forced two million others to flee their homes in northeast Nigeria.

Nigeria's military has been fighting the group since then and despite the government's insistence that it is near defeat, northern Nigeria is still beleaguered by heavy fighting.



Over the years, Boko Haram, which wants to form a breakaway state, has

kidnapped thousands of adults and children. The Boko Haram continued

threat is a major issue for President Muhammadu Buhari as he seeks a second term in the upcoming election in February.**NEWS AGENCIES**

3 die in China university lab explosion

Three students were killed in a laboratory blast at a Beijing university on Wednesday, the city's fire department said, in an accident that blew out windows and left the building a blackened shell.

"There was an explosion at the experimental site during a scientific research experiment" on wastewater treatment in the Environmental Engineering Laboratory, the Beijing Fire Department said.

"The accident caused the death of three students," it added in a statement posted on its social media account.

The incident happened just after 9:30am (0130 GMT) at the Beijing Jiaotong University in the western part of the city.

Some 30 fire engines were sent to the scene, and it took nearly an hour to get the blaze under control. Local authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the incident.

A video posted by the state-run People's Daily newspaper showed blown-out windows and blackened buildings around

a courtyard, with trees and ground covered in firefighting foam.

Images on social media showed plumes of dark smoke billowing from low-rise buildings as firefighters fought to contain the blaze.

Students could be seen wearing face masks and complaining of an acrid smell.

Industrial accidents are common in China, where safety regulations are often poorly enforced.

Last month, a gas leak caused the explosion of a truck carrying combustible chemicals near the entrance of a chemical factory in the northern Chinese of Zhangjiakou, killing 23 and injuring 22 others.

In July, a blast at a chemical plant in southwest Sichuan province left 19 dead and 12 injured. The company had undertaken illegal construction that had not passed safety checks, according to local authorities. **AFP**

Riot police in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, used live ammunition and tear gas in an attempt to disperse protesters marching towards the presidential palace.

Videos posted online appeared to show crowds of several hundred people heading towards the palace on Tuesday, which is located on the bank of the river Blue Nile in the heart of Khartoum.

The demonstrators could be heard singing patriotic songs and chanting, "Peaceful, peaceful against the thieves" and "The people want to bring down the regime" before police began firing into the crowds.

Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan, reporting from Khartoum, said calls for the president to step down were growing louder with people turning up in significant numbers for the protest, which had been planned for a number of days.

"[Protesters] seemed to

Clashes erupt as Sudanese march on presidential palace

agree they want to see change and the police had to use tear gas and

live ammunition to disperse the crowd," Morgan said.

"Unfortunately, for the police that is, people continued [marching].

We've heard people say they want the 'regime' to go, they want to see a



new 'regime'."

"Even with the tear gas being fired at them, some people have been using headscarves and went on to proceed against the riot police with their demands that the president must leave."

Tuesday's protest was organised by The Sudanese Professionals Association, an umbrella coalition for professional unions, and supported by the National Umma Party, one of the country's top opposition parties.

They said they planned on marching to the palace and hand the presidency a memo calling for him to step down immediately.

Sudan's embattled President Omar al-Bashir has vowed to introduce "real reforms" since the anti-government protests began in Atbara city seven days ago, but has also warned the protesters to not respond to attempts "at sowing discord" in the country.

AL JAZEERA

Kabwe Warriors recruit five players ahead of 2019 season

By Alex Chilumbwe
 Kabwe Warriors look set to challenge ZESCO United for the FAZ/MTN league title in 2019 after making five additions to the current squad. Club Chairman Hayden Dingwall has disclosed that the club will today, sign five players to boost the squad's midfield and defence areas ahead of the 2019 football season. Dingwall said in an interview with Goal Diggers! that the official list of the players that will sign contracts will be availed to the media on Friday adding that club management will mention in due time if there would be need to make more additions to the team apart from the five that are yet to append their signatures. "The players are mostly defenders and midfielders and some of them alternate roles on the pitch, and are locally sourced. We have foreign ones that are willing to join the team but we have not made any decisions yet. We do not want to absorb players outside our financial capabilities as management," said Dingwall. Meanwhile, Warriors coach Tenant Chilumba

said that he was looking forward to a better and more consistent performance of his squad in the 2019 football season. He also described the team spirit among his boys in pre-season trainings as high and

encouraging. "I am hoping for a better and consistent performance next season. We will have new additions to the team and the boys' spirit is high and encouraging. It is showing in the pre-season training

sessions," said Chilumba. The Magnificent Warriors finished 7th in the 2018 FAZ/MTN super division league and their latest addition to their squad was Akakulubelwa Mwachiaba who was with Power Dynamos.

Pressure mounts on Gattuso as Milan hit 24-year low in front of goal

Pressure on AC Milan manager Gennaro Gattuso continues to grow after his team ensured their longest period without a Serie A goal since 1984 with a 0-0 draw against newly promoted Frosinone. The Rossineri lie fifth in the table following the result, 21 Failure to find the back of the net now means that Milan have not scored in their previous four league matches - a barren spell that surpasses any they have endured in the past 24 years. *Goal.com*

Eriksen's future remains unclear as Pochettino offers cryptic response to contract questions



Bench role worries promoted young Buffaloes players

By Alex Chilumbwe
 Following their splendid second-place finish in the 2018 Barclays Cup tournament and outdoing their senior counterparts, five Young Green Buffaloes (YGBFC) players have been promoted to the senior team in management's attempt to boost the senior squad. Some of the promoted players however have shown reluctance to join their senior counterparts saying they fear being benched and not having game time. They are also cognizant of the disadvantages that come with not having reasonable game time in football and Goal Diggers! caught up with them. "Most of us are very junior to almost all the players in the senior team and

we technically have little to no say over any decision made. It feels good to be promoted to the senior team but are we going to have adequate game time? When one is always benched, it becomes hard to know if you are improving or not," lamented one player. Another one noted that it would have been better for them to be scouted by other clubs that are not under military management. "If we were scouted by other clubs that are not under military management, it would have been better because we would be free enough to share our concerns with management," he said. Meanwhile, YGBFC coach Josphat Mulenga was all smiles knowing well that he had grilled players that

can compete favourably in the super league. "I have trained them well and I still train with these that have gone to the senior team. It gives me happiness to see that I have made good players out of them," said Mulenga. The boosting of Buffaloes senior team can be misplaced as most of the promoted players are either defensive midfielders or defenders. Senior team coach Biltone Musonda disclosed that he needed two strikers before the start of 2018/2019 continental games. He said that big spending clubs prevented him from acquiring his target strikers. Tunisian side SC Sfaxien eliminated the combatants in the CAF Confederations League with an aggregate of 3-1.

Mauricio Pochettino has offered a cryptic response to questions about Christian Eriksen's future, with the Tottenham midfielder yet to sign a new contract. The Denmark international is one of few senior stars yet to pen a long-term extension to his current deal, and unsurprisingly rumours have arisen regarding his future. As one of the most productive creative influences in the Premier League, a number of leading sides across Europe are keeping a close eye on his situation in north London. La Liga giants Barcelona and Real Madrid would welcome the opportunity to snap up a player of Eriksen's pedigree, and the transfer door may swing open at some stage. Pochettino has been unable to close it, and when quizzed on his efforts to tie the key man down a long-term contract, he said: "Football is so dynamic. It changes every day, every season. "It depends not only on your decision, but it is always a player's decision. "Now is a moment to enjoy our present. "Of course, it is a person that the club wants for the future, but now we need to be focused - a player like him is focused and tries to deliver a great performance in the way that we need. "A decision is going to happen at the end of the season or [maybe] a decision will happen in the next few days, in January. "Football is so dynamic - it is decision, decision, decision. "I hope we are going to take the best decision for the club and hope the player can take the best decision for them and for the club - it is about negotiation and many things that happen. "Football is so dynamic, always you need to move on." So, Pochettino has suggested that an agreement could be reached in January. He has also conceded that Spurs may need to "move on". With little clarity being offered by those at Tottenham, it remains to be seen what the future has in store for a man who has delivered four goals and seven assists this season. *Goal.com*



AFP Forum
Paul Kane / Getty Images / AFP



AFP Forum
Daniel Pockett / Getty Images / AFP

Alex Carey of the Scorchers bats during the Big Bash League match between the Perth Scorchers and the Adelaide Strikers at Optus Stadium on December 26, 2018 in Perth, Australia. AFP

Alex Pledger of Melbourne United helps DJ Kennedy of Melbourne United up during the round 11 NBL match between Melbourne United and the Adelaide 36ers at Hisense Arena on December 26, 2018 in Melbourne, Australia. AFP

KABWE WARRIORS

RECRUIT FIVE

By Alex Chilumbwe

Kabwe Warriors look set to challenge ZESCO United for the FAZ/MTN league title in 2019 after making five additions to the current squad. Club Chairman Hayden Dingwall has disclosed that the club will today, sign five players to boost the squad's midfield and defence areas ahead of the 2019 football season.

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...as Tenant plots to dethrone Zesco



Claudio Ranieri, Manager of Fulham gives his team instructions during the Premier League match between Fulham FC and Wolverhampton Wanderers - AFP



AFP Forum
Marc Atkins / Getty Images / AFP

Ryan Sessegnon of Fulham shoots while under pressure from Ryan Bennett of Wolverhampton Wanderers during the Premier League match between Fulham FC and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Craven Cottage on December 26, 2018 in London - AFP

