



NAWAKWI, MUTATI, WK, SAKI GANG UP

Story page 5

...accuse Church, opposition alliance of conniving to cause regime change



Wynter Kabimba, Sakwiba Sikota, Edith Nawakwi and Felix Mutati at the press briefing yesterday, where they accused the church of conniving with opposition alliance to push regime change



Hakainde Hichilema cycles around Lundazi town during a campaign, shortly after he stormed Lundazi Police Station to complain about PF violence - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Govt forms special joint cyber crime crack squad

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Government has established a Special Joint Cyber crime Crack Squad (SJCCS) aimed at mitigating the abuse and illegal use of internet. This is according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, To page 5

If Lungu offered me a job, I would thank God - Pilgrim

By Thomas Mulenga
Former UPND vice-president Dr Canisius Banda says he would thank God if President Edgar Lungu appointed him as a Cabinet Minister or to any public service position. And Dr Banda has charged that Hakainde Hichilema is a self-centered man who always wants to lead at the expense of others. In an interview, Dr Banda said he would thank God if the Head of State gave him a job, saying he had already been helping the government to deliver. To page 4

CBU lecturers down tools, as UNZA announces delayed January salaries

Story page 5

Sindaza rubbishes Amos' claims that Axxez is using his name to do business

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
Axxez Media Management says it is unfortunate that senior government officials are helping Lebanese companies to thrive in Zambia while killing young local entrepreneurs. In a statement, Axxez public relations officer Treasure Sindaza refuted claims that his company was purporting to be affiliated to State House or to President Edgar Lungu's Press Aide Amos Chanda in order to get business. On Friday, Chanda had told a media briefing that Axxez advertising company was using his name and that of State House to bully councils in Lusaka, Kitwe, and Kafue. To page 3

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Chinsali agro-dealer fled with 600 beneficiaries' deposits - Katambo

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

An agro-dealer in Chinsali bolted with about 600 beneficiaries' deposits under the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), Agriculture Minister Michael Katambo has revealed.

And Katambo says there is no way government will continue engaging criminals masquerading as agro-dealers to supply much-needed inputs going forward. In an interview with News Diggers! Katambo disclosed that an unscrupulous agro-dealer in Chinsali ran away with about 600 beneficiaries' deposits under FISP, meaning that the intended beneficiaries failed to redeem their required inputs.

"The distribution [of inputs] is going on very well though we have recorded reports of other agro-dealers once paid, they run away with money, but all these cases have been reported to police. These are prosecutable offences and the law will take its course. But it's quite sad that agro-dealers, like one example I can cite in Chinsali, that one agro-dealer has run away with about 600 beneficiaries' deposits, which are huge amounts and this is

very sad," Katambo said. "So, anyway, the police command within the province and the minister and the PS within the province and our provincial Agriculture Coordinating Officer and our DACO within Chinsali, are on top of issues to see to it that whoever is found wanting will be brought to book. So, this is very sad, farming is about serving farmers on time. So, we are engaging the Treasury and government is very committed that we clear and settle the amounts that are remaining to pay the agro-dealers so that our farmers

can completely be serviced and access their inputs."

Katambo said going forward, government would no longer engage criminal agro-dealers to supply inputs to farmers owing to their shameful and illegal acts.

"There is no way you are going to continue engaging a criminal. Those (agro-dealers) that will be found engaging in criminal activities will definitely be blacklisted. Even in the next farming season or going forward, they can't be engaged or contracted by the Ministry because they are already a disappointment,

they are already a shame! They can't do what is right for the government, food security is national security. These people that are being... by the government are able to sacrifice and produce even at their household level, [but] if they are being deprived and agro-dealers can even lock up their agro shops because they have run out of stock when they have been paid, it's quiet sad. This is a two-way traffic; government releases the money, the agro-dealer delays the farmer," Katambo said.

Responding to issues of ghost farmers, Katambo warned

those running the system that removing intended beneficiaries from the system and replacing them with undeserving farmers was equally a prosecutable offence.

"Government under the Zambia Agriculture Management Information System under the umbrella of Smart Zambia has increased the updates on the data. A few beneficiaries have been identified. Of course, we have got reports where you find that a certain number of farmers have been removed, those that are captured who are in the system,

which is very sad. These are criminal activities that we are monitoring. So, whoever will be found putting out the actual beneficiaries and putting in the new beneficiaries...these are prosecutable offences. You know the one million targeted beneficiaries are in the data base. That is why you find that in areas where we don't have the banks or network and others our Agriculture Coordinating Officers are issuing documents called authority deposit and farmers go there to collect. This is to identify a true beneficiary," said Katambo.

Poaching reduces Kafue Lechwe population to 23,306

By Thomas Mulenga

The Lechwe population in the Kafue National Park has dropped by 5,000 since 2015 due to increased poaching, with numbers now standing

at around 23,306, new data shows.

In a statement availed by Ministry of Tourism and Arts public relations officer Sakabilo Kalembwe, a

survey conducted by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) found the Lechwe population in the Kafue National Park drop to 23,306 from 28,711 in 2015.

"The status of the Kafue Lechwe is seriously under threat from poaching. Preliminary reports of the 2018 Kafue Lechwe population count on the flats indicates a critical situation for the endemic species, which has recorded

a decline of approximately 5,000 animals in three years. According to surveys conducted by the DNPW, with the support of WWF and International Crane Foundation (ICF), the Lechwe population that stood at 28,711 in 2015, now stands at 23, 306 animals," the statement, released Thursday, read.

"The aim of the survey that was carried out in the second week of November, 2018, was meant to determine the population of the status of

large herbivores, especially the Kafue Lechwe and also some water bird species, particularly the Wattled Cranes in the Lochnivar and Blue Lagoon National Park as well as the Kafue game management area. The survey carried a total area of 5,615 encompassing the two national parks."

And data showed that the population of hippos had equally dropped by 800 from the last count.

"Meanwhile, the report on the 2018 count of the common Hippo on the Luangwa River reveals a decline of about 800 hippos from the previous count. The report indicates that the current population stands at 12,498 hippotami on a river stretch of 270Km. This is, however, still above the river's carrying capacity. The total number of the hippos counted comprises of 331 schools and 116 solitary animals," read the statement.

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Axzez rubbishes Amos' allegations, says Govt is protecting Lebanese interests

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Axzez Media Management says it is unfortunate that senior government officials are helping Lebanese companies to thrive in Zambia while killing young local entrepreneurs.

In a statement, Axzez public relations officer Treasure Sindaza refuted claims that his company was purporting to be affiliated to State House or to President Edgar Lungu's Press Aide Amos Chanda in order to get business.

On Friday, Chanda had told a media briefing that Axzez advertising company was using his name and that of State House to bully councils in Lusaka, Kitwe, and Kafue. "There is a company [called] Axzez media, this company is a billboard advertising media. It is going round purporting that they are acting for State House [and] I can confirm that they are not acting for us. The second thing I can confirm that I do not own this company as they are purporting. The third thing is that I can confirm that it is owned by two shareholders but I will not mention the names, you can go to PACRA. So they are neither acting for us nor do I own it. Those dealing with this company can engage them on their own terms as Axzez media. Information is that they are bullying chief officers of Lusaka City council, Ndola, Kitwe and Kafue council purporting to be acting for State House. They don't have instructions of State House to put out Bill boards or to do anything and most importantly I do not own the company, I do not know them, we have no interest directly or indirectly whatsoever," said Chanda.

But Sindaza stated that

Chanda's allegations were propaganda and fake adding that if indeed his company was using State House to get business, it would have gotten contracts from government. "Axzez Media Management is a Zambian company founded and established by young Zambian entrepreneurs. We have never purported to be affiliated to State House or state that our company is owned by Mr Amos Chanda and that is evident by the fact that we have never gotten any business from the state owned companies. If we use State House to get business we would have gotten even one contract from the Government," Sindaza stated. Sindaza also stated that his company had never bullied any of the mentioned councils and urged Chanda to verify facts with his company before siding with a Lebanese company which he said was connected to some cabinet ministers.

"Secondly, we want to make it clear that we have never bullied any council CEO. As a matter of fact, Lusaka City Council under ministerial instructions, pulled down our billboards in 2017 regardless of the billboard approvals and a named Lebanese company

took over our legally approved billboard spaces. It is so unfortunate that the relevant authorities have been siding with a Lebanese Company that is connected to some minister and abuses that relationship by using his name to take over our sites. Is this how we are going to live in Zambia, killing young local entrepreneurs

at the expense of Lebanese companies? We expected Mr Amos Chanda to verify with us before taking the matter to the media and misinforming the public. He has our contacts, we have officially complained to him before concerning these matters of the Lusaka City Council siding with a Lebanese company of which he just

threw away our complaints but surprisingly he is now giving false and unverified news," stated Sindaza. "We urge the public to treat that news as propaganda and we hereby challenge Mr Amos Chanda to avail evidence to his allegations. We want to put it clear that we do not have any billboards in Kafue and have never been to

Kafue City Council to apply for billboards or bully anyone there. Yes, we have billboards in Kitwe, Ndola and Lusaka but we have never bullied any council CEOs whatsoever. We only have business relationships with these local councils, we always follow the laid down procedures and we have records and council approvals."

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A grade five dropout boy of Chindwale village in Katete district heading after cattle - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Bishop Mambo questions Sumaili's silence on Sichelwe's porn blunder

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

CiSCA chairperson Bishop John Mambo says President Lungu should take action against Chiefs and Traditional Affairs Minister Lawrence Sichelwe for sharing a

pornographic video on social media because the minister's conduct sends a bad signal to the young generation.

And Bishop Mambo has condemned Religious Affairs Minister Reverend Godfridah

Sumaili's silence over the issue which was against the country's morals.

In an interview, Bishop Mambo said it was a known fact that the issue will die a natural death because it

involved a government official.

"I think those clergy who gang and denounce the church should check themselves. They should be in the forefront denouncing that type of evil. If a leader including myself is found with pornographic material [then] I am not worth to be in that position. Truthful speaking, even without investigations that should be a summary dismissal, otherwise you will be sending signals that this is allowed and tolerated. We are a Christian Nation in our preamble of the Constitution, but if pornography comes from the top especially a minister and all that [then] we have a problem," Bishop Mambo said. He argued that Sichelwe did not have any immunity that protected him from facing prosecuted, and therefore, needed to be held accountable. "I think let President Lungu give us an example in this case, what signal are we sending to the pupils in schools? Is the law selective? Because the police also can't just say 'we are doing something' they should tell us what they have done. Of course a person is proven innocent until by the courts of law but the process itself must

start," Bishop Mambo said. And Bishop Mambo expressed disappointment over Sumaili's silence on the matter. "I think that we must have a Constitution that embraces everybody such that when I make a mistake, I have to face the music. For me I am disappointed with that minister (of Religious Affairs) who should have intervened. But it's like business as usual, so where is National Guidance and Religious Affairs?" asked Bishop Mambo.

"I watched the debate in parliament where people questioned the role of that ministry because we are on the increase in terms of immorality, alcohol intake and all that and yet we have a ministry that has got staff and a budget line that should handle these things. So this will send a terrible signal. The police are on record saying 'we are investigating' [but] what I know in this country is that if that person was not in office, then that matter would be pursued all the way until crucified on the cross, but because he is a minister it will die a natural death and as a result it does send a bad signal."

only remaining with the fourth estate, which is the media, and this media as a fourth estate makes them uncomfortable. So, they are slowly going for it, to destroy it and reasonable citizens of this country must not side with PF in their last assault on the democratic institutions of this country," Changala said. "Davies Mwila has no moral right to disgrace, embarrass and treat the people from the media, and Prime TV in particular, in the manner that he did with insolence, in public view! And I want to warn PF [that] they have not bought this country, nobody has sold them this country for them to take outright ownership in exclusion of others. They will pay a huge price! And worse still, we have a president of PF, who is also the Republican President, who has gone out of his way to endorse and accept this insolence by senior members of his political party. And I don't want to fall into a trap where people

are saying: 'Davies Mwila is number three in the hierarchy from the President' yes, in their political party he is [but] in general governance in terms of the Republic of Zambia, Davies Mwila is way away from authority. He is a cadre for the party! He is not an administrative officer of government, no!" He said the PF's arrogance of harassing everyone would soon come to an end. "So, this arrogance of harassing every 'Jim and Jack' will have to come to an end one day. This is our country collectively as a people, it is not a country for PF alone. In a nutshell, the conduct of the PF Secretary General gives you that state of our government and you should not allow the government, as (Chanda) Kasolo (Information PS) has alluded to, to control the media through some legislation in Parliament. You must fight it tooth and nail because this is what you are going to get," said Changala.

Changala condemns Lungu for condoning Mwila's attacks on Prime TV

By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Human rights activist Brebner Changala says PF Secretary General Davies Mwila's arrogance of harassing the media should be condemned by every well-meaning Zambian.

In an interview, Changala condemned President Edgar Lungu for condoning Mwila's attacks on Prime TV.

"He is not even third in rank, bwana (sir) don't reduce this country into a Banana Republic. The conduct of Mr Mwila towards the Prime TV must be roundly condemned! That is barbaric and totally unacceptable! But that again shows you the arrogance of the incumbent. They think whatever they do, they do it in the interest of Zambia not knowing that the people of Zambia are slowly and urgently getting fed up with the behaviour and arrogance of PF. PF as a government and PF as a party have destroyed all institutions of governance without exception. We are

only remaining with the fourth estate, which is the media, and this media as a fourth estate makes them uncomfortable. So, they are slowly going for it, to destroy it and reasonable citizens of this country must not side with PF in their last assault on the democratic institutions of this country," Changala said. "Davies Mwila has no moral right to disgrace, embarrass and treat the people from the media, and Prime TV in particular, in the manner that he did with insolence, in public view! And I want to warn PF [that] they have not bought this country, nobody has sold them this country for them to take outright ownership in exclusion of others. They will pay a huge price! And worse still, we have a president of PF, who is also the Republican President, who has gone out of his way to endorse and accept this insolence by senior members of his political party. And I don't want to fall into a trap where people



Andrew Banda addresses a UPND rally on Saturday in Mukombwa ward, Lundazi district ahead of the February by-election - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

By Thomas Mulenga

Former UPND vice-president Dr Canisius Banda says he would thank God if President Edgar Lungu appointed him as a Cabinet Minister or to any public service position.

And Dr Banda has charged that Hakainde Hichilema is a self-centered man who always wants to lead at the expense of others.

In an interview, Dr Banda said he would thank God if

I'd thank God if Lungu appointed me Cabinet Minister – Canisius

the Head of State appointed him as Cabinet Minister or to any public service position.

"I am a nationalist, I have

dedicated my life to the service of the nation and humanity. And even now, I am serving the nation by offering advice to the

government, the President knows that I am working to help the government deliver, even in my private role. But if the President decides to give me a more public role through, which I should contribute to the service of the nation and mankind, I wouldn't hesitate to take up it up. I would use any role that the President would give me to serve the nation as I have always done in different capacities and as I continue to do now. I would thank God for such an opportunity from the Republican President because service to the nation and humanity is what comes first for me, and we should all be ready to work for the betterment of the country whenever called upon," Dr Banda said.

"Platforms for work do not matter and they vary with time, what matters is the work that you do. For example, what moves me is service to humanity, so whether under UNIP, MMD, UPND or PF, the service remains the same. So, what I find important is to address the need of citizens now and that's why wherever I have been, I have highlighted issues that matter to people, such as water and sanitation, electricity for all, water for all, education for all. There used to be a time when I used to be vice president in the UPND and I did say that: 'Chagwa wagwesa magesi' that was a mantra that I said, and the Republican President listened and load

shedding that was terrible, with 30 per cent power reduction to the mines, is gone now. That shows that the President listened. I did say that: 'migodi yagwa' but that has changed with the new mining tax regime that has been introduced so that Zambians get more from their minerals than ever before, because it's this money once collected that will fund our education and health sectors."

He said he had so far been supporting the PF by rendering them helpful advice.

"I stand with the Presidency of the Republic of Zambia and the ruling government, so I support the government of the day, which comprises the ruling party, the PF. So, I am a development activist, and whenever I get the opportunity, I bring to the attention of the ruling party, 'dos and don'ts' in my private capacity as a citizen; I highlight various issues to different party and government leaders, right from the SG to the ministers. For example, I keep telling them that stop overpricing government contracts, for example, if a rim of paper costs K50, let's not buy it at K150 because that's government wastage of peoples' resources. When we save money, the national income will grow and we will have money to spend on roads, hospitals, schools and others. And I also mention to them, for example, that it's more important to dismantle

domestic debt than foreign debt first, because domestic debt is going to put money in the pockets of Zambians, the foreign debt, money goes in the pockets of foreigners. So, these are examples of advice that I give to the ruling party and they are received very well because they see me as one of them, a citizen that means well," explained Dr Banda.

And Dr Banda charged that Hichilema was a self-centered man who always wanted to lead at the expense of others.

"I want to put it in on record that I thank the UPND for giving me an opportunity to serve as vice-president of the party, but do I miss the UPND? No! I played my part, I did what I could and I cannot go back, there is no position that I can hold there. Remember, I was vice president for politics, I was number two and HH did a good job to groom me to succeed him, but there is no vacancy up to now, HH is still there. He thinks that it always has to be him in the driving seat that he has to be the leader, always. The man is so self-centred; he thinks that he is the only one who can lead and he cannot be led! But good leadership means that you cannot lead, always. Sometimes, you have to be led by others, sometimes you have to lead from behind and that's what I am doing now myself by giving advice to the ruling party in the back ground," said Dr Banda.

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By Sipilisiwe Ncube

Government has established a Special Joint Cyber crime Crack Squad (SJCCS) aimed at mitigating the abuse and illegal use of internet.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the adoption of this approach reinforces government's commitment to introducing measures and policies that will promote a safe, secure, resilient, reliable and inclusive ICT sector.

"However, the wider and increased availability to the digital platforms such as the internet and mobile technology has led to some individuals using ICTs to propagate illegal vices. In order to mitigate against abusive and illegal use of digital platforms and vulnerabilities amongst

Govt forms "special joint cyber crime crack squad"

and against Zambian citizens, the Government of the Republic of Zambia through the Ministry of Transport and Communications has spearheaded the formation of a Special Joint Cyber crime Crack Squad (SJCCS). The SJCCS is an effort of collaboration amongst security agencies and other stakeholder groups. The SJCCS has been established with the understanding that the ability to reduce risks brought about by the digital revolution requires

the establishment of effective and efficient real-time and proactive strategies. Such strategies can be developed and implemented through enhanced and improved collaboration between key cross-sectoral stakeholders," the statement read.

The ministry further stated that the Special Joint Cyber crime Crack Squad would support the identification of investigative overlaps and eliminate duplicity of resources among other functions.

"The Special Joint Cyber crime Crack Squad (SJCCS) will play a lead role in bringing some level of sanity amongst digital platform users in the country. It will support the identification of investigative overlaps and eliminate duplicity of resources whilst effecting new investigative approaches to bring about rapid resolution of cyber crime cases and fast-track prosecution of the offenders. This team will help ensure that public digital platforms including social media are

not used as vehicles for illegal and harmful activities. The Ministry remains committed to promoting the responsible and productive use of digital platforms. Further we condemn all forms of cyber crime and the harmful use of social media," further stated the ministry.

"The adoption of this multi-disciplinary collaborative approach reinforces Governments commitment to introducing measures and policies that will promote a safe, secure, resilient, reliable

and inclusive ICT sector for increased and continued Investment and Development in Zambia. The exponential growth in the information and communication technology sector has created unprecedented opportunities for accelerated development in interactions by individuals and corporate entities facilitating the establishment of knowledge based digital societies. Through ICTs, the ability for people to communicate, connect, share, learn, access information and express their opinions on matters that affect their lives and their communities has been enhanced enormously. People, the world over including the people of Zambia, have benefited greatly by opportunities brought about by the emergence of the digital age."

Nawakwi, Saki, Wynter, Mutati gang up against opposition alliance

By Mukosha Funga

Four opposition political parties have accused the Opposition Alliance and the church of trying to use the dialogue process as a vehicle for regime change.

At a joint press briefing, Sunday, Sakwiba Sikota of the United Liberal Party, Felix Mutati, leader of one of the two Movement for Multiparty Democracy factions, Edith Nawakwi of the Forum for Democracy and Development and Wynter Kabimba of the Rainbow Party, charged that the Opposition Alliance had deliberately been misleading the nation.

Nawakwi read the statement on behalf of the four opposition leaders.

"We wish to give a response to the press statement issued by the Opposition Alliance on Friday, 1st February, 2019. The Opposition Alliance

has conveniently omitted the issues of fundamental importance and agreement during the meetings referred to in their press statement. The omission is deliberate because stating the actual facts would expose their duplicity and ultimately their political scheme. We now intend to do just that so that the Zambian people can make a fair judgement," Nawakwi said.

Nawakwi said when the four first met with the Opposition Alliance at the Law Association of Zambia, they made it clear that they were not part of the alliance. "At this meeting president Sakwiba and president Milupi were appointed as co-chairpersons. We were not surprised at the question because after the failed launch of the National Dialogue held at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on 18th January,

2019, a statement was issued by the Opposition Alliance calling those of us who did not attend the said launch as surrogate political parties of the Patriotic Front," she said. Nawakwi said the four opposition leaders met the church in a bid to resolve its impasse with ZCID, but the church connived with the Opposition Alliance to frustrate those efforts.

"On the evening of Friday, 18th January 2019, on their own initiative the concerned Party Presidents namely: Hon Sakwiba Sikota, Hon Felix Mutati and myself went to Kapingila House to meet the three Bishops namely Bishop George Lungu, Bishop Alfred Kalembu and Bishop Paul Mususu. The purpose of the meeting was to seek to resolve the differences between the Bishops and ZCID. The follow-up meeting was held

on 19th January, 2019, in which the four (4) Party Presidents presented a Draft Memorandum of Understanding from ZCID to the bishops. The bishops advised that they needed time to peruse through the documents and would revert to the Party Presidents after consultations. It was quite clear in the meeting that there were no major differences with the text in the Memorandum of Understanding. The bishops commended the party presidents for the initiative and emphasised the urgency to conclude and sign the Memorandum of Understanding. While waiting for a response from the bishops with regards to the Memorandum of Understanding, president Charles Milupi contacted president Sakwiba Sikota requesting for a meeting

which culminated into a meeting of Thursday, 24th January, 2019," she narrated. "When we met with the Opposition Alliance on 24th January, 2019, we had no idea that they were coming to the meeting as emissaries of the bishops. In that meeting the Patriotic Front were not present as they were not invited. The truth of the matter is that the purported launch on 18th January, 2019, was a failure in its attempt to promote the image of one Political Party namely the United Party for National Development. The rest of us were to be used as tokens to promote that agenda, and hence the reference to us as surrogates of Patriotic Front." She said in another meeting, UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema expressed ignorance of a memorandum of understanding which all parties, including his party, had agreed to, threatening to abandon the dialogue process.

"At the behest of co-chair Hon Milupi a meeting of political parties was called without an agenda at the Pamodzi Hotel on Tuesday 29th January, 2019. To our dismay the United Party for National Development and its Alliance Parties reneged on almost all clauses agreed to during the meeting on Friday 25th January 2019, and attempted to re-open debate on the Memorandum of Understanding based on the comments made by the bishops. We then asked them as to whether they were speaking on behalf of the bishops or they had changed their minds about what was agreed document in the meeting of Friday 25th January 2019 concerning the texts of the same MOU. In response they said that they had not changed their minds but they argued that the document didn't reflect the spirit of the discussion. We advised them that there was no need to respond to the spirit of the meeting when the text to which agreed was

very clear," Nawakwi said.

"It was a strange coincidence that the issues on which they wanted to reopen the debate were exactly the same as the comments raised by the bishops' reactions in the Memorandum of Understanding. This level of hypocrisy was unacceptable. When the Opposition Alliance insisted on reopening the debate, we proposed to them that the verbatim recording be played to the meeting in order to settle the argument. At which stage the UPND president stated that if we went ahead to play the recording, he would walk away and the dialogue process will collapse. With that threat from the UPND president the meeting collapsed because it was clear that the meeting was unproductive."

She said it was clear the Opposition Alliance was trying to use the dialogue process as a vehicle for regime change, with the help of the church.

"Members of the press, we now clearly understand the maneuvers and capitulation by UPND and its alliance as stated in their press statement in paragraph 20 in the Opposition Alliance press Statement which reads: "We do not see the possible success of the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Process as a pre-requisite to our winning the 2021 general Elections, but rather as merely complimentary. A successful National Dialogue and Reconciliation process would ensure a peaceful transition of power in 2021, whereas a failed process would bring about a chaotic transition of power in 2021." From the foregoing, it is clear to see and understand that the National Dialogue is only important if it guarantees the United Party for National Development and its Alliance Parties a gateway to state House in 2021. It is a vehicle for regime change and nothing else," said Nawakwi.

CBU lecturers down tools, as UNZA announces delayed January salaries

By Thomas Mulenga

Copperbelt University and the University of Zambia lecturers say they will not report for work today at the two institutions, owing to their January 2019 delayed salaries.

In a letter addressed to Copperbelt University Registrar and signed by three Union Secretary Generals namely: Lukanga Kapeshi, Secretary General of Copperbelt University Senior Administrative, Professional and Technical Staff Union (CUSATSU), Willie Ngosa Secretary General of the Copperbelt University Academics Union (CBUAU) and Fernando Fulwe, Secretary General of the Copperbelt University and Allied Workers Union (CBUAUWU), the union leaders stated that their members would not be available for work on 4th February 2019 as they have not been paid their January salaries.

"This serves to inform your office that our members won't be available starting Monday 4th February 2019 as they will be engaged in other means to meet their daily needs until the Copperbelt

University pays their delayed 2019 January salaries. Our members have been and have continued reporting for work after 28th of January without being paid their 2019 January salaries. This scenario cannot be tolerated as our members do not have means of coming to work and need to find other means to fend for their families," read the letter. "Be reminded also that the employment Act cap 268 of the Laws of Zambia section 48 (1) in reference to payment of wages to employees provides that 'the wages of an employee shall be due (a) on the last day of the each month or (f) in accordance with the terms of the contract of service.' In the case of the Copper belt University employees, wages are to be paid on the 28th of each month unless with agreement to the contrary by the affected employees. The same act at section 48 (2) provides that 'the wages of the employee shall be paid at regular intervals not being later than the fifth day following the date upon which they fall due under subsection (1)."

The unions stated that it was therefore mandatory for the Copperbelt University

to pay every employee, whether unionised or in management, not later than 5 days after the 28th of every month. "Therefore, this law gives employees an option to agree to continue working without pay or withdraw labour to go and look for other means to meet his/her daily needs until the employer pays the due wages. We look forward to your urgent resolution of this matter," read the letter.

Meanwhile, the University of Zambia management has informed employees that the January salaries will be delayed. In an internal memo issued by acting registrar Rodgers Phiri, UNZA management has told employees that their salaries would be paid when government gives them the monthly grant.

"This serves to inform all members of staff of the University of Zambia that the January 2019 salaries will be delayed and will be paid as soon as the grant is received. The inconvenience caused is deeply regretted. We thank you in advance for your usual cooperation on this issue," read the memo.



PATRIOTIC FRONT



Why we deserve your vote *Leaving no one behind*

PF ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME NUMBER 5:

“IMPROVED ACCESS TO DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS”

By Hon Davies Mwila

Introduction

In the last article we highlighted the achievements of the Patriotic Front (PF) Government in line with the PF Manifesto and the Seventh National Development Plan 7NDP, concerning “improving access to domestic, regional and international markets” with the aim of diversifying the economy and attaining Zambia’s Vision 2030 objective of becoming a “prosperous middle-income country by 2030”.

As we continue from there, it is also important to note that connecting of African major cities by road, rail and air including through establishment of national airlines is not unique to Zambia only. For example, according to the 2019 African Economic Outlook by the African Development Bank (2019: xx):

“Roads, ports, railways, pipelines, and telecommunications have always been important for African integration. And recently, China and the African Union Commission signed a far-reaching agreement within the framework of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 to link all African capitals by road, rail, and air transport. By reducing trade costs, new roads, railways, and ports are intended to improve connections across cities, accelerate urbanization, and encourage regional integration. A virtuous cycle leads from investments in hard infrastructure to increased trade that in turn makes further investments profitable. By contrast, poorly functioning logistics markets lead to a vicious circle of low trade volume and high trade costs. The quality and quantity of hard infrastructure are key determinants of trade costs.”

Therefore, by connecting domestic and regional cities by road, rail, and air transport including the establishment of a national airline; the PF Government is consistent with prescriptions under the 7NDP and within the framework of the AU Agenda 2063. More importantly, through transport infrastructure development, the PF Government is improving trade facilitation as well as maximizing on the above-mentioned virtuous cycle benefits while also; simultaneously eliminating the vicious circle impediments of low trade volume and high trade costs mentioned above.

Additionally, in order to further improve trade facilitation through transport infrastructure development, the PF Government under President Lungu is currently implementing numerous road construction and rehabilitation projects such as the Link Zambia 8000 aimed at Land-Linking Zambia with her neighbors by restoring over 8,000 KM of roads across the country over a period of five (5) to eight (8) years. Particularly, the PF Government will, through the Link Zambia 8000 effectively link Zambia to the trade markets of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola – thereby accelerating economic diversification and the attainment of Vision 2030.

In addition to the above road project, the PF Government

under President Lungu is rehabilitating the Chinsali to Nakonde Border Road in order to facilitate increased trade domestically and with the East African corridor, through the provision of faster and safer movement of goods and people along this important trading route. More specifically, Government, through the Road Development Agency (RDA), has signed two (02) contracts for the rehabilitation of the Great North Road from Chinsali to Nakonde in Muchinga Province, which has been divided into Lot 1 and Lot 2. Lot 1, from Chinsali to Isoka, a 103 kilometre stretch has been awarded to China State Construction Engineering Limited at a contract sum of K 785,773,382. 49 and Lot 2, with a stretch of 107 from Isoka to Nakonde has been awarded to China Railway Seventh Group Co. Zambia Limited at a contract sum of K713, 866,768.53.

Lot 2 also includes the urban section of the road to the border with Tanzania. The project is being financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) which is contributing US Dollar 193Million, Africa Growing Together Fund US Dollar 50Million, and US Dollar 12.76 million from the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ). Government, through RDA, will complete the rehabilitation of the Chinsali to Nakonde Road within 40 months. The scope of works includes but is not limited to: clearing and grubbing, earthworks, bituminous surfacing related works; and road signage and ancillary works. Further to this, the road carriageway will be widened from the current 6.1 metres to 7.0 metres and will include a 2.0 metre wide hard shoulder in order to enhance safety. In addition to the main civil works, the entire project also includes several other components such as the rehabilitation of 50 kilometres of feeder roads in Chinsali and Isoka Districts which are currently under procurement; the planting of 10,000 trees along the project road, and sinking of 15 boreholes at various locations in the surrounding areas along the corridor. The construction of this road will also significantly reduce the loss of human lives and damage to goods and vehicles as a result of the bad state of the road.

Another major road construction and rehabilitation project is the Ndola to Lusaka Dual Carriageway, which upon completion, shall boost inclusive economic development as a result of enhanced domestic trade through more efficient flow of goods on this strategic domestic and regional trade route.

In line with the 7NDP, the PF Government is also improving trade facilitation through effective and efficient implementation of the One-Stop Border Posts Establishment Programme (OSBP) to streamline cross-border trade processes. For example, Kasumbalesa Border, between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia, is the busiest transit border in Zambia and handles an average of 650 trucks per day. Through Kasumbalesa, Zambia’s main exports are sugar, cement, timber, mattresses, acid, mealie-meal, agricultural products, and cooking oil, among others. On the other hand, Zambia mainly imports mineral ores and concentrates from DRC destined for Konkola Copper

Mines and Chambishi Copper Smelter in the Copperbelt.

In order to expand the potential of this existing bilateral and regional trade through Kasumbalesa border, and enable faster movement of people, the Governments of Zambia and DRC signed an agreement to implement the One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) concept at Kasumbalesa Border. More so, the OSBP concept is being implemented by the PF Government at all other border posts including Nakonde border with the United Republic of Tanzania with the aim of improving trade facilitation with Tanzania and the East African economic hub as a whole.

Among other ongoing projects under the OSBP is establishment of an OSBP at Zombe-Kasesya Border in Northern Province between Tanzania and Zambia. Improved Trade Facilitation through securing Access to Export Markets & Enhancing Competitiveness.

The PF Government has successfully secured new markets for various Zambian products. For example, in 2018, the PF Government created a taskforce comprising of Ministries of Livestock and Fisheries, Agriculture, Commerce, Trade and Industry as well as representatives from the private sector. The aim of the taskforce was to develop a roadmap that will help expedite the process of goat and sheep commercialization in Zambia for export to Saudi Arabia, among other markets.

Under this agreement facilitated by the PF Government, Saudi Arabia shall be importing one million (1,000,000) goats and fresh vegetables on a monthly basis from Zambia.

In addition, the PF Government has also secured a new market for the export of Organic Honey to China. Currently, Zambia’s annual honey production stands at 2,500 tonnes whereas the country currently exports only 1,000 tonnes to the European and African markets, which leaves a surplus of 1,500 tonnes. However, the new market to China secured by the PF Government has the export potential in excess of 3,000 tonnes of Organic Honey. This new export market for Organic Honey in China was secured after the signing of an export protocol by President Edgar Lungu and Chinese President, Xi Jinping. Further to this, the PF Government has expanded and consolidated trade relations with regional partners such as DRC and Angola, among others. As a result, Zambia’s non-copper merchandise exports have steadily grown to traditional and new markets. More specifically, agriculture exports such as sugar, tobacco, wheat, soybean and maize have witnessed aggregate growth in the period under review.

CONCLUSION

As can be deduced from the forgoing, the PF Government in line with PF Manifesto and the 7NDP, has successfully implemented various programmes and recorded notable successes in improving access to domestic, regional and international markets as well as effectively implementing the National Industrial and the National Trade Policies towards the attainment of Vision 2030.

The Author is Patriotic Front Secretary General



POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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The looting continues: explaining the response to Congo's chaotic election

On 30 December 2018, voters in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) went to the polls to choose a successor to President Joseph Kabila who had been in power since 2001. The election featured 21 presidential candidates though only three were frontrunners. These included Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary of the ruling People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy, Felix Tshisekedi of the main opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress, and Martin Fayulu from the Dynamic of Congolese Political Opposition. It was not initially clear who had emerged as a victor. A week before the country's electoral commission announced the results, the Roman Catholic Church, a powerful body in Congolese society, heavily hinted that Fayulu had won the poll. The organisation cited evidence collected from its parallel vote tabulation, having deployed thousands of election observers throughout the country, as the basis for its conclusion. Heightened tension followed, worsened by the United States' decision to deploy troops to neighbouring Gabon to quell any possible violence arising from the declaration of the official results. On 10 January 2019, the electoral commission announced that Tshisekedi, son of the recently deceased veteran politician Etienne Tshisekedi, had won the election, after he polled 38 percent of the total vote, four points ahead of Fayulu. Shadary finished a distant third at 23 percent.

Fayulu immediately rejected the results as fraudulent and accused Kabila of having struck a favourable deal with Tshisekedi in order to deny him the presidency. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) both backed Fayulu's claims and either called for the formation of Government of National Unity or a recount of the results. Amidst mounting fears of electoral violence, Fayulu filed a petition against Tshisekedi's election, one that was eventually dismissed by Congo's Constitutional Court a few days before Tshisekedi was sworn in on 24 January 2019.

Now that the dust has settled on Congo's chaotic election, this is an opportune moment to reflect on and interrogate the enthusiasm that greeted the outcome from some quarters. Why did SADC demand for the creation of a government of national unity even before the legal avenues for resolving disputed elections were exhausted? What explains the AU's reluctance to endorse Tshisekedi's election? Are we seeing a welcome change of attitude towards the quality of democratic elections from SADC and the African Union? It is my contention that SADC and the AU's interest in Congo had little to do with the undemocratic conduct of the elections; narrow and partisan interests drove the response of the two organisations to Congo's chaotic election. To better understand this point, it is important to identify the relevant personalities in charge of the two institutions at the time and to examine the motivations for their involvement in Congo. What is important to note from the onset though are two things that remain unchanged: the dismal role of regional bodies in endorsing democratic standards and that Congo will continue to be treated as a free for all pillage by regional and world powers.

Soon after the official results were declared, SADC released a statement on the disputed elections, calling for a negotiated settlement, which would culminate into the formation of a unity government. To avoid misinterpreting what SADC said, it is worth quoting the organisation's statement at length: "Given the strong objections to the provisional results of the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has called on all political leaders to consider a negotiated political settlement for a Government of National Unity. SADC draws the attention of the Congolese politicians

to similar arrangements that were very successful in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya where governments of national unity created the necessary stability for durable peace. SADC, therefore, encourages all parties to enter into an apolitical process towards a government of national unity in order to enhance public confidence, build bridges and reinforce democratic institutions of government and electoral process for a better Congo. SADC has taken note of the strong doubts cast on the poll outcomes by the Roman Catholic Church in the DRC, which deployed 40,000 monitors, the opposition 'Lamuka coalition, and the observers and, therefore, feels a recount would provide the necessary re-assurance to both winners and losers."

The Western media immediately latched onto the statement, presenting it as the position of the regional body and paying little attention to its source. Although the statement was issued in the name of SADC, it in fact came from Zambia's President Edgar Lungu who chairs the regional body's politics, defence and security section. Until recently, I believed, like many people, that the statement was a product of regional consensus reached after intense deliberations. However, two well-placed SADC senior leaders familiar with the development told me in separate meetings that other regional leaders did not share Lungu's position. As one of them put it, 'We do not know where that statement came from because that was not the position of SADC. It was President Lungu's view and he used his position as Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security to commit the whole bloc to what was, at best, Zambia's position.' All things considered, it is even likely that the supposed author of the statement, Lungu, knew little of the statement. First, at the time of its release, he was undergoing a reportedly prolonged medical review at a hospital in South Africa, rendering his participation in intense meetings doubtful. Second, Lungu has been a fierce opponent of unity governments and it is implausible that he would advocate a form of political settlement that he has previously done so much to oppose including back home.

Who then was the actual author of the supposed SADC statement on Congo's election? We may never know for certain the answer to this question. What is conceivable is that the SADC statement calling for a unity government in Congo was the work of a faction in Lungu's administration that supported Fayulu's candidature. It is worth noting that Lungu's administration maintains a close relationship with Moses Katumbi, the Western-backed, exiled ex-governor of the mineral-rich Katanga region who was prevented from standing in the elections and consequently threw his support behind the candidature of Fayulu. In moving quickly to call for the creation of a unity government, Lungu, or those who acted in his name, may have sought to promote the interests of the Katumbi faction – get Fayulu in a power sharing deal that would have sought the incorporation of Katumbi and his allies into government. In so, doing they spoke in the name of SADC and consequently used the infrastructure of the regional body to serve sectional, partisan interests.

Similarly, partisan and sectional considerations appear to have been at the heart of the AU's response to Congo's election. This prospect assumes importance when one considers the fact that Paul Kagame, whose government has had longstanding interests in who leads Congo, currently leads the continental body. After the publication of the election results, Kagame, using his position as AU chairperson, very rapidly called for a meeting that raised grave doubts about the poll outcome, demanded for a recount of the vote tally, and pledged to dispatch a delegation to Congo to resolve the post-election deadlock. Like Lungu tried to do with

SADC, Kagame masked his interest using his AU position. The Rwandan leader has a notorious history of intervention in Congo. It was his forces that brought to power Laurent Kabila, the immediate past president's father. Since falling out with his son, Joseph Kabila, Rwandese backed forces have caused chaos in the eastern part of the country. It is therefore pertinent to note how Kagame covertly came out in support of the opposition candidate Fayulu.

What clearly emerges from this foregoing discussion is a worrying development where interested parties deploy regional and continental bodies to serve sectional interests. How far this development goes remains to be seen. What is certain is that Congolese elections or for that matter disputed elections in general have never greatly exercised the conscience of SADC leaders or the AU. One might for example search in vain for any official statement on Zambia's 2016 polls or suggestions that a unity government be formed. It is also worth noting that various SADC members have longstanding interests in Congo. Angola and Zimbabwe, for instance, have both intervened militarily in Congo and in Zimbabwe's case its army, now effectively in charge of the country, has had extensive business interests in Congo. It is even likely that the Zimbabwean army's vicious rejection of the opposition Movement for Multiparty Change's victory in the 2008 election was motivated by the desire to secure the business interests of top military officials in the Congo. The sudden and close interests in the outcome of Congo's election point to the acute concerns by those involved that the opportunity for looting would be reduced under a Tshisekedi presidency or the spoils would be redistributed in a way that does not sufficiently benefit the current recipients.

Kagame and his ilk are of course only junior partners in the looting of Congo. They may have the boots on the ground and be more ready to intervene militarily but they certainly do not receive the largest share of the spoils. It is the same motivation to return a moderately stable Congo, stable enough that is, to facilitate continued plunder, that motivates the concerns of Western nations and multinationals. Congo from inception has been run by outside powers. Mobutu Sese Seko, the military dictator who ruled Congo from 1965 to 1997, was in power for such a long-time only because he received the backing of Western governments. As long as Mobutu allowed Western firms to loot the riches of Congo, Western governments never took issue with his dictatorship and lack of commitment to genuine democracy. Similarly, Laurent Kabila, who overthrew Mobutu in May 1997, was never committed to any democratic standards but he received the backing of Western countries for as long as he remained faithful to Western exploitation of Congo's wealth. The point is that Western countries, like SADC ones, have had no problems in recognising fraudulent elections anywhere on the continent as long as the new leader is one they see as better placed to serve their interests. The response of Western governments to the outcome of Congo's recent election should be understood in this context: the search for a pliant leader who would remain faithful to facilitating Western interests in the Congo.

The clearest loser in all this the Congolese people who have once again been denied the opportunity to elect a leader of their own choosing and one free from the influences of regional powers and Western countries and multinational corporations. Only one such leader has emerged in Congo's unhappy history. And the fate of Patrice Lumumba is well known. His death still haunts Congo. Any political figure who considers straying from the path of ruling Congo in the interests of the plunderers fears the same fate could befall them.

Two weeks ago Pastor Nevers Mumba was in India on a working vacation where he also addressed foreign investors. We got curious about his trip and we called to ask him if it was a PF government-sponsored trip. He said at the end of every year, he travels out of the country, and this particular programme in India was sponsored by an American friend of his from Pennsylvania. A few things surprised us about this development, but we withheld our opinion at that point because it was not within our space to poke our noses into someone's private life.

But when Pastor Nevers Mumba returned from India, his first public statement was to complain that he, and his friends who have served this country as vice-presidents are languishing because they were not given enough money to sustain their livelihoods after they left their jobs.

"Without disturbing the spirit of mourning [the late Lupando Mwape], I wish to raise a pivotal issue which relates to the plight of former vice-presidents in Zambia. Although Vice Presidents actually act as President and play a significant role in the management of the nation, the occupants of that office have zero sustainable benefits once they leave office. The only sure retirement benefit has been a state funeral at death," wrote Pastor Mumba, adding that he was speaking on behalf of others and not to benefit himself.

We can't hold back our opinion anymore. We want to agree in order to disagree with Pastor Mumba. We want to thank him for bringing up the topic that will enable us

Pastor Mumba should not complain, he buried his talent



Diggers! is published by NEWS DIGGERS MEDIA LTD
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question the justification of certain benefits that some government leaders take home after retirement. But first, we would like to weigh in on Pastor Mumba's personal predicament, and it doesn't matter if he was talking for himself or for others.

It's like us at News Diggers suggesting that government must consider paying a percentage of salaries for private media journalists because they also serve the public; then claim that we are not talking for ourselves but for others. People will know that we are fooling them. Why is former vice-president Enock Kavindele not the one complaining? Why is this not coming from former vice-president Godfrey Miyanda? It is because Mr Mumba's colleagues are living within their means.

We recall that when Pastor Mumba was at the peak of building his brand in God's ministry, he was blessed with a huge house in a respected Kitwe suburb called Riverside. But he doesn't own that

House anymore. As far as we know, he sold it. With the grace of God on his side, Pastor Mumba got an opportunity to serve as vice-president of Zambia. He had everything at his disposal, and didn't need to spend his money on anything.

When Pastor Mumba was relieved of his duties as Vice-President of Zambia, he didn't leave with an empty briefcase and a Bible under his armpits; he was paid gratuity like every other appointee of the President who qualifies. This gratuity was calculated equal to his pay, and his pay was calculated equal to his job.

If this money was not given to Pastor Mumba, he had, and still has the right to sue government and demand his dues. Any cheap lawyer can easily win him that matter if that was the case. But the truth is that he got what was due to him.

Pastor Mumba doesn't drink alcohol. He doesn't go to nightclubs to party with girls. So what did he do with his money? As far

as we know he used part of his money to buy some property. But does he still own those properties? We do not think so.

When Pastor Mumba was serving as Zambia's High Commissioner to Canada, he was getting a decent salary, plus allowances. When he was recalled, he didn't just return with a fancy gigantic pickup truck that he was shining with around the city; he was paid gratuity for the period he served abroad - like everyone else. What did he do with that money? We don't know, maybe he can tell us.

But what we know for sure is that on his return from Canada, there wasn't a house he could decently return to. Government accommodated him at Fallsway Villas, where he used to call us for press briefings as he took over the MMD presidency from Mr Rupiah Banda. Later, a house was found for him to rent in Kabulonga.

Today if Pastor Mumba is struggling to sustain himself, the blame shouldn't be on

government. Not every Zambian can have the privilege of serving in these government positions, so we can't see why the privileged few should demand that government sustains their livelihoods until they die. This was a service to the people and not an endless reign of a monarch in a kingdom. The Zambian taxpayers did their part to thank Pastor Mumba for serving them as Vice-President, it was up to him to stay afloat by investing wisely.

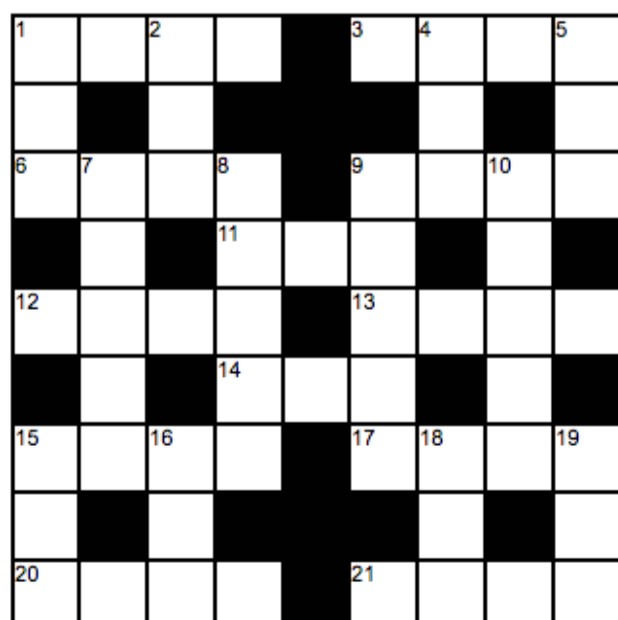
We can't preach to Pastor Mumba about anything that the Lord says because he knows better. But we can remind him when we think his memory has faltered. The Bible in Mathew 25:14 teaches us about a Master who decided to test the industrious abilities of his servants. Before embarking on a journey, the Master called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one, he gave five talents, to another two, and to the last one he gave just one talent - each according to his ability. The other two went and invested, and they

reaped profits which they were able to report back to their returning Master. But the one who got only one talent had gone to bury it underground and he had nothing to point at, claiming it was too little and too risky to invest. This servant was thrown into the darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Unfortunately, this is the situation that Pastor Nevers Mumba finds himself in. He is weeping and gnashing his teeth from the wilderness because he didn't invest as wisely as his friends. If Pastor Mumba had invested wisely, he would not be relying on his friend to sponsor his end of year vacation. That friend of his has never been a Vice President of his country, how are they able to sponsor the former vice-president of Zambia on vacation? It should be Nevers sending money from his massive investments to his friend.

That said; we are not in a position to suggest that Pastor Mumba is broke. We have no access to his bank records and we don't know what assets he owns. But we are simply trying to illustrate the dependency syndrome that most of us Zambians have. We are quick to blame the system for any misery that we face, even if we are entirely to blame. It's the "boma iyanganepe" mentality that is at play in Pastor Mumba's head.

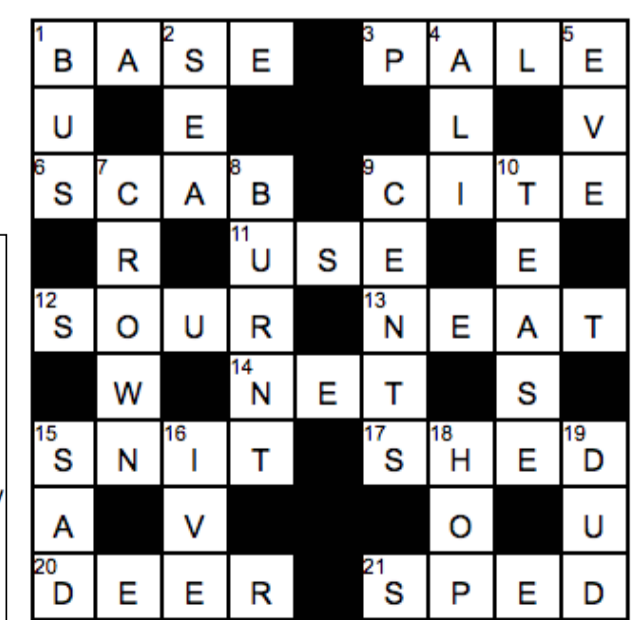
Crossword puzzle 285



"Be practical as well as generous in your ideals. Keep your eyes on the stars, but remember to keep your feet on the ground."
- Theodore Roosevelt

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1. Impale | 1. Yak |
| 3. Drapes over the head | 2. Harry Potter's friend |
| 6. Belonging to Ben | 4. Hooting bird |
| 9. Happy | 5. Father |
| 11. Roofing material | 7. Obliterate |
| 12. Twosome | 8. Stroke the strings |
| 13. Small insects | 9. Lollipop flavor |
| 14. Umpire | 10. Time ___ Time: repeatedly |
| 15. Spore | 15. Young girl |
| 17. Flubs | 16. Toupee, slangly |
| 20. Racing sled | 18. Groove |
| 21. Cook by boiling slowly | 19. Dam |

Solutions to puzzle 284



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.

VJ's observation on youths aspiring to get into politics for riches

Editor,

"Very true, and it is worse with the current regime." - Dennis Tyson Phiri

"VJ's observation is on

the mark. Politics has become synonymous with financial upgrades as opposed to serving. That's the reason why we have so many bad politicians. They don't understand service!" - Mwaba

"That's the only lucrative job in Zambia." - Benjamin Kajoba

"Which other way do you want to get rich? Money is in government as you will be getting tenders and contracts because you are a cadre! Ordinary people don't get these contacts and tenders. They even have influence on private companies that are told to cancel the tender or contact once you are not a ruling party cadre. So, which way forward? Be a cadre and you will have all the plots to sell after being given by the council." - Chiundule Wansimbi

"Politics is one way of getting rich fast and many politicians gets into politics to serve their own interest instead of the people who put them into authority. We tend to have leadership crisis and youths have been reduced to cadres, even those who are educated just used as ladders to get wealth for themselves." - Charles Chiluba Chuutu

"Today, a die-hard minister offered to pay Kalusha's K110,000 FIFA fine as simply as if he was buying chicken and chips for a former prisoner! Youngsters see that people become rich overnight in modern politics - just like they also buy leaked exam papers - kids aren't encouraged to work hard, but instead sent to political standoffs." - Joe Mumba Kawimbe

"This trend was started by MMD, the party you helped to ascend to power. It's is going to be hard to change the mentality, VJ." - Sam Imusho



Siliya's claim that Mwila will meet Prime TV to resolve differences

Editor,
"That's the problem with PF when their member misbehaves in public they will try to make sense out the nonsense. In anything they will find someone to blame. That's why we always say that PF is a failed product because blame is linked to failure." - Dennis Tyson Phiri

"Dora, your Mwila got it wrong. He lost the plot! We all saw him throw the toys out of his pram. Just help him to build a good image for himself." - GT Tembo

"In PF, making blunders mean nothing. What every normal person criticizes is seen as an attack and trying to gain political

mileage because they can't differentiate between the societal norms and abnormal. This mafia type of defending ones blunders is what makes them untrainable. Look at Davis Mwila. Does he look like someone who understands amicable discussion?" - Sarah Musongole

"Madam, we already know that your party has issues with the opposition and you will never accept that people will disagree." - Kasanda Bwalya

"After being humiliated like that I would ask Davis Mwila to publicly apologize as a precondition for any dialogue if I were Prime TV." - Joseph Chisenga

DIGGERS' OPINION: Mwila is repeating Kambwili's stupid mistake on media

Dear Editor,

"I always love the Diggers' analysis with all my heart and soul. Kudos!" - Stan Sichita

"This is very well articulated. One would have thought that by now, and at his age, ba Mwila would have learned the basics of democracy. Anyway, I now agree that stupidity is not the privilege of the young ones only." - Jim Amos Mumba

"Ba News Diggers! Keep it up, please!" - Temfuma Sam

"Point, ND! Can't agree with you more." - Chad Mupila

"Unfortunately, the other journalists decided to stay instead of walking out and boycotting the event in support of their friends that were chased. We lack that unity; they should know better that whatever affects one journalist, affects all!" - James M. Chiti

"I think that perhaps one of the biggest problem with PF is that they have some hot headed people in very high positions. With cool heads things would certainly be smoother for both the party and the nation. Our leaders should embrace the values of democracy if they want a better Zambia." - Mwaba Mwaba



Russia suspends nuclear missile treaty after US move

President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said Russia was suspending its participation in a key Cold War-era missile treaty in a mirror response to a US move the day before. Moscow and Washington have long accused the other of violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces agreement.

President Donald Trump last year announced plans to withdraw unless Russia fulfilled its obligations.

"Our American partners have announced they are suspending their participation in the deal, and we are also suspending our participation," Putin said of the agreement, following a US deadline for cooperation. Putin said during a televised meeting with foreign and defence ministers Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Shoigu that Russia would no longer initiate talks with the US on disarmament.

"We will wait until our partners have matured enough to conduct an equal,

meaningful dialogue with us on this important topic," the president said.

Brokered by US president Ronald Reagan with last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty ended a superpower buildup of warheads that had frightened Europeans.

It banned ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometres (300 to 3,400 miles).

The deal resolved a crisis

over Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals, but put no restrictions on other major military actors such as China.

President Donald Trump said Friday that Washington was starting a process to withdraw from the agreement in six months.

Trump said he would like to "get everybody in a big and beautiful room and do a new treaty," but in the meantime,

the United States "can't be put at a disadvantage."

- Disputed missile -

The US in December gave Moscow a 60-day deadline to dismantle missiles it said breached the agreement.

But Moscow has insisted the disputed 9M729 missile is allowed under the treaty. The defence ministry last month invited journalists and foreign military attaches to a briefing on the weapon system. *AFP*

Belgium agrees to host Ivory Coast ex-president Gbagbo



Belgium said Saturday it has agreed to host Ivory Coast ex-president Laurent Gbagbo pending a possible appeal against his acquittal by the International Criminal Court in The Hague on charges of crimes against humanity.

On January 15, the tribunal acquitted Gbagbo and his aide, Charles Ble Goude, on charges stemming from a wave of violence after disputed elections in the west African nation in 2010.

The following day, the court ruled there were no exceptional circumstances preventing the pair's release from detention in The Hague, and said they could be sent to a member country willing to accept them.

"It was a request from the court to host Mr Gbagbo simply because he has family in Belgium: his second wife, a child in Brussels," Foreign Minister Didier Reynders told RTBF, Belgium's public television channel.

"We have concluded that it is alright for him to stay in Belgium while on conditional release," he said, adding that the "conditions" of his stay would be discussed with the ICC including "limits" on Gbagbo's movements. *AFP*

Central African Republic reaches peace deal with rebels

The Central African Republic government and 14 armed groups struck a deal Saturday to end years of fighting that has killed thousands, the parties and a mediator said.

The deal, the seventh since 2012, was announced on Twitter by the government of President Faustin-Archange Touadera just a day after the African Union and UN-sponsored talks in

Khartoum were suspended amid disagreements over amnesty.

"A peace agreement has been reached," said the tweet.

"This agreement should be initialled tomorrow (Sunday) and its signing will take place in Bangui in a few days," the Tweet added.

Also on Twitter, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail

Chergui confirmed the breakthrough, adding some details of the pact still had to be ironed out.

"I am humbled to announce that with the exemplary cooperation I received from both the Government of the CAR and the 14 armed groups, we have secured a peace agreement today in the interest of the people of CAR."

Aboubakar Sidik,

spokesman for one of the main armed factions, the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic (FPRC) said: "We are happy a consensus has been reached on sticking points which were an amnesty (for militia fighters) and an inclusive government."

The talks, which started on January 24, were suspended repeatedly over several issues including rebel demands for an amnesty.

The armed groups also wanted the dissolution of the present government in favour of an interim regime led by someone from their side, according to a document obtained by AFP. Under Western pressure, Bangui has always refused pardons for warlords, several of whom are under UN sanctions or cited for human rights violations in UN reports.

A Special Criminal Court (CPS) has been set up in Bangui to judge people accused of crimes in the country since 2003, but has so far done little.

And despite the peace initiative, the violence has continued.

Since the talks started, the mainly Muslim Union for Peace (UPC) has notably

carried out several attacks on the central prefecture of Ouaka.

None of the six earlier accords struck between the parties have managed to restore stability.

The former French colony has more than 12,000 UN peacekeepers (MINUSCA) in the country.

But rights group Amnesty International has criticised their failure to stop a rebel attack that killed scores of civilians at a displacement camp in the central town of Alindao last November.

Central African Republic is rich in mineral resources but remains one of the world's poorest nations.

It has struggled to recover from a 2013 civil war that erupted when President Francois Bozize, a Christian, was overthrown by mainly Muslim Seleka rebels.

In response, Christians, who account for about 80 percent of the population, organised vigilante units dubbed "anti-Balaka" in reference to the balaka machetes used by Seleka rebels.

Thousands of people have died in the violence, 700,000 have been internally displaced, and another 570,000 have fled abroad. *AFP*

Nigeria's VP thanks crew after helicopter crash

Nigeria's vice-president has said he is "safe and sound" after surviving a helicopter crash as he was on his way to an election campaign rally.

Yemi Osinbajo also tweeted his thanks to the crew of the aircraft for the way they handled the situation in the central town of Kabba.

He and President Muhammadu Buhari are seeking re-election on 16 February.

Mr Buhari's main rival, Atiku Abubakar, tweeted his relief that the vice-president and his team were unhurt.

After the crash on Saturday afternoon, Mr Osinbajo, 61, continued on the

campaign trail for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, tweeting footage from a bus of him waving at the crowds.

Earlier, one of his aides posted a video showing people rushing to help at the crash site in Kogi state. Twelve people were on board the aircraft when it came down.

An investigation into the cause of the crash has been launched.

Caverton Helicopters, the company that owned the aircraft that crashed, said no-one was hurt in the incident and blamed "unusual weather conditions", according a statement quoted by local media.

Eyewitnesses say dust thrown up as the helicopter approached to land by the Kabba Township Stadium may have impaired the pilot's visibility. Some say one of the rotor blades detached from the mast as it was coming down. Mr Osinbajo, who is the pastor in charge of Lagos's Redeemed Christian Church of God and a former law professor, has proved a popular vice-president.

Correspondents say he is eloquent, unassuming and hardworking - and he has been admired for the way he has deputised for the 76-year-old president, who has suffered bouts of ill health over the last four years. *BBC*

There stigma after ban - Kalu



By Abraham Kalito

Zambia's most celebrated football star Kalusha Bwalya says he has faced a lot of stigma emanating from his reprieved ban from all soccer related activities, particularly because he is African.

First Secretary Press and Public Relations at the Zambian High Commission in South Africa Naomi Nyawali quoted Bwalya as saying that there were many things that influenced FIFA to ban him.

Nyawali stated that Bwalya said he would however make a positive contribution towards football following his reprieved ban.

"Zambia's Celebrated football icon Kalusha Bwalya says the reprieve of his two-year ban by FIFA appeals committee will allow him make positive contribution to football

administration. The 1998 African footballer of the year said his initial two-year ban from football administration was unimaginable as it prevented him from doing what he loves most. He said the period of his suspension was a difficult period for him and his family including people that have supported his football career. The Great Kalu said the earlier decision by FIFA to suspend him from football activities came as a shock to him, owing to the fact he had never faced any disciplinary action during his entire footballing life. He added that he was confident that the truth would prevail despite the stigma that is associated with Africans. He has since thanked the FIFA appeals committee for having listened to his case favorably. The Great Kalu also expressed his gratitude to government

officials, football administrators, football players and his former playmates for giving him strength and comfort during his suspension," read the statement.

"I was confident that the truth in the end would prevail, but you never know because there are so many things that can influence a decision and also coming from Africa, there is a lot of stigma that comes with it. I am glad it's over and I can get on with doing what I love the most and that is being involved in football and making a positive difference. Football is my life," Bwalya said.

Bwalya was speaking in Johannesburg, South Africa, following FIFA appeals committee decision to reprieve his two year ban which was slapped on him when he was found guilty of corruption.

Messi fitness in doubt ahead of cup clash against Real Madrid



Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde remains hopeful Lionel Messi will be fit to face Real Madrid on Wednesday, despite the striker feeling a "small problem" during Saturday's 2-2 draw with Valencia.

Barca face Madrid in the first leg of the Copa del Rey semi-finals and Valverde said Messi had felt some discomfort against Valencia, after scoring twice to salvage his team a point.

"We have to wait until tomorrow to do the tests to see how he is, like the other players," Valverde said. "I don't know too much more. We hope he can recover, just like the others."

Asked what the problem was, Valverde said: "I don't know, I would like to tell you more but I don't know exactly."

"He had a little problem, as some of the others

will have too. We will wait to see what the doctors tell us when they do the tests and we will look at it. I cannot guess anything but we imagine that it can't be too bad."

Messi's absence at the Camp Nou would be a blow to Barcelona, particularly with the Argentinian in such blistering form.

His double against Valencia means he has now scored in nine consecutive matches, while registering a total of 12 goals in that period.

Barca might also be cautious, given they have a testing month of fixtures ahead. They play Madrid three times in the next four weeks, twice in the cup and once in La Liga.

There will also be two legs against Lyon to negotiate in the last 16 of the Champions League. **AFP**



Hazard impressed by 'unbelievable' Higuain

Eden Hazard believes Gonzalo Higuain's first two goals for Chelsea in Saturday's 5-0 rout of Huddersfield are just the beginning for the Argentine ace, with whom he foresees a potentially lethal partnership in the Premier League run in.

The Belgian also scored a double against the Terriers as Maurizio Sarri's men bounced back from a 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Bournemouth in midweek that plunged the Italian's future into question.

Sarri worked with Higuain

when the Argentine scored a record 36 Serie A goals in a single season at Napoli.

And Higuain showed why he has a stellar scoring record over the past decade in Spanish and Italian football with two excellent finishes to open his Premier League account.

"He's a great striker. He's a bit less of a target man than (Olivier) Giroud, but he can hold the ball, he can play one touches. He's intelligent," said Hazard.

"In the box he's unbelievable. He will score more goals."

Victory lifted Chelsea back into the top four above Arsenal, who visit Manchester City on Sunday.

However, Chelsea face their own daunting run of fixtures in February with two clashes against City in the Premier League next weekend and the League Cup final as well a FA Cup tie against Manchester United and Tottenham visiting Stamford Bridge at the end of the month. **AFP**

FAZ sets up committee to raise \$10 million

By Abraham Kalito

Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) General Secretary Adrian Kazala says the association has unveiled a committee tasked to raise a \$10 million bond through a Special Purpose Vehicle.

And Kazala says the association has set April 13 as date for the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

In a statement, Sunday, Kazala said FAZ has set up a committee comprising eminent personalities to help raise \$10 million on behalf of the association.

"The Football Association of Zambia has set April 13, 2019 as the date for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

that will be preceded by provincial assemblies that will elect delegates to attend the conference. Provincial elections shall be held from 8th February, 2019 to 4th March, 2019. FAZ has also unveiled a committee that has been tasked to raise a \$10 million bond through a Special Purpose Vehicle. The committee comprises eminent personalities among them Chairperson Mr. Joseph Katema and former Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) Director Andrew Chipwende who will be vice chairperson," read the statement.

"Other members are Mr. Ngenda Nyambe, Davies Pwele, Kafula Mwiche, Malcom Jhala and Mr Victor

Sodala.

The Executive Committee also disclosed that FAZ shall receive the following funds from FIFA in 2019: a) One Million Dollars (Increased from 500,000 Dollars in 2018) for operational and football development expenditure. b) Two Million Dollars for infrastructure development. This infrastructure development which will be done in consultation with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Child Development, FAZ shall target upgrading stadia in Chipata, Kasama, Solwezi and Mansa."

Meanwhile Kazala said the association has identified five local

coaches including Under-23 assistant coach Bilton Musonda to be sent for professional training.

"FAZ has identified five coaches to be sent for training in Europe. The coaches that will be sent for training are Bilton Musonda, Noah Chivuta, Yonah Phiri, George Chilufya and Misheck Lungu. Another 3 UEFA B trained coaches will attend the CAF Pro training with 5 coaches to be drawn from various clubs in consultation with the ZAFCA earmarked for training (KNVB) in liaison with our partners Morocco. Further the Association has introduced provincial cups that will be open to all members in the provinces."

Rashford reaches Premier League milestone



Marcus Rashford became the second-youngest Manchester United player to reach 100 Premier League appearances, celebrating with the opening goal against Leicester.

The England international played his 100th league game for the Red Devils just 95 days past his 21st birthday. Only Ryan Giggs achieved the feat at a younger age, playing his 100th Premier League game at 21 years and 74 days old en route to becoming United's top appearance maker in the competition, with 632 appearances in the Premier League as well as 40 more in the old First Division.

Rashford has enjoyed a starring role in the United starting XI since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

took charge of the club in December and scored his sixth goal in eight league appearances since the former striker replaced Jose Mourinho in the dugout.

The forward's performances have earned rave reviews from his new boss, with Solskjaer claiming that Rashford is now one of the team's most important players.

"I'm delighted for him because he's coming on and he'll be a top, top player," Solskjaer told reporters at the end of December. "The way he's gone about this job, playing up top, the work rate he puts in, he's got everything."

"I'm really pleased that he'll get goals. But his work rate, all the work he puts in, that's a big pleasing thing for me - with the whole team, because we should never be outworked by anyone. And he's the catalyst. I'll have to slow him down at times."

Rashford's opening goal took his Premier League tally to 26 in the competition. Since his debut in February 2016, no United player has scored more goals than Rashford in the Premier League.

His return of eight league goals this season is also a career high, having improved on five goals in each of his first two seasons and then a seven-goal tally in 2017-18 under Mourinho.

Rashford's recent form also saw him named Manchester United's player of the month for January and earned him a nomination for the Premier League player of the month award.

Goal.com

FAZ SEEKS \$10M BOND



Trump prefers soccer for son over 'dangerous' gridiron

President Donald Trump said Sunday he would prefer his son to play soccer rather than American football, describing gridiron as "dangerous."

In an interview with CBS's "Face the Nation", which aired as millions of Americans prepare to watch the Super Bowl, Trump said he was concerned about

safety aspects of the sport.

Asked if he would let his 12-year-old son Barron to play gridiron, Trump replied: "It's a very tough question. If he wanted to? Yes. Would I steer him that way? No, I wouldn't."

Asked to elaborate, Trump revealed Barron played soccer, which is the most played

sport by youngsters in the United States yet remains in the shadow of basketball, American football and baseball.

"He's liking soccer," Trump said. "And a lot of people, including me, thought soccer would probably never make it in this country, but it really is moving forward rapidly." AFP

