



KABWE EXPLAINS

'STOLEN' K205,000 ...as council officials accuse each other of pocketing China Jiangxi donation

Story page 2



Nyau dancers celebrate after collecting 'New Year tax' from motorists along the Great East Road in Katete District on Tuesday - Picture by Joseph Mwenda



Kambwili addresses journalists yesterday - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

We are taking over C/belt from weak PF - Kambwili

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili says his party will easily take over Copperbelt Province because the newly elected PF provincial leadership holds no impact.

And Kambwili says it is a waste of public resources for President Edgar Lungu to be flying out of the country to resolve political differences of other countries when he has failed to allow democracy to flourish in his own country. **To page 5**

High taxation will kill mines, warns FQM boss

By Stuart Lisulo

Outgoing First Quantum Minerals (FQM) director of operations Matt Pascal (right) says the decision to lay-off some of its staff is to ensure the mining company is not taxed to death. And Pascal has revealed that FQM is still owed over US \$400 million in VAT refunds by the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), a situation that will be made worse by the new fiscal regime. Meanwhile, Pascal has thanked all the workers at FQM's operations at Kansanshi Mining Plc and the Sentinel in Kalumbila District for their hard work in helping to make the mining giant a success. **To page 2**



It's depressing, all politicians are deemed dishonest - Kalaba

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Democratic Party (DP) presidential candidate Harry Kalaba has asked Zambians to rally with the party up to and beyond 2021 to achieve a just and equitable Zambia. And Kalaba says the DP presents a transformative agenda to change the political systems and re-establish trust in government. **Story page 5**

ZNBC staff to sue management

Story page 3

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

A theft scandal has been unearthed in Central Province where officials are counter accusing each other of pocketing about K205,000 donated by the Chinese for the successful launch of the Jiangxi Multi Economic Zone, in November last year.

According to the News Diggers findings, Chibombo Council released about K18, 000 for services in preparation for the ground breaking ceremony at which President Edgar Lungu officiated, but on the actual day of the event, the Chinese firm paid K204, 801.87 cash to district council, money which has since disappeared.

Meanwhile, Central Province Permanent Secretary Chanda Kabwe was at pains to explain the whereabouts of the money when queried yesterday, insisting that the cash was used for its intended purpose, but failing to give a break down of the services paid for.

A whistleblower told News Diggers that Chibombo Council had already paid for the services in question leading to the launch of the Multi Facility Economic Zone, and wondered why the council had issued a receipt for the money which was never accounted for.

"This money was received on the same day of the event, long after the (Chibombo Council) had already released about K18,000 for the services. So when China Jiangxi said they had brought in a contribution of over K204, 000 Council Secretary Reuben Simfukwe and the Council Chairman James Ntalasha sent a junior clerk of the council

Central Province officials in K205,000 theft scandal

to receive the money. So they didn't use the accountant to properly receive the money, so they just issued a manual receipt acknowledging that they had received the money, but the two bosses did not surrender that money to the accounts at Chibombo Council. The clerk who received the money has also been told to keep his mouth shut, so he is not talking," the whistleblower revealed.

"But people saw that these bosses got the money at the event, and they can't explain where they took the money because it is believed that they pocketed it. The question is, if the money was donated to individuals and not the council, why was the receipt issued in the name of the council? You must ask the SC and his chairman to explain where they took this money. Already we have heard that Simfukwe is threatened to spearhead transfers for any staff who will be heard discussing the issue."

According to the General manual Receipt number 1354454 dated November 20, 2018, the said Chinese firm paid the full pledged amount totalling K204, 801.87 to the

local authority, money which never hit its accounts. But during the full council meeting which was held a fortnight ago, the council secretary and the chairperson defended themselves saying the money was not meant for Chibombo Council.

When contacted for a comment, Council Chairman Ntalasha pointed his fingers on the Central Province Permanent Secretary, saying Kabwe would know the whereabouts of the money because the Chibombo office surrendered the cash to the province, despite having received it on behalf of local council.

"There was not any time when the said Chinese firm donated money to the council, the money which is being referred to was donated to the province. That money was received by one of our accountants and it was handed over to the province. The province are the ones who came up with a budget which they presented to the Chinese firm and the Chinese firm in turn responded to that and the money went to the province. You can speak to the provincial permanent secretary and the

provincial accountant. If they tell you that the council's top management in Chibombo has pocketed that money, then you can come back to us," Ntalasha said.

When asked why the provincial accountant didn't receive the money, Ntalasha said only the Chibombo official was present. "The way it was [is], it was supposed to be received by the province but because by the time the money was coming, it was little bit far but however just ten minutes after the money was received, the provincial accountant and the PS reached the scene and received the money. So I don't know if in ten minutes there is any money which people can be able to share. But we understand that is politics, people are interested to defame other people's integrity," he explained.

"So what I expect is a complaint from the province. When the province says 'we did not receive the money which we were supposed to receive' then I will agree to say there is a problem, [and] not a person who was not the owner of the money, who was not involved, I don't see where that complaint

is coming from. That is the issue which is there. Otherwise you can put an inquiry, you can put an audit but the issue is as it is. The documentations are there and the province received that money."

When asked why it was not the Chibombo District Council secretary who received the money, Ntalasha said the finance officers were out in school.

"When the money was ready, I was the one who was informed that the money is ready and I asked my council secretary to say 'where is our district treasurer?' I was told he is at school, 'what about the district accountant who is acting as deputy?' I was told he is also at school. 'Now what are we going to do because yourself and myself cannot receive this money?' who shall receive this money on behalf of the province?' Then we said let us look for someone from finance, and they found one person in finance and he received," said Ntalasha.

When contacted, Kabwe admitted that his office received the money, but struggled to give a proper trail of the transaction.

"I don't know my sister if there was a donation of money or there was money for the service, I don't even know which services people are saying were already paid for, I don't know. I am sure [that] the companies that were hired to put up all the things for the event are available, they have not died. They are available for questioning if some people paid. I am sure those companies are still around within Zambia and some of them are from Lusaka. So maybe, I will tell you [that] I don't know if there was any donation but I know that there was money for services. And I don't know if there is anyone who is claiming that they paid for those services. I know that the money which was given for the services is what was used to put up that good event. I don't know if other people have pocketed the money," Chanda said.

"But maybe it will be a matter of investigation to know the truth [and] that is why when you called me, I wanted to invite you with the whistleblower who said money has been pocketed so that you can interview him and then he explains where money has been pocketed. Unless the companies which were there said we didn't pay them [and that] we used their services but we didn't pay. But I think the companies we invited to come and put up that infrastructure were paid. I am sure if people further want to do the investigations, my dear sister people are free to do an investigation but that thing will soon be in public domain because people come and audit the expenditure and they will come and look at all the retains and all the receipts and everyone who was involved."

When asked which company paid the Provincial Office money and if his office issued a receipt of the money from the said company, Chanda could not comment any further, saying he was going to issue a statement after a council meeting.

"I think why I am answering is because it was to do with the province. What I will do is when I finish my management meeting, I can even issue a full detailed statement if that is what some circles want. We can do that and it can be on all public and private media, we can issue a full statement and I am sure we will walk towards that," said Chanda.

"Of course some companies, we have not paid them because they didn't finish putting up what we had requested them to put up. So I think their balance should be about K14, 000 or so which I know my colleague in the finance department would answer better. But what I am saying is there was no donation, there was money for the services and everyone who was engaged to provide a service to put up that successful launch were paid."

High taxation will kill mines, warns outgoing FQM boss

By Stuart Lisulo

Outgoing First Quantum Minerals (FQM) director of operations Matt Pascal says the decision to lay-off some of its staff is to ensure the mining company is not taxed to death.

And Pascal has revealed that FQM is still owed over US \$400 million in VAT refunds by the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), a situation that will be made worse by the new fiscal regime. Meanwhile, Pascal has thanked all the workers at FQM's operations at Kansanshi Mining Plc and the Sentinel in Kalumbila District for their hard work in helping to make the mining giant a success.

Announcing the official end of his management role with FQM in Zambia, Wednesday, Pascal reiterated that the decision to lay-off some of its staff this year in response to government's new 2019 mining fiscal regime, which took effect, Tuesday, was designed to ensure that the company was not taxed to death.

Last month, FQM announced that it will cut its workforce by 2,500 local and expatriate employees during the first quarter of 2019, in addition to an unspecified number of contractors, in response to the hiked mining fiscal regime.

The 2019 mining fiscal regime will see an increase in mineral royalty rates by 1.5 percentage points at all levels of the sliding scale.

In a detailed statement narrating his over two-decade tour of duty in the country, Pascal warned that with the new mining fiscal regime, no new or

expansion capital will be possible.

"It would seem improper for me to take my leave without some explanation for the (December, 2018) letter I recently sent out regarding reductions in labour numbers, especially given the amount of negative reaction it has caused," Pascal wrote.

"The prime responsibility of any company to all its stakeholders is to stay in business. If a company or mine closes down for whatever reason all parties, including all the employees, lose. Any new or expansion capital will not be possible under the prescribed new tax regime. To reiterate what was in my letter - these moves on labour reduction are not "strong-arm tactics", they are simply measures that need to be taken to ensure the mines are not 'taxed to death.'"

And Pascal revealed that the 2019 mining fiscal regime will exacerbate FQM's position given the fact they are still owed over US \$400 million in VAT refunds.

"The taxation level has been further exacerbated by the non-refund of VAT to the tune of well over US \$400 million to FQM. This leaves the only costs in our control as being; other consumables, maintenance spares and labour. Reducing the cost of consumables automatically reduces the levels of production, and once production levels decline so must labour costs," he explained.

He also defended FQM's role in helping to develop Zambia's infrastructure.

"As all of you who work on our mines will know we have also contributed

hugely to infrastructure development around the mines. This has included: maintenance and rebuilding of the T5 National road; construction of many kilometres of tarred roads; buildings Kabitaka and Kalumbila towns; clinics; schools; power supply; airports; police stations; etc," Pascal added.

"Realistically, a lot of this work should be done by government out of the taxes, especially royalties, paid by the mines. Royalties, strictly speaking, should be for the benefit mainly of those whose lives are affected by the creation of the mines, i.e. the local residents."

He further explained the history of how economically unviable the old ZCCM became pre-privatization. "Having been personally involved in the ZCCM privatisation process, it was very evident even before 1999, that ZCCM could not continue as a business; it was losing US \$1 million per day, which was only possible with World Bank funding that was meant for the State. This is part of the reason that Zambia ended up with over \$6 billion in debt to the World Bank and others," he explained.

"By 2000, the assets were in such poor condition that not only did the new owners have to spend billions of dollars refurbishing them; but also had to pick up the full retrenchment liabilities (over \$110 million) for the entire ZCCM workforce."

He further narrated how high taxation rates at the time had negatively impacted ZCCM.

"The uneasy truth was that ZCCM had reached a stage where it couldn't afford to pay reasonable wages nor

could it afford to retrench workers due to the high retrenchment benefits. Sometimes it is important if not critical to reduce labour numbers if the health and survival of the company is at stake. What had happened to the once mighty ZCCM? It had effectively been taxed to death; this is probably true to say that being a State-owned entity it was not able to make decisions on a purely business basis, and the golden goose was plundered of all its eggs," he recalled. Meanwhile, Pascal thanked all the workers at FQM's operations at Kansanshi and in Kalumbila for their hard work in helping to make the mining giant a success.

"Although my day-to-day management role in Zambia ends today, as one can see from the history, the voyage from a tiny start-up to now has been a tremendous ride. It couldn't have happened without the all the men and women who have worked with us over these years, and this is really a tribute to all of you," stated Pascal, who now takes up a new role in South America.

"So my sincere thanks go out to all of you, and to those who may have been part of the journey but are no longer with us for whatever reason. Of course, I have had to spend a large proportion of my time away from home and so my wife and family have been and remain a critical support to me. I would also like to thank all those who, other than at work, have helped to make life more sociable enjoyable whether this was patiently waiting for me on cycle rides, hacking around the golf course, feeding me or in any other social activity."

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia president Jerome Kanyika says the move by the Zambia Medical Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) to close 40 non-compliant pharmacies in Lusaka is brave. In an interview, Kanyika said it was also a danger and serious offence for the closed pharmacies to be dispensing drugs to patients without qualified pharmacists. Last week, ZAMRA suspended registration certificates for 40 registered retail pharmacies in Lusaka for breach of terms and conditions under which their licenses were granted. "The Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) has suspended certificates of registration of 40 registered retail pharmacies in Lusaka for breach of terms and conditions of the certificate of registration under which their licences was granted. 64 pharmacies were inspected and 40 were found operating without required qualified pharmacists and were ordered to close. In some instances, prescription-only medicines were dispensed without prescriptions. The Authority would like to urge pharmacists working and managing pharmacies to be present at all

Pharmaceutical Society hails ZAMRA's move to close non-compliant pharmacies

times in order to enhance the levels of compliance in retail outlets," ZAMRA public relations officer Ludovic Mwape stated. "We have noted with great concern the increase in the absence of pharmacists in most outlets resulting in non-qualified personnel dispensing prescription-only medicines to members of the public without prescriptions. In the case of antibiotics, this practice, if left unchecked, has potential to contribute to the increase in antimicrobial resistance. We wish to sternly warn all registered retail pharmacies/chemists to adhere to good pharmaceutical practices as the Authority will not hesitate to suspend or revoke Certificate of Registration to all those found wanting." And in an interview, Kanyika said the move by ZAMRA was a brave one. "I want to commend ZAMRA for being brave and taken action over the 40 pharmacies that were non-compliant with the law. And when you check

properly, one of the major reasons for these pharmacies is lack of a pharmacist in there, and it's one of the major requirements for opening up a pharmacy. So, meaning that these pharmacies, because they didn't have a pharmacist, they were turned to be illegal drug stores because there was no professional to answer the queries from the general public [or] the patients. So, this is very much commendable and I think it's provided for in the medicines and other Substance Act number 3 of 2013, Section 3 (24) on the closure of pharmacies," Kanyika said. He observed that ZAMRA

followed the law accordingly when suspending the practising certificates for the 40 pharmacies. "So, ZAMRA followed the law and we are hoping that the owners or the proprietors of those businesses of retail pharmacies should by all means try to adhere to the requirements of the law by employing well-trained pharmacists, who should be able to comply with what the law states. And this task should not only be based in Lusaka; ZAMRA should also do the same on the Copperbelt and make sure that the general public are protected by making these registered pharmacies to be compliant," he advised.

"Unlike the way it is where they have stated that some pharmacies were dispensing antibiotics without a [qualified] pharmacist. This is also a big case and those pharmacies that have been dispensing the antibiotics without the pharmacist, I think ZAMRA should take serious action because they are causing the resistance, which we are fighting. So, as Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia, we are very much happy and we commend ZAMRA for taking brave action towards these pharmacies that are non-compliant. It is the first time ZAMRA closed 40 pharmacies at a go for no compliance since the time it was created."

And Kanyika appealed to ZAMRA to also move in and close illegal drug stores. "And as ZAMRA has also moved in to close the pharmacies that are non-compliant, they should also move in and make sure that the illegal drug stores are also closed. If ZAMRA can close the registered pharmacies, why not also move in and close the illegal drug stores? Because the problem which was there was [that] ZAMRA was not closing the pharmacies that were non-compliant, but they were closing only illegal drug stores; [but] now, they have shown that they are not applying the law selectively, they are applying the law in both ends. So, they should make sure that they also go in and close even those illegal drug stores that are operating without the proper documentation and without following the law of Zambia," urged Kanyika.

ZNBC employees to sue management

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
ZNBC unionized employees have resolved to drag management to court over the broadcaster's failure to increase their salaries for the year 2018.

In an interview with News Diggers! Zambia Union of Broadcasters and other Information Disseminators (ZUBID) Andrew Mpandamwike said if management has failed to run the institution, they should give chance to capable individuals to do so. Late last year, the union had declared a dispute after the two could not reach a consensus on their negotiations. "It's true; we've been negotiating for the past one year [and] nothing seems to be coming out of these negotiations. So, as a union, we had a meeting with the general membership at ZNBC and we agreed that we take the case to the Industrial Relations Court. So, in short, we have

agreed that we are going to drag management to court for the failed 2018 negotiations," Mpandamwike narrated. He said management has been saying that it had no capacity to increase workers' salaries as the company is currently not doing well financially. "We have [been] negotiating with management over the review of collective agreements for 2018, but management has insisted that they have no capacity to increase our salaries [and that] the company is not doing very fine; they don't have money. So, [they are saying that] they can't give us an increment, but we believe they should have reviewed the company," he explained. And Mpandamwike said

if management failed to run the company, others who are capable should be given chance. "If they have failed to manage the company, then they should leave and give other people who are capable of running the company because ZNBC has always given an increment, even in a year when economic conditions are not good. But for them to refuse, it means either they have failed [and] they should give chance to others to come and run. This is a public company, and we cannot have workers who are in a public company and they are malnourished, no! [We had our last increment in the 2017 financial year [but for] 2018, we didn't have anything," complained Mpandamwike.

PF a model of intra-party democracy, boasts Mwila

Zondiwe Mbewe
PF Secretary General Davies Mwila has boasted that the Patriotic Front is a model of intra-party democracy while other parties with "life presidents" are merely tourists of the system because they are not committed to it. And Mwila says government has recorded increased revenues from the tourism levy which was introduced in 2017, adding that K8.8 million has been raised between January and July, this year. Meanwhile, Mwila notes that as a result of government's public-private partnerships in developing the tourism sector, the Mosi-oa-Tunya Resort Holdings Limited will next year construct a five-star hotel, golf course and a 600-seater convention centre in Livingstone costing US\$165 million. In PF's weekly news letter to News Diggers! Mwila boasted about intra-party democracy in PF saying other parties were merely voyeurs that viewed democracy from a distance. "This article comes to you in the immediate aftermath of the elective conference for the PF Copperbelt Province. Even as we discuss tourism and indeed every sector in the overall development of our blessed nation through the 7NDP, I cannot help but reflect on how intra-party democracy goes with development and how PF is a bastion and model of intra-party democracy while other parties with Life Presidents are merely "Tourists of Democracy"; as they don't live democracy and they are evidently not committed to it. They are voyeurs that only view it like sightseers from a distance, through their distorted binoculars once in a while!" Mwila stated. Mwila stated that from the onset, PF recognized the strategic importance of the tourism sector to economic diversification and job creation, as well as, to the attainment of the Vision 2030. He added that under the 7NDP, the tourism sector had three main focus areas; promoting tourism-related infrastructure, game restocking and improving domestic tourism. And Mwila noted that government had recorded increased revenues from the tourism levy which was introduced in 2017, adding that K8.8 million had been raised between January and July, this year. He stated that these funds were used to enhance tourism, marketing and product promotion, as well as, rehabilitation of tourism infrastructure. "It is worth noting that government has recorded increased revenues from the tourism levy which

was introduced in 2017. To this end, government raised over K9.5 million in 2017 and K8.8 million was been raised between January and July this year. These funds are used to enhance tourism, marketing and product promotion as well as rehabilitation of tourism infrastructure. Evidently, the PF government has placed the tourism sector on a sustainable growth trajectory so that the sector can make a more significant contribution to economic diversification and employment creation in Zambia," Mwila stated. "In line with the PF manifesto and 7NDP, government has concentrated on the development, upgrade and rehabilitation of tourism-related infrastructure such as roads, viewing loops and airstrips to and within the major national parks such as Kafue, Lower Zambezi and the Mosi-oa-Tunya, to mention but three. The aim is to efficiently interlink the major destinations in the Southern Tourism Circuit and South Luangwa, thereby prolonging the tourism season from seven to 12 months per annum." Meanwhile, Mwila stated that the PF government was currently implementing the Tourism Development Fund to support tourism product development, tourism infrastructure and tourism marketing. He stated that in addition, government had strengthened collaborations with the private sector in order to ensure an integrated approach to developing the tourism sector. "In addition, the PF government has strengthened collaborations with the private sector in order to ensure an integrated approach to developing the tourism sector. As a result of these public-private partnerships, there have been important positive developments in the sector. For example, Mosi-oa-Tunya Resort Holdings Limited, will in June 2019, construct a five-star hotel, golf course and a 600-seater convention centre in Livingstone at the cost of US Dollar 165 million," he stated. "The company will sign a 50-year lease agreement with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife to construct the hotel in the Mosi-oa-Tunya national park. Indeed, the goal of the PF government since 2017 is to work towards transforming Livingstone into a premier conferencing centre in Southern Africa so that the tourism sector can leverage on infrastructure development to grow sustainably." Mwila stated that as of 2016, the tourism sector employed 300,000 people and was set to continue increasing its contributions to the country's GDP.

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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) youth Prince Ndoyi has condemned the action by the three Church mother bodies to proceed with the consultative dialogue meeting without the involvement of other political parties. Ndoyi has accused the leaders of the three church mother bodies of driving an 'opposition agenda.' In a statement, Ndoyi argued that the conflicting statements issued by ZCID and the church last week were unfortunate, charging that the church was promoting polarization and partisan politics.

"In commenting on today's meeting where the three Church mother bodies have chosen to go ahead to hold a dialogue meeting with UPND and its 10 alliance partners contrary to the agreed upon position, with their facilitating partner ZCID, is ultimately unfortunate. Yesterday's events where the three Church mother bodies and ZCID gave conflicting statements is untimely seeing that we are in the festive season and unfortunate. Suffice to say, no one single member of the joint secretariat had 'VETO POWER' to bulldoze their way against the collective, and today, that's what we shall be subjected to; a dialogue meeting between the Church and UPND. To say this was strange could probably be an

Ndoyi accuses church of driving opposition agenda in dialogue process

understatement because the Church is generally believed to be sacred space, free from any whiff of partisan politics," Ndoyi stated. He added that the danger of the Church going ahead with the meeting without involving other political parties had the potential to drag it into "narrow partisan trenches."

"The danger of their action to go ahead with today's meeting without PF, MMD, FDD, among others, is that it has the potential to drag the Church into narrow partisan trenches. Sometimes, criticism aimed at the church is unfair and unwarranted. But other times, they absolutely deserve the criticism that comes their way! And, of course, the Church will inevitably run into criticism for shooting themselves in the foot. What can we do? There's a myth that the Church shouldn't meddle in politics. But if politics is the way a community orders its life across time for the common good, then the Church should meddle away, working to make sure the marginalized, ignored, and forgotten have a share in the common good. What the Church shouldn't be is partisan. Partisans confuse their identities with the

agenda of a party. Christian partisans mistakenly believe that the mercy, peace, and justice—the shalom—of God's Kingdom can be captured by the narrow agenda of a political party. And when this happens, as it often has, the results can be disastrous, especially for

the Church as it loses the integrity of its prophetic witness," stated Ndoyi. "This action in actual fact is promoting polarisation and partisan politics — thus effectively, further poisoning the political environment. The true conversation we should

be having is hard. It's even harder when the conversation emanates from partisan trenches. Let's contextualize this action, politically, in view of the ongoing national political dialogue process. We must put our fingers on the deeper issue. What

does this mean and what impression does it create thereof? How can the Church rise above board, without appearing to be condescending to partisan politics, thereby, taking sides in view of their role of Chairmanship of the ongoing dialogue process?"



Vice-President Inonge Wina (r) congratulates Deputy Army Commander Major General Sitali Dennis Alibuzwi after the Swearing in ceremony at State House yesterday
- Picture by Salim Henry

God made Lungu President because he's humble, unlike UPND - Mumbi

By Mirriam Chabala

PF deputy secretary general Mumbi Phiri has expressed disappointment with sentiments attributed to Chirundu UPND member of parliament Douglas Syakalima that "the devil, not God, made President Edgar Lungu Head of State". Reacting to Syakalima's statement in an interview, Phiri said God elevated President Lungu to his current position because he had been humble leader who never exalted himself. Phiri said God lifted President Lungu to the position of Head of State because he was humble, unlike people like Syakalima who were self-exalted. "This is 2019, me as deputy Secretary General of the PF party, I would encourage you as News Diggers! to be enlightening us as government in the areas we are failing. Don't be shy to speak against us if we are committing any ills against the people of Zambia. So for honourable Syakalima, he's an elected member of parliament, to judge President Edgar Lungu (scoffs), he's not God. God knows President Edgar Lungu inside out. And let me remind them again, Lesa asumubula abashaisansamika (God lifts up those who humble themselves). The Bible is very clear

[Les] asumubula abashaisansamika. Abaisansamika (those who lift themselves up) like ba Syakalima, he brings them down," she said. "You remember what was being said about me? Even when I said 'God's time is the best time', people used to think I was joking. But me I am a believer in God, and here I am. I am with honourable Syakalima, he's a back bencher, I have gone in also as a nominated member of parliament because I always believe in waiting upon the Lord. Let us also remember that when our God calls us. I will not go and face my God as a PF MP, I will not go as honourable Mumbi Phiri. When God created me he knew my name, which is Mumbi and when I face him, I will face him as Mumbi." And Phiri, who is a nominated PF member of parliament, backed President Lungu's call to have Christians in politics, saying having Christians in political positions would bring dignity into the country's political circles. "That is very unfortunate for honourable Syakalima to have said, and if we continue with this type of politics, then I don't know where we are going to end. It's true that we should have Christians in politics, so that we have dignity in

our political circles. When you are a Christian, you believe in what you believe in. And I am on record myself of having said this, that's why I can publicly say today that I am where I am because of God... Can I remind the nation that we were in the opposition for 10 years as PF. What type of politics did we play? We played the politics of development, not the individual attacks which are being perpetuated by our colleagues. When we were in the opposition as PF, we managed to save the life of Patricia Maluti, who was a student at the University of Zambia. When the child was not being taken to South Africa, by then the Minister of Health was Dr Brian Chituwo. And when that child was being taken to South Africa at the Airport, my President, Michael Chilufya Sata was there at the Airport to see of the child," Phiri said. "In 2009, there was K48 billion which was allocated to Munali constituency for the construction of the roads in Gardenia, Mutendere, PHI... I was being reminded everyday by Mr Sata to talk about it. Those were the checks and balances we were doing. Remember that it was in my tenure that the UNZA bridge was constructed and I could go to that bridge and records are there. Whenever

the Minister then Honourable Simba heard that I was at the site, he could come. We would do the adjustments accordingly. I was never suspended from my party for working with the government of the day. But what are seeing now? We see our colleagues on TV, through you as the media whom they think are friendly to them... instead of following the ministers to their offices, they are scared that their leadership will suspend them. So how do they expect to take development to their areas?" Meanwhile, Phiri has advised youths in the country not allow politicians to use them as tools of violence this year. "I would like thank God for taking me into 2019 and I continue reminding the youths that let none of us use you as tools for violence. If I come the youths and tell you to say 'here is a Panga, he is a gun, here is beer' this 2019, challenge us. We are leaving our children at home and we want to destroy other people's children. But time has come where you should challenge us so that we move this country forward. For me 2019 is a year where I will be celebrating my 50 years jubilee. So I am looking forward to you as the youth to challenge us and put us in the right place," said Phiri.

We are taking over C/belt from PF - Kambwili

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
 NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili says his party will easily take over Copperbelt Province because the newly elected PF provincial leadership holds no impact. And Kambwili says it is a waste of public resources for President Edgar Lungu to be flying out of the country to resolve political differences of other countries when he has failed to allow democracy to flourish in his own country. Speaking at a press briefing at his residence in Lusaka Wednesday, Kambwili said those saying that the PF government was performing, needed to be taken for mental checkup. "If a political party cannot attract quality people to stand as provincial chairmen then that political party is gone. You know you don't need a scientist, you call for elections on the Copperbelt and allow small containers to stand. Even just here in Lusaka, [Kennedy] Kamba wants to be provincial [chairman]? Okay, but this party has finished, it can't even form government anymore. Look at the quality of the people who stood for elections on the Copperbelt then you will tell that the party is finished. I am sure even Mr Sata in his

grave is changing positions. Please attract leaders. Bowman Lusambo tells you the truth and you say he is wrong. And for us it's a blessing in disguise for Copperbelt to have a small container because we will just pass smoothly. Come on Chipoka, up your game because Copperbelt is already finished. They have left it for us. That is how God works when he wants to remove people from power," Kambwili said. "People are saying that the PF government has performed. How can you say that the PF government has performed? What is the plight of the civil servants today? How is the living standards of the civil servants today? Because a successful government, a government that has done so well, you only determine their success looking at the way the civil servants are living. It must be understood that government is the largest employer and the way government is look after its employees, the way government employees are living determines whether the country is on a correct trajectory. If the civil servants are suffering, if the civil servants cannot manage to take their children to school, if the civil servants cannot have three course meals, if the civil servants can walk all the way

from Emmasdale to Matero where he works because he cannot afford to jump on a minibus, then you say this government has performed. There must be something wrong with you and you must go to Chinama to be checked," he said. He wondered why God allowed President Lungu to lead Zambia. Sometimes I do ask God that where did you get Edgar Lungu from because bringing us Lungu was bad luck, a president who doesn't think of other people's sufferings. He is not a president worth his salt. Today a civil servant from his salary cannot afford to pay housing allowance and yet you say this government is a performing government. Are you not ashamed? Have mercy President Lungu. Practice Christianity and you are on test this year, give the civil servants a salary that they deserve [and] housing allowances that they deserve," he demanded. "You saw what happened in France when the French president announced that there would be a fuel increment, there was a yellow vest protest. They made the French president to rescind his decision over the fuel increase. So you Zambians do you think that when Kambwili speaks alone without

your involvement things will change? And you even know me Zambians [that] I don't just talk. I am an action oriented person. Whatever I have done in this country I have a history. I am not like these who are jumping from one town to the other [saying] I want to be president [but] they don't know why they want to be president. I want to be president because I know what it takes to be president and I know people's sufferings. This year I urge you all civil servants more especially your unions that as you sit to deliberate on your conditions of service, you should not accept a salary increment that is going to have housing allowance paid at lower than the market price of houses at the moment." Kambwili appealed to the SADC to drop President Lungu's chairmanship until he resolves issues in his own country. "And if you are a sinner, don't go and stand to tell people that you should be like me. I don't

want to be like you. I will not even want to learn anything from your leadership style because it's a disaster. You are president of Zambia, there is no democracy in Zambia, the opposition cannot have meetings in Zambia, an MP can be arrested for addressing his own constituency then you say 'I am the chairman for SADC politics and whatever,' resign, come home, bring democracy in Zambia, bring the rule of law in Zambia, institute a proper constitution in Zambia [and] then you can go to SADC and become chairman for SADC organ on politics and security," said Kambwili. "What you are doing now is hypocrisy. It is actually a waste of public resources for President Lungu to fly from Zambia to a meeting in Congo Brazzaville to talk about democracy and good governance when there is no good governance in Zambia. For two years, tell me which



political party has been given a permit to hold a meeting? Stop wasting Zambian money to go and attend to those meetings and I am appealing to SADC to drop Edgar Lungu with immediate effect. Tell him [to] go and correct the wrongs in his country, then he can become chairman for SADC." And reacting to Kambwili's statement, PF media director Sunday Chanda charged that the Roan member of parliament was Hakainde Hichilema's useful idiot who had been promised a position of Prime Minister if UPND formed government. "We are very much aware that honourable Chishimba Kambwili is a useful idiot for Mr Hakainde Hichilema and that is a fact he can never run away from. Mr Kambwili has always wanted to stand as president and the coalition of opposition political parties has taken the position that they are going to field one candidate in 2021 and that candidate is of course Hakainde Hichilema. This is a rebirth of the UDA and Kambwili has been promised the Prime Minister position from what we know and he cannot deny it," said Chanda. "And once again he has gone against his own words. His role in that alliance is to attempt to escort Hakainde Hichilema to State House. Again when we say he is a useful idiot for Mr Hakainde Hichilema he must not take it personal because that is what useful idiots do. Again we want to place it on record that the political alliance by opposition political parties stand on sinking sand and it cannot stand the taste of time. It's a bubble that is waiting bursting and it doesn't concern us at all," said Chanda.

It's depressing that all politicians are deemed dishonest - Kalaba

By Zondiwe Mbewe
 Democratic Party (DP) presidential candidate Harry Kalaba has asked Zambians to rally with the party up to and beyond 2021 to achieve a just and equitable Zambia. And Kalaba says the DP presents a transformative agenda to change the political systems and re-establish trust in government by having value-driven leadership. In DP's newsletter to News Diggers! on 'why the people of Zambia should vote for the DP Presidential candidate', Kalaba noted that millions of Zambians were in a dilemma as who to vote for in the upcoming 2021 election. He lamented that it was depressing that all politicians had been given a tag of dishonesty. "Millions of Zambians, eligible and ineligible voters, are understandably in a quandary as who to vote for in the 2021 general elections. Better put, Zambians seem to be in a political predicament as to who should drive the mantle of responsibility for this resourceful country, come 2021. The argument for the political indecision, at least going by popular public responses or whispers, is that all politicians are the same - they never fulfil their electoral pledges. It's undoubtedly depressing that politicians have been given that tag of dishonesty," Kalaba stated.

He, however, added that ordinary citizens were not to blame for that perception because successive politicians had continued to perpetuate political acts that had eroded their confidence. "Ordinary citizens are not to blame for this perception as successive politicians have continued to perpetuate a sequence of political acts that have eroded citizens' confidence and aspirations, leading to the unfortunate common belief of politics being a means to politicians' self-aggrandizement," he stated. And Kalaba stated that DP hoped to build a transformed, united and developed Zambia

with shared prosperity for the people, as well as for future generations. "The DP presents a generational transformative agenda to positively change the political systems and to re-establish trust in our government by having value-driven political leadership who will promote equitable and sustainable development. A leadership that will be true to fiscal responsibility, remain engaged and accountable to the people of Zambia, and hopes to build coherency and transparency of systems," Kalaba pledged. He asked Zambians to rally with DP up to and beyond 2021 to ensure that a just

and equitable Zambia that everyone would be proud of, was built. "We ask for your commitment to rally with us up to and beyond 2021 to ensure that we build a just and equitable Zambia that we will all be proud of. A Zambia that addresses the needs of the poor the same way it addresses the needs of those who walk the corridor of power. A Zambia where social protection will be safeguarded and not pillaged through wanton abuse of the Social Cash Transfer. A Zambia that will make us all stand tall and be proud to belong to this great nation. We ask you to join us as we embark on this journey," appealed Kalaba.

"Zambia needs to regain its lost glory and expedite its social economic development. This can only be done when we believe again. Not all is lost. The past has armed us with critical information to demonstrate our capacity for resilience and turn things around by believing in ourselves as real game changers. Let's believe again! Let's 'Believe Again' epitomizes the hardworking Zambians to create wealth and jobs for all. While the PF political leadership and government has closed its doors on equal and equitable social economic gains, the Democratic Party presents a key to collective action for shared prosperity."

PF should leave its lies in 2018 - East Rainbow

By Zindikilani Banda in Sinda
 The PF government must leave the lies it told Zambians in 2018 behind as the New Year begins, says Eastern Province Rainbow chairperson Emmanuel Nyau. In an interview, Nyau observed that people did not enjoy last year because it was packed with lies from government, which citizens don't need. He reminded the PF government that what people wanted was to be told the truth because that's what would help them solve their problems. "I am asking the PF to leave 2018 lies behind, not to take them in this year 2019, but that they should embrace and practice the truth in this year. The citizens of this country need to be

helped; they need actions and not the lies, which they were receiving last year that did not help anyone. And if they want to be loved by people, let them speak the truth. People are fed up of PF lies and they should make sure the monies allocated in the budget are used in the right way for the benefit of the people of Zambia," Nyau said. He recalled that government had promised farmers would be sorted out before the end of November, 2018, but that farmers had still not collected their inputs. "Government lied to farmers as it said inputs will be given to them before the end of November; every farmer will have their inputs received, but not. It's January, farmers are still stranded. Is

this promise fulfilment? When we talk of the roads, it's another issue because even themselves agree and testify that 'nkhani ya ma road yabakanga' now when are they going to manage?" he wondered. Nyau has also called on the police to be professional in exercising their duties, adding that the Public Order Act should not favour anyone. "Public Order Act was used against us where we, the opposition, were not allowed to meet the people or hold meetings. But the fact is that we also want to make structures and mobilise our parties just as [they do]. So, it's important for the police to be fair to everyone as not doing so it's not being democratic," Nyau complained.

He predicted that the PF had no future, arguing that Zambians who are keen to rebuild the country should join hands with the Rainbow Party under Wynter Kabimba. "The policy of Rainbow is to help the people because the true and genuine legacy of the late president Michael Sata is with Wynter Kabimba that is why anyone who is wise in PF has seen that there is no future in PF, and the best way is to move [with] Rainbow Party under Wynter Kabimba. The wish of Sata was street vending to be operating and the council to put certain measures to benefit from it as a nation, farmers to receive inputs in good time...let people trust Rainbow for their destiny," urged Nyau.



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



EDUCATION SECTOR REFORMS



Zambia's education system extremely falls behind by international standards and is in a state of crisis. The government has failed to provide an education system that enables the preparation of students for entrepreneurship and the highly competitive job market. Millions of children are coming out from primary school with reading, writing and numeracy skills far below expected levels. These skills have been totally neglected. The education system currently has many deficiencies; of which include; a highly qualified, well paid and highly motivated educators. Under the existing educational structures there is deficiency and erratic allocation of resources. The management of the whole education system is structurally dysfunctional. The existing system does not address the lack of educators in the areas of science, math, and technical subjects.

The situation has been compounded by; inadequate teaching aids and learning materials; broken-down and inadequate infrastructure; poor sanitary conditions; and a poor learning environment;

As a result, the 2015 target of attaining nine years of basic education for all has not been achieved in Zambia.

NDC will offset these challenges by;

□ Increasing funding towards the education system so as to increase teacher recruitment and training, reducing teacher-

pupil ratio to 1: 35 pupils in three years, and increase teaching aids

□ Early childhood education has not received much attention. In essence it has been highly neglected. We will ensure that local government authorities efficiently run early childhood education centers in each and every ward in the country.

□ The NDC will increase the number of boarding and technical schools at district level to ensure that pupils are in boarding to cut back on long distances travelled to access schools, increase pupils concentration and reduce the bad vices that distract them from attaining education; such as early child marriages and child labor. This will reduce school dropouts. We will do this in conjunction with the private sector, NGOs and churches.

□ We will also ensure that each district has a fully-fledged and functional college and each province to have at least two universities.

□ Further, content specialization in academic and vocational training from the 10th Grade up to 12th grade, with attachments in the 12th grade as part of curriculum and year end exam. We will put in place measures that will strongly link the education sector to all sectors of the nation, such as mining, energy, construction, health sector, National Engineers, and social sciences sports and Arts.

□ An Education designed to foster

independent and rational thinking, innovation and problem-solving, starting from elementary schools through to colleges and universities. This will be done by ensuring that there is yearly curriculum review.

□ We will diversify the education system and ensure that it is highly specialized to properly address the vocational, technical and academic needs of the country.

□ Under the NDC our education system will be free up to grade 12 and tertiary education will be more affordable.

□ We will develop a highly qualified, well-paid and highly motivated team of educators to achieve quality education.

□ We will introduce more teacher training colleges and provide far more bursaries in targeted subjects such as math, science and technical subjects.

□ We will also ensure that each district has a special school and college for the physically and mentally challenged citizens.

□ As NDC we will ensure that public tertiary institutions develop programs and curriculums to offer courses in the study of renewable energy undergraduate and post graduate.

The NDC believes far more must be done to address inherited imbalances and to ensure the education system affords everybody the means to fulfill his or her potential while making our education more competitive in the global market.

DEC nabs two for money laundering involving US\$39.5m

By Geoffrey Zulu

The Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC), through its Anti-Money Laundering Investigations Unit in Lusaka, has arrested and jointly-charged two Lusaka businessmen for money laundering activities involving US\$39,550,000.00.

In a statement, Thursday, DEC Public Relations Officer Theresa Katongo stated that Metternich Saidi Chishimba, 49, a businessman of Chalala area in Lusaka District has been arrested and jointly-charged with Anderson Phiri, 42, a businessman of Ibex Hill for money laundering involving US \$39,550,000.00, contrary to the laws of Zambia.

"Particulars of the offence are that Metternich Saidi Chishimba, on dates unknown but between 7th October, 2015, and 31st December, 2017, jointly and whilst acting together with Anderson Phiri and other persons unknown with intent to defraud, did forge contract documents purporting that the Road Development Agency (RDA) and the National Road Fund Agency (NRFA) had signed a contract with Drum and Bitumen Isfahan of Iran for the supply of 100,000 metric tonnes of bitumen with a total contract value of US \$39,550,000.00 when in fact not," Katongo disclosed.

She revealed that the duo managed to obtain a total

sum of US\$480,000.00 as advance payment guarantee from Drum and Bitumen into their company account, which funds were used to acquire various properties for sale for their personal benefit. According to Katongo, the Commission has since seized the properties in question from the duo for further investigations, and the suspects are on police bond and will appear in court soon.



Bahati MP Harry Kalaba take a ride round Chipata Town on a bicycle on November 23, 2018

- Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Lungu asks mining companies to justify opposition of Sales Tax

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Amos Chanda says President Edgar Lungu has left it to mining companies to justify why they are opposing Sales Tax.

Meanwhile, Chanda says President Lungu may not be available for dialogue activities on January 18 due to preset engagements.

Speaking to journalists at State House after President Lungu swore in a new Army Commander, Monday, Chanda disclosed that government had dispatched technocrats to discuss lay-offs at FQM.

"A team of technocrats will actually be traveling to North Western Province to meet with the owners of FQM to look at the numbers that they are proposing, to look at the labour reduction proposals that they are making and to call evidence that shows clearly that they have got a case to make. Otherwise, the summary of it is that the tax

measures that the minister announced remain as they are, approved by Parliament and they will take effect as law once the due dates are set, which is tomorrow [January 1] and April 1. So the President has left the matter in the hands of the mining companies to justify for instance, why they are opposed to sales tax here when they are complying with sales tax in other regimes," Chanda said.

Chanda said President Lungu met mine workers' unions whilst on the Copperbelt and asked them to lead discussions on the new tax regime.

"President Lungu held two meetings whilst on the Copperbelt. He had a consultative meeting, very fruitful meeting, with the Mine Workers' Unions, three different unions that represent the mine workers. On Saturday, he held a meeting with representatives of the Chamber of Mines. The discussion centered around the new tax regime that will

take effect tomorrow and other measures taking effect on April 1. The President was satisfied with the understanding of the Mine Workers' Union. They are fully cognizant of the fact that for the government to function smoothly [and] for the social services to be delivered, government has to collect taxes in a free and fair manner. He has encouraged them to engage with the mine owners and seek justification for any decision that the mining companies might decide to make in terms of shedding off labour," he said.

"He has encouraged the unions to be the team leaders in the discussions to ensure that every action is justified. To call all information and records that must make the case for the mining companies justifiable, if at all it's justifiable. The summary of that meeting is that the President was satisfied with the knowledge that mine workers unions have over the matter and the engagement. The mine workers unions did

make some submissions on behalf of the mine owners that in certain areas government could consider certain changes. But those details cannot be disclosed to the public. The second meeting was with the Chamber of Mines led by the president of the Chamber of Mines. The President made the point very clear that the tax measures and the tax system in Zambia was fair, was not punitive and was arrived at through a broad consultative mechanism. And that government would not put in place any measures that deliberately disadvantaged the growth of the private sector. He made the appeal to them that if they have any genuine cases to present, they must present to the Mines Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Labour."

Meanwhile, Chanda said President Lungu might not be available for dialogue activities on January 18 due to preset engagements.

"As we said, as a standard

position, the President was one of the team leaders in pushing for this dialogue so he remains absolutely committed to the dialogue process. And if the dates have been set for 18th and there are any other formalities required, State House requires that those formalities are communicated to State House in due course and with ample time. As you know, the President's diary sometimes is closed for three months so when we accept anything that comes outside the three months, we are actually bending a lot of regulations, a lot of planning. But the 18th, we have heard from the church mother bodies, the President is available for dialogue. But we emphasize that if there are administrative problems within the facilitating movement, the church and ZCID, those must be sorted out without them being extended to the parties," said Chanda.

"The President is just one of the parties in there so if the President for instance does not receive formal communication as was the case, do expect him to turn up. In any case, it is a big problem for the presidential secretariat to plan for his attendance when in fact, there is no formal communication.

The presidency functions in a manner where all engagements with the President must be formalized. Press statements are different from formal communication. We would encourage the church and ZCID to make every procedure regarding this process formal. Otherwise for any other individual, any other parties their burden of responsibility is lighter than that of the President. If you call them at 10:00 hours, probably they can be there at 11:00 hours. The President does have an idea that there seem to be problems of coordination within the facilitators. That problem must quickly be dealt with so that it doesn't rub off on the parties."

ZACL sues Defense Ministry for trespassing

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) has sued the Ministry of Defence through the Attorney General in the Lusaka High Court, demanding damages for allegedly trespassing on its land and constructing concrete pillars. ZACL is seeking an order that the ministry immediately demolish all developments made and vacate the land so that it carries out expansion works at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) without any disturbances.

In a statement of claim filed in the Lusaka High Court, December 28, ZACL explained that government had embarked on various projects in the Aviation Sector which included; construction and rehabilitation of the new KKIA terminal building, airport hotel, air traffic control tower, shopping mall, among others.

It stated that on March 1, 2015, a certificate of title relating to Farm 4169 was issued in its name.

ZACL further explained that it had set aside Farm 4161 for the undertaking of various airport related projects to augment government's efforts to create KKIA into a regional hub.

"The plaintiff has engaged a consultant to undertake a land use study of Farm 4169 to ensure the best use of the land. Further the plaintiff undertook a successful open tendering process and has proceeded to procure a private developer for a filling station on Farm 4169," read the statement of claim. ZACL stated that on December 4, last year, it observed that concrete pillars were being erected on the said property by individuals who identified themselves as officers from the Zambia Army under the Ministry of Defence.

It stated that the construction of the

concrete pillars was discovered to be part of efforts to build a perimeter fence around the land within Farm 4169 which the officers from Zambia Army alleged had been allocated to the Ministry of Defence.

ZACL claimed that the Ministry of Defence's continued presence on Farm 4169 amounted to trespass, and was further an inconvenience, disruption and hindrance to the construction project and activities which were going on at the airport.

"Farm 4169 is also located in close proximity with with airplanes flying in and through the Zambian airspace's flight path, as well as the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport's second runway which is earmarked for construction in future phases of the airport's projects," read the statement of claim further.

ZACL further stated that the allegation

by the Ministry of Defence that a portion of Farm 4169 belonged to them had not been supported by any official government documentation.

The corporation now prays for an order that the Ministry of Defence was trespassing on its land and was therefore not entitled to enter, use or park on the said property.

It is further seeking for an order that the Ministry of Defence immediately demolish all developments made and vacate the land to enable development works of expanding Kenneth Kaunda International Airport to be undertaken without any disruption, hindrance or disturbance.

And an order of injunction restraining the Ministry of Defence from interfering or taking any form of construction on the said land pending determination of the matter by the court.

We have observed for some time now that whenever State House Press Aide Amos Chanda is interviewed by local and international media on press freedom standards in Zambia, he never misses a line that says: "there is no journalist who is imprisoned in this country." True to that fact, there had never been a journalist serving a (in line of duty) prison term under President Edgar Lungu's government.

The reason why Mr Chanda likes to use that line is because he knows that elsewhere in the world, working journalists are potential prisoners. As soon as they publish anything critical of government, they go in. So, President Edgar Lungu's spokesperson has been trying to paint a picture that this regime is so tolerant that citizens are free to express themselves through the press, and journalists are also at liberty to publish what they find newsworthy.

But that is not totally true at all. To start with, people need to know that the Zambian government oppresses journalism in so many ways. Some media houses are private, quite alright, but they are State-sponsored in one way or another. Some have written letters to State House requesting for advertising support in exchange for good publicity. Such newspapers, television and radio stations have sold their editorial independence to the State, and as such, they can never write anything critical of government and its leaders.

Journalists who work for such private

Please Amos Chanda, intervene for Sinjela

NEWS Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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media houses are not any different from those who are confined under public media. They have resources at their disposal, but they can't investigate anyone in government or any corruption within the system. If, by any mistake an exposé is published, the media owner gets in hot soup and the advertising support from government is threatened or terminated. They may have all the fancy words in their journalism motto for their media house, but they know in their hearts that they are operating under the "sebana wikute" slogan.

This is one way through which the State obliterates functional journalism. They don't necessarily send journalists to prison for exposing corrupt government deals; they just cripple the organisation's income and further threaten other big corporate companies that wish to do business with such perceived 'hostile

media.' If one media house stands out to be resilient to all such forms of oppression and intimidation, the State goes in foolhardy to physically shut it down, using all types of government instruments at their disposal. Without sending anyone to prison, that media house will simply cease to exist. This was the case with the late *Post Newspaper*. When it exposed evidence of the planned rigging of the 2016 elections, an operation was initiated to shut it down through a process that saw the newspaper editors beaten, detained for nights, but never prosecuted nor sent to jail.

There is no way that anyone can describe this as a free press. Counting the number of jailed journalists as a yardstick for press freedom is like judging a man's hunger by looking at his stomach. Some men may have huge bellies, like a woman whose expected date of delivery is

approaching; yet they are starving.

This is why we say it is not accurate for Mr Chanda to say Zambia is a functioning democracy where the press is free to provide checks and balances, for the simple reason that there is no journalist serving time in prison.

But assuming that all the above was not true about media freedom in Zambia. We do now have a situation that the State House press aide has been waiting for. The editor-in-chief of *Rainbow Newspaper* was harshly jailed for alleging that there is corruption involving some known judges in the Judiciary. We already made our opinion clear last week on the irony that the complainants in this matter were also the judge and jury.

Our job today is to make an earnest appeal to Mr Chanda to engage President Lungu on this case. President Lungu has in the past forgiven

an unrepentant sexual offender called General Kanene; a self-confessed rapist whose name appears in the police OB book more frequently than anyone can care to count. Why can't President Lungu turn his head towards Editor Dereck Sinjela? We feel this is a matter that needs the President's attention through Mr Amos Chanda.

Editor Sinjela is languishing in prison today, being the first one under President Lungu's regime, for a 'crime' that is hard to comprehend. To be honest, we can actually bet on the fact that 99.9 per cent of the people who have learnt that this journalist was jailed for contempt actually never read the contemptuous article in question. Some have never even seen how the said *Rainbow Newspaper* looks like. It is the complainants in this case who actually brought this contemptuous article to the attention of the uninterested public.

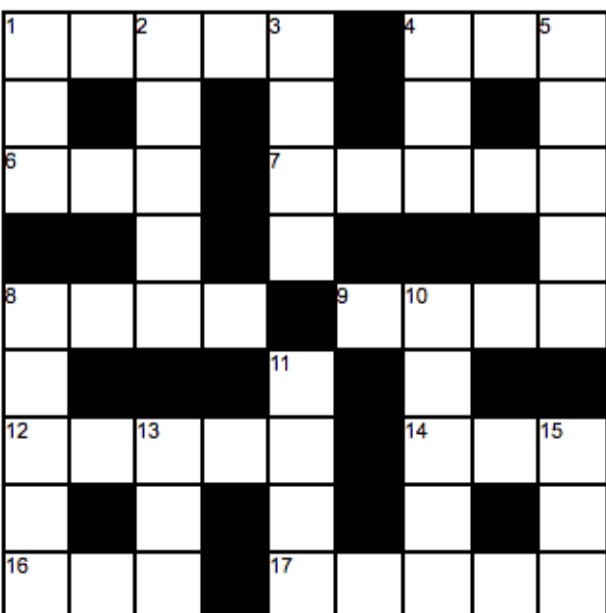
But be that as it may, our

colleague was remorseful. He apologized to the panel of judges and said he had learnt his lesson, vowing never to repeat his mistake. But he was still condemned to prison. Why? State House needs to intervene.

Mr Chanda has proved to have the right amount of influence on President Lungu in the past – judging by the fact that the Head of State has granted him permission to speak, not only on his behalf, but the entire Cabinet as well. The challenge is on him now to demonstrate that, indeed, President Lungu is a listening Head of State. Editor Sinjela did not rape anyone; he assaulted nobody and never stole anyone's property. He made a mistake in his line of duty, for which he is remorseful, like any human being in any profession.

Please, Mr Chanda, step in and save your fellow media colleague from spending the whole of 2019 and half of next year in prison. Bring him out so that his media outlet can also take a bite at the hype of the 2021 general elections. Mr Chanda, you already rank very high among the most approachable and friendly press aides Zambia has ever had, getting Sinjela out will definitely win you more kudos from the media fraternity. We believe we speak for many other journalists when we say freeing Sinjela will give us hope that we have a Presidential spokesperson who cares about our interests in the governance of this country. #FreeSinjela!

Crossword puzzle 264



"Where an open war is impossible, oppression can continue quietly behind the scenes."

- Alexander Solzhenitsyn

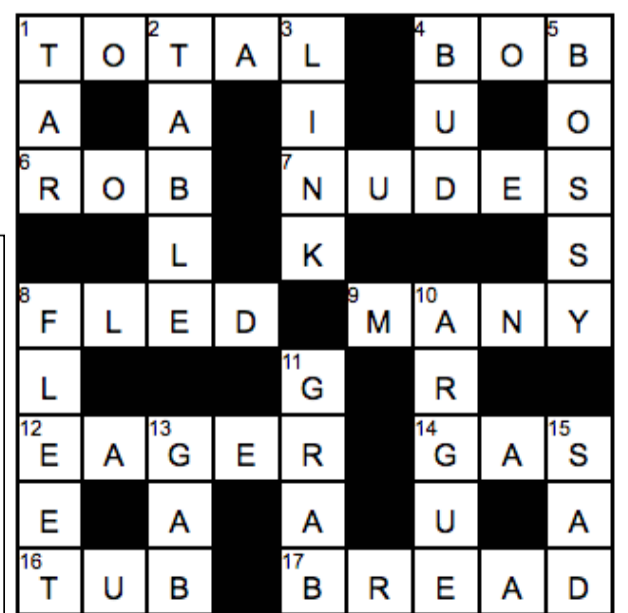
Across

- 1. Sum
- 4. Dole or Marley
- 6. Rip off
- 7. Some sculptures
- 8. Took off
- 9. Quite a few
- 12. Raring to go
- 14. Petroleum
- 16. Bathroom fixture
- 17. Whole wheat or rye

Down

- 1. Black sticky substance
- 2. Dining surface
- 3. Connection
- 4. Abbott, Lou's partner
- 5. Overly assertive
- 8. Naval force
- 10. Discuss loudly
- 11. Catch
- 13. Shoot the breeze
- 15. Unhappy

Solutions to puzzle 263



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.

Lungu on HH being longest-serving opposition president in Africa

Editor,

"Coming from someone who doesn't want to leave office after serving 2 terms?" - Levi Chinuka Kangololo

"We want affordable fuel and food on the table and not who

served longer!" - Mwambwa Kwikoshi

"Tired of petty politics. What matters is competence and ability to deliver; how long in opposition doesn't matter." - Sylvester Chongo

"I only know one president in the world who admitted to not having a vision, and it can be clearly seen through his failure to manage the affairs of the country. It is now 2019 and 2021 is just after next year; I pray that all the people who voted without using their brains will make a correct decision this time around." - Melvis Saviye

"Forgive him; he was referring to Kabila his friend, who has been in power for 17 years and is refusing to relinquish power; they are birds of the same feather." - Michelo D. Sialubala

"We need to vote wisely in 2021. This is so embarrassing!" - Joseph Mulenga Junior

"It's not always that one should think loudly, especially if one occupies high office. Some thoughts must never reach the mouth!" - Chola Mwale

"What bothers a sitting president about an opposition leader so much that he should waste time on such unimportant statements? Is Mr Lungu afraid of HH? Does he just hate the opposition leader? President Lungu is showing us a lot of weakness with this statement and am sure there are more pressing issues that the head of state needs to be addressing instead of worrying of how long Hichilema has been an opposition leader," - John Mweemba



High failure rate of grade 9 exams compared to 2017

Editor,

"A true reflection of what's on the ground. No finger pointing, these are the children most our teachers are teaching. As parents, let's take it upon ourselves to monitor our children's performance. In education, there are no miracles like in Church; pupils need to be serious with school, teachers are only facilitators." - Chimfwembe Nguni

"Overcrowding in classrooms of over 100 pupils instead of 45 pupils in class is one of the biggest problems, especially in government schools." - Albert Jean Sipiya

"A less than 50% pass rate for grade 9 is just sad." - Regina Chigubu Sibanda

"Frightening figure!" - Mike Phiri

"What do you expect from this type of leadership where teachers who leave the Ministry is 7,000 and you employ 2009...? Do you think teachers are like Google? One teacher teaching 8 classes of 100 pupils, and you expect improvement? This should be a wake-up call!" - Darren TheOracle

"And with 5% salary increment for teachers in 2019, expect worse than these results in 2019 examinations; it's work as you earn..." - Mulenga Phiri

"To be honest, something must be done to improve our education standards; this is not making sense!" - Fathar Kayuma Gift

Sinkamba's right on ZCID's involvement in dialogue perpetuating confusion

"Mr Sinkamba is absolutely right! Someone somewhere is throwing spanners in the works. Please, people, let us uphold peace. Don't take it for granted." - Nick Ndawa

"Right on, Mr Sinkamba." - George Sikazwe

"This man has wisdom!" - Billy Maseko

"Dictator Edgar Lungu likes the ZCID because it causes confusion in the dialogue process; Lungu has never shown any interest in the dialogue since a successful dialogue will mean the beginning of the end of his tribal and corrupt PF regime. Let us struggle for regime change." - Chivunda Samusungwa

"People surrounding the President are the ones sponsoring ZCID; I doubt if the President is even aware of underhand involvement of his party lieutenants in the ZCID. They don't want him to give in to dialogue because it's obvious most of the resolutions will render most guys in PF redundant. A lot of them are thriving in selling violence & crookedness to..." - Robby LM

"It must be reiterated that ZCID is made up of political parties and their interest in the process is political. National dialogue is beyond politics and therefore invalidates ZCID's insistence on leading this process. By the way, they have already shown their card." - Pascal Bwalya

Twenty-two opposition parties and groups back protesters' call for president to resign, demand transitional government.

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir is facing growing calls to step down following deadly protests over a dire economic crisis in the country.

Twenty-two Sudanese opposition political parties and groups on Tuesday demanded that Bashir transfer power to a "sovereign council" and a transitional government that would set a "suitable" date for democratic elections.

The groupings, calling themselves the National Front for Change, include some Islamist factions that were once allied with Bashir, who seized power in a 1989 military coup, as well as breakaway groups from large traditional parties.

"This government does not have the ability to overcome the economic crisis because the economic crisis is basically a political crisis," Mubarak Elfadel, chairman of the Umma Party, told reporters at a press conference in Sudan's capital, Khartoum.

"The government needs to end its rule and step down. We need to form a provisional council and a transitional government that will run this new stage and prepare us for new elections."

The groups said they will submit a memorandum comprising their demands

to the president on Wednesday. They warned that failure to transition to a new political system would have "dire consequences" for Sudan.

The move came as a second party, Sudan Reform Now, announced it was withdrawing from the coalition government.

It joins the Umma Party, which announced its withdrawal from the cabinet on Thursday, citing its support for the protesters and the government's failure to implement recommendations that were outlined in the national dialogue that preceded the coalition's formation.

Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan, reporting from Khartoum, said the decision by Sudan Reform Now would likely weaken Bashir's government.

"Many opposition groups have come out to say they believe the protesters have legitimate reasons, but it is not clear yet if other parties will also follow in the footsteps of Sudan Reform Now and withdraw from the national coalition government." **AL JAZEERA**

22 opposition parties back protesters' call for Sudan's president to resign



Sudanese President Omar-al-Bashir

Somalia orders UN envoy to leave country

Somalia's government has ordered the top United Nations official in the country to leave, accusing him of interfering with national sovereignty days after he raised concerns about the actions of UN-supported Somali security

forces.

The foreign affairs ministry said on Tuesday that Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, "is not required and cannot work in this country", effectively declaring the

official persona non grata.

"The decision comes after he openly breached the appropriate conduct of the UN office in Somalia," a statement read.

Haysom sent a letter dated December 30 to the interior security minister

expressing concern over "the alleged involvement of UN-supported Somali security forces in the arrest of Mukhtar Robow on 13 December, the deaths of 15 civilians...on 13, 14, and 15 December...and the arrest of approximately

300 people involved in the demonstrations on 13, 14, and 15 December".

Robow, the individual referred to in the letter, is a former member the armed group al-Shabab whose bid to become a regional leader in the country in an election last month was blocked.

The Internal Security Ministry said that Robow was arrested on suspicion that he had brought fighters and weapons back to the southern city of Baidoa, the capital of South West region where he is running for president.

His arrest sparked clashes between militiamen loyal to Robow and Somali forces. Ethiopian security forces, who are part of an African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia, were also involved in the violence.

There was no immediate comment from the UN mission in the country.

The decision comes hours after the UN compound in the Somali capital of Mogadishu was attacked. Seven mortars landed inside the compound which led to the wounding of two UN staff members and one contractor. The Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the attack and urged the Somali authorities to "investigate the attack and bring those responsible to justice".

Al-Shabab has reportedly claimed responsibility of the attack according to a statement by the UN. **AL JAZEERA**

Xi says nobody can change fact Taiwan is part of China

Chinese President Xi Jinping has said that no one can change the fact that Taiwan is "part of China", adding that Beijing will not give up the use of military force as an option to ensure "reunification".

Xi made the comments on Wednesday in a speech marking the 40th anniversary of a policy statement that eventually led to a thaw in relations with the self-ruled island.

"We are firmly against those who conspire behind the idea of 'Two China', or 'One China-One Taiwan', or Taiwan Independence," Xi said in a part of his first major speech addressing the people of what Beijing considers a breakaway province.

"We have achieved great victory on defeating any pro-independence or separatist activities. Nobody, and no party, can change the historical and legal fact that Taiwan is part of China and that both sides of the strait belong to China," Xi said in Beijing.

China "reserves the option of taking all necessary measures" against outside forces that interfere with peaceful reunification and Taiwan independence separatist activities, he added.

His speech came a day after Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen called on China to seek a peaceful solution on their differences, insisting people

on the island want to maintain self-rule.

"I would like to call on China to face squarely the reality of the existence of the Republic of China on Taiwan," Tsai said in a New Year's Day address, referring to the island's formal name.

She added that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait needed a pragmatic understanding of the basic differences that exist between them in terms of values and political systems.

China "must respect the insistence of 23 million people on freedom and democracy, and must use peaceful, on parity means to handle our differences", Tsai said.

Graham Ong-Webb, research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University, said Xi's remarks on Wednesday were "consistent" with the "message put out by the Chinese government over the last 40 years under the tenure of a string of premiers".

He noted, however, that the Chinese president in recent years has been delivering "the same message albeit in a more sharp and firm stance for various reasons".

"At the end of the day, there is a timeline when it comes to reunification and the Chinese government has to achieve this goal at some stage," Ong-Webb told Al Jazeera from Singapore.

The Chinese government has heaped pressure on Tsai since she took office in 2016, cutting off dialogue, whittling down Taiwan's few remaining diplomatic allies and forcing foreign airlines to list Taiwan as part of China on their websites.

It fears Tsai wishes to push for Taiwan's formal independence, though Tsai says she wants to maintain the status quo. Beijing has regularly sent military aircraft and ships to circle the island on drills.

China's interference in the island's political and social development is "Taiwan's biggest challenge at the moment", Tsai said on Tuesday. Beijing denies any interference in Taiwan's internal affairs. It views Taiwan as a wayward province, to be brought under its control by force if needed, with no right to international recognition as a separate political entity.

Democratic Taiwan has shown no interest in being ruled by autocratic China.

Liu Jieyi, head of China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said in his new year's message they had not wavered last year in the face of "deliberate provocations" from Taiwan's government.

"Although the way ahead won't all be plain sailing, we have the confidence and the ability to vanquish risks and challenges," he said in a statement on the office's website. **AL JAZEERA**

FAZ to introduce age grouping for lower division teams

By Alex Chilumbwe

Local football mother body FAZ says it is going to ensure that lower division teams establish age group teams in order to protect young and upcoming players from being overshadowed by failed players from the elite division.

FAZ vice president Rix Mweemba noted that footballers that fail to make it in the elite league join lower division sides that absorb them right away, thereby disadvantaging younger players that deserve to be given game time and a chance to be spotted by super division teams.

In an interactive session with the media on Monday, Mweemba said that the association will ensure that all provincial teams in the lower division recruit players on age basis so that journeymen stop overshadowing younger players.

"We want to ensure that players that have failed to make it in the elite do not disadvantage younger or upcoming ones. There are

some of them that join smaller teams in the lower divisions where they are considered good but that disadvantages younger players. When that team wins promotion to the elite

league, you start seeing the same players that could not make it in the first place," he said.

Mweemba further said that the establishment of age group or developmental

teams was a noble move aimed at protecting the continued growth of the sport in the country and not a hindrance to footballers that would want to revive their careers in the lower

division.

"We want to give young footballers equal chances of playing for their teams and this can even make scouting of potential national team players easy. We are not

hindering those that want to revive their careers in the lower divisions, we simply want to categorize them according to their ages for equal chances," said Mweemba.

Zambian match fixer Nchimunya Mweetwa on crusade to help others

By Kennedy Gondwe, BBC

In 2012 former Zambia international Nchimunya Mweetwa's promising football career came to an abrupt end when he was convicted and banned for match fixing.

The 34-year-old is now using his own personal experiences to try and help others to avoid a similar fate through the Nchimunya Mweetwa Sports Foundation.

As a youngster he rose through high school football onto club stardom before clinching a dream move abroad.

His move to RoPS in Finland also saw him being called up to the Zambian national team. The dream came crashing down when he, with five other Zambian players, was arrested, tried and convicted of match fixing.

He spent nine days in police cells before his trial and was handed a suspended eight month sentence after an appeal. His conviction led to a two-year ban by football's world governing body, Fifa.

After his ban he returned to play in Zambia, Uganda and

Botswana but now devotes his time to his foundation.

The fall from grace

He says falling into the match fixing trap did not happen overnight and believes his youthful naivety and over-trusting nature were key to his fall from grace.

"Wilson Raj Perumal is the match fixer who approached me. He was eventually arrested in Finland trying to fix matches," he explained.

"He had papers showing that he was a licensed Fifa agent. I do not know if he forged those

papers but he had a licence showing that he was a Fifa agent."

"He approached my friends and started giving them money under the guise of being an agent.

"He spent about one or two years flashing money and saying 'I like the way you play,' without you realising he was a match fixer wanting you to work for him in return.

"I was also approached, he gave me about 10,000 Euros and gave me more over time saying he was happy with the way I was playing because I was a big name in my town where I was playing. Everyone talked about the way I played." The cash gifts continued flowing until Perumal eventually had garnered enough leverage to recruit Mweetwa to his match fixing army.

"I was getting the money and enjoying it, partying but eventually reality dawned on me. He said the money was not for free. You need to start doing this, the money was good so I never thought it was bad to start fixing the games," he said.

It was not until he was arrested that the reality dawned on Mweetwa that his luck had run out.

"The sad part is I was caught (arrested) on the field of play. We were training at the gym in the morning and then from the gym we went on the field of play and the police came. They had to close all the exit doors and they picked me up," he says.

"I didn't even go home to see my wife and say I'm going to jail. They first went to raid my apartment and they got every device that was there and my wife did not know what was happening.

"They took me to a jail cell with the policemen telling me to take off my shoes and belt. I stayed in the cell for nine days. I went to court after four days. After four days they transferred me to another town in a solitary room. It was mental torture and it was depressing."

Helping others

Mweetwa is now determined to help stop other young players falling into the same trap that he found himself

caught up in.

"We will tour the country (Zambia) and we are trying to get the athletes from the grassroots level to be of good character," he explained.

"We want to integrate skill and talent with integrity into athletes so that when they become successful their good character will sustain them."

Mweetwa admits that telling his story is not easy and knows some people will judge him in a bad light but he wants others to learn from it and avoid being trapped in vices like match fixing.

"It is not a good story but on the other hand it's important your son hears you say that you cheated but that you do not want to hear another person cheat," he added.

"Today they see me as their hero because I tell them that I do not want you to fall prey to unsportsmanlike behaviour.

"I am not the only one but I am the only one who has come out and I can even tell you that one of my friends - after hearing me - has said 'I also want to speak out', added Mweetwa.

He says that although African players fall prey to match fixing partly as a result of a poor economic background it should never be used as an excuse.

"Africa is a poverty stricken continent, we are not privileged enough like these other continents like Europe and America but we cannot just say because of poverty that is why we behave unethically," he insists.

"We cannot say because of poverty that is why I am stealing. For me and the rest of the group what we are trying to do is to reduce the number of athletes falling prey.

"It is difficult and it is very hard because everyone wants to have food on the table and if you are offered money to dishonestly manipulate a game you are tempted.

"We are trying to help these people to actually think about the long term and not the short term of receiving money - just to use it there and then and then lose everything.

"We are trying to make people understand that you can actually live with a true conscience and make it in life."

Dortmund confirm Pulisic to join Chelsea in £58m deal



Dortmund have confirmed Christian Pulisic is joining Chelsea in a £58 million (€64m/\$73m) deal that will see him loaned back to the German club for the remainder of the 2018-19 season.

The USA international attacker has impressed since making the breakthrough for the Bundesliga side during the 2015-16 campaign and has since made 115 appearances for the top team, scoring 15 goals and creating another 24.

He has, however, struggled to hold down a regular starting place in Lucien Favre's side as they have charged to the top of the league standings, where they have opened a six-point gap to Bayern Munich.

Indeed, the 20-year-old has featured only four times from the beginning of matches in the league, with his last start coming on September 29.

With the player unable to agree new terms with the club and a deal that expired in 2020, BVB were content to allow him to leave.

"It was always Christian's dream to play in the Premier League. That certainly has to do with his American background, and as a result we were unable to extend his contract," BVB sporting director Michael Zorc told the club's official website.

"Against this background, we have decided to accept an extremely lucrative bid by Chelsea, given the low contract maturity."

Zorc holds no fears that the youngster will allow his level to drop in the coming months, despite his big move being secured.

"He's a player of perfect character," he said. "I am sure that in the coming months

he will do everything in his power to bring his high quality to the team and to achieve his sporting goals with his Borussia Dortmund team-mates."

Pulisic is a player that the Blues have been tracking for several months, with the future of star man Eden Hazard, who continues to be linked with Real Madrid, still uncertain and their other options in the wide areas typically aging.

The Stamford Bridge side were also monitoring the progress of Lyon's Nabil Fekir and Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele as a potential replacement for the Belgium star.

Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool were two of the other clubs hovering over Pulisic, but the Reds dropped their interest at the end of November. **Goal.com**

Lessons from a banned match fixer, Mweetwa...

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AFP Forum
Zhong zhenbin / Imaginechina / ICHN



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Zhong zhenbin / Imaginechina

Left: Wang Xinyu of China falls down while competing against Maria Sharapova of Russia in their second round match of the women's singles during the 2019 WTA Shenzhen Open tennis tournament in Shenzhen city, south China's Guangdong province yesterday. Right: Maria Sharapova, the No.5 seed, moved into the quarterfinals of the Shenzhen Open after moving past the impressive Chinese teenager Wang Xinyu, 6-7(4), 5-2, ret. Wang powered to a stunning first-set win before injury forced her to retire during the second set. Sharapova will face either top seed Aryna Sabalenka or fellow Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova in the elite eight in Shenzhen. - AFP

WADA confirm Russia misses Moscow doping lab deadline

Russia faced up to the possibility of renewed sporting sanctions on Tuesday when the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) confirmed the country had missed a December 31 deadline to hand over data from its anti-doping laboratory in Moscow. "I am bitterly disappointed that data extraction from the former Moscow Laboratory has not been completed by the date agreed," said WADA president Craig Reedie. WADA said the independent Compliance Review Committee (CRC) will now consider the next step in the long-running saga at a January 14-15 meeting. The end-of-year deadline was set in September, when WADA lifted a ban on the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), paving the way for

Russian athletes to return to competition across all sports after a report which uncovered a state-sponsored doping programme in Russia. WADA's confirmation of the missed deadline came as US Anti-Doping Agency chief Travis Tygart described Russia's return to the sports fold "a total joke and an embarrassment". However, in his New Year message, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach insisted Russia had been sufficiently punished. "With its suspension from the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, the Russian Olympic Committee has served its sanction," wrote Bach. WADA personnel travelled to Russia in December but were unable to extract all of the promised data.



WADA president Craig Reedie

WADA said at the time its team could not complete its mission "due to an issue raised by the Russian authorities that the team's equipment to be used for the data extraction was required to be certified under Russian law". With WADA waiting and the December 31 deadline

looming, RUSADA chief Yuri Ganus asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to intervene to stave off another ban that put Russia "on the brink of the abyss". However, the Kremlin said RUSADA's concerns about new sanctions were "without foundation." AFP

Valverde hints on Barca exit

Barcelona manager Ernesto Valverde has admitted he could leave the club following the current campaign. Valverde was named manager of the Catalan club prior to last season and the former Athletic Bilbao boss led his side to a successful campaign domestically, winning the league and cup double. Barca have continued to prosper this season under the 54-year-old, with the club topping La Liga currently and having advanced to the Champions League last 16. Valverde has a contract through the 2019-20 season, but both he and the club have an option to terminate his deal a year early at the end of the current campaign. And he has confirmed that he could still choose to end his time at Camp Nou after just two seasons. "I do not know what I will do next season. In this football, who knows? We all know how things are. I never think long or long term," Valverde told Barca TV. "For us, two months are a very long term. If you win a game, everyone is happy and if you lose, everyone is watching you. "What I want is for everyone to be satisfied with the work. But we are not going to cheat. "If you do not win the league, everyone looks at the coach because it is marked like that. I try to meet the objectives and, of course, how much we have left, so let's see it." Valverde went on to explain what he's learned during his season and a half in charge in Catalonia, admitting that managing a club like Barcelona is a huge challenge. *Goal.com*

