



LUNGU GOES FOR SENIOR LAWYERS

...tells new LAZ boss to tame State Counsel who openly criticise him

We'll record 1,000 deaths per day if guidelines are not followed, warns Chitalu

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
HEALTH Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya says the country may record up to 20,000 health facility admissions and close to 1,000 COVID-19 deaths per day if people continue flouting the health regulations. *Story page 6*

LWSSC wasted K13m on faulty meters - AG

By Natasha Sakala
GOVERNMENT institutions were owing Lusaka Water Sewerage and Sanitation Company (LWSSC) over K133 million in unpaid water bills as at end of 2018, according to the Auditor General's report on the accounts of water and sanitation companies. *Story page 3*

Respect institutions of governance, Kapeso tells PF cadres

Story page 5



President Edgar Lungu (r) talks to Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) president Abyudi Shonga after a meeting at State House in Lusaka yesterday - Picture by Salim Henry. *Story page 6*

Revelations in Rwanda issue deserve serious action from govt, IDC - TIZ

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Exploit domestic revenue potential to avoid debt contraction, IMF tips govt

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FREE PRESS INITIATIVE (Z)

By Mirriam Chabala
HIGHER Education Loans and Scholarship Board (HELSEB) chief executive officer Ireen Chirwa says the Board has recovered a total of K65.4 million since it rolled out its recovery scheme in January, 2018.

And Chirwa has asked beneficiaries of the loan

Loans Board recovers K65.4m

scheme not to wait to be followed up before they can start paying back, saying the funds being recovered will be used to sponsor other students at public universities.

Speaking at a media

briefing in Lusaka, Monday, Chirwa disclosed that K18.61 million had been recovered between January and June, this year, and disclosed that the number of institutions remitting on behalf of their

employees had increased from one in 2018 to 13 by the second quarter of 2020.

"We have recovered a total of K65.4 million from time recoveries started in 2018 and the breakdown is: K8.6 million was collected in the last quarter of 2018, in 2019, January to December, we collected K38.13 million and between January, this year, and 30th June, we have collected K18.61 million. We are projecting to recover a total of K50 million by the end of this year. The Board has approached 43 other employers in the second quarter of 2020 for more recoveries. So, this will enable us to start recovering from an additional 1,553 beneficiaries by the end of August. We have provided support in this academic year (2019/2020), a total of 1,679 students in five public universities and the expenditure on these students is estimated at K33 million, which is within the K50 million projected from loan recoveries in 2020," Chirwa said.

She, however, urged beneficiaries of the loan scheme to start remitting the borrowed funds without waiting to be called upon.

"They don't need to wait for us to approach their

employers; when one reads our Act, it actually gives a loan beneficiary an opportunity to approach as soon as they are able to start paying back. Everyone has a one-year grace period after they leave their institution of learning, either by graduating or any other means. But they don't have to wait until the end of the grace period; they can approach us any time as soon as they are able to pay back. We need these funds to support other students and waiting for us to approach the beneficiaries, who already know that they are under obligation to pay back, has sort of slowed down what we should have been recovering. Though we have recorded success, we should have actually recovered much more if the loan beneficiaries were not waiting for us to approach them," she explained.

And Chirwa said the Board had no challenges with collecting the money because deductions were done through the employers using data at NAPSA.

"For now, I think we are recording success because of the recovery through employers. For as long as someone is getting a salary, the employers have a mandate to deduct and remit. We

are careful to discuss with the HR (Human Resource) departments of these employers on the provisions of the law in case they deduct and don't remit, so we keep reminding each other. We have sufficient numbers of the people, which we have been given by NAPSA of both those in formal employment and those in informal. So, as soon as we are done with those in formal employment, the next target are those that are self-employed. And we have provisions of the law that we will be able to use in case of non-compliance," she said.

"So, I think so far, we are okay in terms of compliance and there are actually some individuals, about 16, who have said they would like to pay in a shorter period. We have provided for a repayment mode, but we are also giving information to the beneficiaries that the longer they take to pay back, the more they pay in terms of interest. So, it is to their advantage to pay back within the shortest period possible and we are explaining the harmonization that we are using. The compliance for now is good, especially that we are doing it through employers."

Meanwhile, Chirwa hoped that more students living with disabilities would be able to apply for loans under the 10 per cent provision for people living with disabilities considering that a lot of sensitization had been done.

"In terms of students living with disabilities, before we introduced a new criterion of selection last year, we were not able to segment which students were living with disabilities. But starting from last year, we've started recording the number of students that are living with disabilities even by way of changing our forms. Our forms now have a clause where a student living with disabilities is able to tick and also tell us the kind of disability that they have. So, we have been able to segment the students that we are awarding with loans. And for this academic year, we gave out 20 student loans to students that are at the University of Zambia, another four at Kwame Nkrumah University and six at the Copperbelt University. Unfortunately, we didn't record any for Chalimbana, Kapasa Masaka and Mukuba University. So, we are hoping that with the sensitization that we've done, we should have more students with disabilities that should be able to apply for our loans because we have a 10 per cent allocated to students living with disabilities," said Chirwa.

"The criterion I talked about is such that we have the first 30 per cent given to meritorious students, so everyone is able to compete in the first 30 per cent. Then the next 30 per cent is given to students who are coming from rural areas. The next 30 per cent is given to female students and then the last 10 per cent is given to students living with disabilities. But so far, the 10 per cent has not been exhausted by students living with disabilities. So, we end up giving the remaining percentage to the meritorious category."

DPP proposes penalties for sudden case withdrawals

By Mirriam Chabala

DIRECTOR of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Lillian Siyuni has proposed an amendment to the law to introduce penalties for people with a tendency of recanting or withdrawing court cases after being bribed by suspects.

In an interview, Siyuni lamented that the tendency by victims to withdraw abruptly was terribly affecting her work due to the huge waste of time spent on cases that ended up closed.

"Sometimes what we experience is that when we call witnesses in pre-trial, they will say what's on the statement. But when you take the matter to court, they totally change their statement. I have experienced a case where this family lost their child, their child died. This is a family in Kabwe, so they went and reported the matter to the police and the police went and exhumed the body of this girl. But when the matter went to court a few months later, I think those times it used to take long to take the matter to court, so I started interrogating these people (the family members) and they expressed total ignorance of the matter. They started asking me: 'whose daughter died? Which one is that? Our daughter didn't die.' They totally refused, everyone refused! So, you can see that each time we take a matter to court, we are taking it on the belief that there is evidence, but then some people just go and change their statements in court like the way that family I have told you about did. So, we do take cases to court, but sometimes people don't just say what they have said in the statement to us," Siyuni said.

Asked why people were recanting and withdrawing cases, Siyuni suspected it was due to poverty.

"You know how people are, like for the example I gave you about the family in Kabwe...later on, I got to know from their lawyer that they had been paid off cattle. So, it was the life of a child for cattle. So, they were given cattle by the defence and so it was settled. There were no threats, but they settled it that way. But in other cases, the reason people change their statement is actually

because of love. Most of the withdrawn cases we have recorded are gender-based cases and, mostly, it's an issue of love or economics. In some cases, people get worried that if the breadwinner goes to court and they are tried and jailed, then the whole family will suffer. We've even had cases where a child is defiled in a family and then the family just sits down and make sure that the child disappears, so this child is sent to the village where they cannot be accessed. So, when that happens, we have no choice, but to discontinue or withdraw the case," she said.

Siyuni, however, insisted that it would be better if a penalty was introduced for wasting the state's time.

"We are thinking that maybe we should introduce a penalty such that if I am a woman and I have been beaten by my husband and then I go and report to the police and the police investigate and then I withdraw later, we are thinking that maybe people should start paying us. So, we are thinking that maybe we should ensure that once you go and withdraw your statement, you are going to pay the State, and the State includes police. So, maybe we should start quantifying now to say, 'nobody should be wasting time.' Instead of us looking at other matters, we are busy looking at your matter, which just ends up being withdrawn," said Siyuni.

"But this is just a suggestion anyway because it goes back to law reforms again. It can only be implemented once the law is changed to allow for people to be paying for wasting time (the DPP's time). The law, currently, doesn't allow for that to happen, so it's just a suggestion. But we really feel that could help a lot, for GBV cases especially because some women, when they come to withdraw cases, you can even wonder. Someone who nearly died comes back to say, 'my husband can't do this.' So, it is our view that perhaps we should consider that if people come back to withdraw a case after reporting, they should be charged so that we stop people from withdrawing cases anyhow, especially that in some cases their lives are at risk."



President Edgar Chagwa Lungu (r) talks to LAZ president Abyudi Shonga after a meeting at State House in Lusaka on Tuesday, July 21, 2020. Picture by Salim Henry

CSPR fears poverty reduction projects will slow as budget deficit widens

By Ulande Nkomeshu

THE Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) has called on government to create a sinking fund specifically meant for poverty reduction programmes to cushion vulnerable Zambians' hardships.

In an interview, CSPR programmes manager Chimuka Nachibinga said the proposed fund would ensure that no money meant for social protection programmes was diverted to other sectors or functions, such as debt servicing.

He observed that the increase in the country's budget deficit to K17.2 billion from K14.8 billion meant that funds allocated to social protection programmes would reduce and be diverted to debt servicing.

"What government needs to do is actually come up with the sovereign fund or sinking fund, specifically that is supposed to be channelled towards these important sectors that bring about economic development in the country. So, if we come up with a specific sinking fund, it means that we

are trying to reinforce those economic sectors that we think can bring about economic growth and also the social sectors in the country, meaning that even if we have high levels of debt, government will be compelled to ensure that there is money, which is channelled to those sectors that have been reinforced as compared to how it is now. In terms of policies, we are hoping that as far as social protection is concerned, we are hoping that by the end of this year, we are going to have the Social Protection Bill passed so that it becomes an Act that will compel government to ensure that resources are safeguarded that are supposed to be channelled towards social protection programmes," Nachibinga said.

"As we speak now, the proposed Bill is with the Ministry of Justice making headways to Cabinet. So, we are very hopeful that maybe that Bill goes through, then definitely, we will see social programmes being reinforced. As things are right now, I think the social protection programmes are mostly affected due

to the fact that government, through the Ministry of Finance, is trying to rearrange the 2020 budget and most of those resources that have been gotten from other sectors, definitely, are being channelled to the health sector because of the adverse effects of COVID-19. Our recommendation is that despite the COVID-19 pandemic that has come in, we need to step up in terms of fighting the high levels of inequality in the country because, definitely, a number of people have fallen into poverty levels."

He said that the increased budget deficit would also negatively affect several other sectors of the country's economy and reduce disposable incomes.

"So, basically, the increased issues of budget deficit means that government needs to look for resources somewhere and that will mount pressure on debt accumulation, and if we add on to our debt, then, definitely, we are crowding out spending to other sectors when it comes to issues of debt payment. So, it means that we are actually putting

more pressure on our economy when it comes to issues of liquidity. So, you find that with less liquidity in the economy, there are so many sectors that are affected. For example, one sector that is going to be affected is the small-scale industries that produce, locally-manufactured goods in terms of their production," said Nachibinga.

"Secondly, in terms of demand for goods and services because people will not have disposable income; it will become difficult for them to be able to demand for goods and services. When it comes to allocation of resources budget-wise towards the social sectors, you will find that the social sectors will be highly affected because most of the resources will be channelled towards debt repayment. You will also find that sectors, such as education, social protection will definitely be affected. Generally, economic growth will be affected because much of the resources will be channelled into debt servicing compared to channelling them to economic pillars that may bring about economic growth in the country."

By Natasha Sakala
 GOVERNMENT institutions were owing Lusaka Water Sewerage and Sanitation Company (LWSSC) over K133 million in unpaid water bills as at end of 2018, according to the Auditor General's report on the accounts of water and sanitation companies.

And the report has also revealed that the company had to uninstall 8,836 prepaid meters valued around K13 million due to faulty batteries resulting in wasteful expenditure.

According to the report, LWSSC, during the period under review, was owed about K267 million in unpaid water bills, majority of debtors being government institutions.

"According to LWSSC commercial policy, a customer is expected to pay the water bills within a period of fourteen (14) days after they have received the bill. However, a review

LWSSC wasted K13m on faulty meters – AG

of records availed for audit revealed that the Company was owed amounts totaling K266,512,300 in unpaid water bills some of which had been outstanding since 2016. Commercial Customers K37,233,903; Domestic Customers K95,826,311; and GRZ Institutions K133,452,085 bringing it to a total of K266,512,299," the report read.

And the report disclosed that the company spent over K14 million wastefully through the purchase of faulty prepaid meters, and a vacuum tanker that did not serve their purpose.

"On 1st December 2015, LWSSC signed a contract with Infotron Zambia Limited for the supply of 9,000 prepaid meters at a contract sum of

K13,479,767 and the contract sum had been paid in full. According to Clause No. 13 of the contract, the battery which was to be embedded in the prepaid meter was supposed to have a lifespan of at least five (5) years. However, it was observed that as at 31st December 2019, out of the 9,000 meters installed, batteries for 8,836 meters valued at K13,234,136 were

found to be faulty before the expiry of the five year life span. Consequently, the meters were uninstalled resulting in wasteful expenditure," the report read.

"On 29th May 2017, LWSSC engaged Peace Corps Investment Ltd to supply a vacuum tanker at a cost of K2,091,051 with a delivery period of eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks. The tanker was

delivered on 28th February 2018 and the supplier had been paid the whole contract sum. Contrary to the clauses of the contract, the following were observed: The supplier delivered a vacuum tanker that had been used and had a mileage coverage of 20,000 Km at the time of delivery; The Company paid the supplier in full on 7th March 2018 including the 10% acceptance

fee despite the vacuum tanker not meeting the specifications in clause 28.1.52; There was no evidence that the supplier had provided the 10% performance security. As at 31st December 2019, twenty-two (22) months after delivery, the tanker had never been used and was parked at LWSSC premises as management had rejected the vacuum tanker."

Continues on P5

Lungu is our best-selling candidate for 2021 - East PF

By Mirriam Chabala
 EASTERN Province PF chairman Andrew Lubusha says it is baseless to continue debating President Edgar Lungu's eligibility to contest

the 2021 general election when the Constitutional Court has already declared him eligible.

And Lubusha has asked opposition political parties

to leave the ruling party presidential candidate alone and concentrate on selling their own candidates, saying it is not their business who contests elections on the PF ticket.

Commenting on aspiring Kaumbwe Constituency PF member of parliament Moses Mutale's advice to the ruling party that they should look for an alternative presidential candidate for next year's presidential election in case the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) rejected President Lungu's nomination papers, Lubusha dismissed the assertion and insisted that the Head of State remained eligible to contest.

"President Lungu remains our presidential candidate; our sole candidate for both party presidency and national Presidency is President Edgar Chagwa Lungu and he qualifies to stand in 2021 beyond any reasonable doubt. So, those debates of saying 'President Lungu doesn't qualify to contest elections next year' are baseless, and that is coming from the opposition because they are scared of President Lungu. What is perplexing me even more is that if the opposition believe President Lungu is not a popular candidate, then why are they scared of him? It's better they meet him head-on and defeat him in the election if they think he's not popular. And for Mr Mutale, I don't even understand what he smoked for him to come up with such suggestions of PF finding an alternative because he's not a member of PF and it is not his place to tell us what to do," Lubusha argued.

"PF has a competent central committee that can advise on such matters and the central committee has already settled for President Edgar Chagwa Lungu as our sole candidate and we have agreed as a party that he is our candidate. So, we wonder what the interest of people like Mr Mutale is in trying to advise us otherwise. For us, we have a super candidate whom we know is going to deliver victory to us in 2021. We don't even have any interest whatsoever in finding any alternative candidate because we have a credible candidate who is the best-selling! In fact, President Lungu is the best

candidate that the Patriotic Front can ever have and so we can only advise the opposition to leave our candidate alone and concentrate on selling their parties and candidates."

He insisted that debate surrounding President Lungu's eligibility was baseless at this point, arguing that the ConCourt had already declared him eligible to contest the next presidential election.

"President Lungu qualifies to stand next year, by law. For us, we believe in the rule of law and whenever we have misunderstandings or need interpretation, we run to the courts of law to help us adjudicate and the courts of law guided, clearly, that President Lungu qualifies to be a candidate for the elections next year. So, why must we start looking for an alternative candidate when the Court has already guided? The debates on President Lungu's eligibility are now baseless because the ConCourt has already ruled, and for us, Eastern Province and the country at large, we are solidly behind President Edgar Chagwa Lungu and we are not going to look anywhere else for a candidate apart from President Edgar Chagwa Lungu," Lubusha vowed.

He called on "all well-meaning Zambians to rally behind President Lungu" to ensure that he got "his second full-term of office".

"We have absolute confidence in the leadership of President Edgar Chagwa Lungu and we believe he's one of the best Presidents we've ever had as a nation. So, I can only ask the entire nation to rally behind him because he means well. President Lungu took over power at a time when our local economy was down and a lot of challenges, but just look at how best he has tried to resolve the many challenges that were there the time he took over office," claimed Lubusha. "Even now, there is COVID 19, which has affected our economy, but look at how many successes he has gained with his government in the fight against the pandemic to ensure that there is liquidity in our economy! So basically, we can only appeal to Zambians to give President Lungu his second full-term of office."

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Edgar Lungu is this what you are teaching our children?



PUBLISHED BY FRIENDS OF THE UPND

By Ulande Nkomesha

ZAMTEL incurred losses of over K4 billion during the financial year ending December 31, 2018, due to excessively high distribution and administration costs compared to low revenues generated during the same period, says the latest Auditor General's Report.

According to the Auditor General's Report on the Accounts of Parastatal Bodies and other statutory institutions for the financial year ended December 31, 2018, the struggling telecommunications company's accumulated losses were worsening year-on-year from over K2.5 billion in 2015 up to K4 billion in 2018.

The Report equally disclosed that Zamtel's failure to meet its revenue targets contributed to its huge loss-making position.

"During the period under

Zamtel incurred losses of K4bn in 2018, reveals Auditor General

review, the company recorded losses of K1,155,323,000 in 2015, K272,349,000 in 2016, K475,865,000 in 2017 and K546,394,000 in 2018. In addition, the financing costs of K461,058,000 in 2015, K72,156,000 in 2016, K43,078,000 in 2017 and K496,102,000 in 2018 also contributed to the losses. Consequently, the accumulated losses for the company were worsening year-by-year from K2,536,415,000 in 2015, to K4,000,203,000 in 2018. During the period under review, budget provisions in amounts totalling K3,694,997,513

were made to cater for various activities, against which amounts totalling K2,422,599,000 were generated resulting in a deficit of K1,272,398,513. The failure to meet the revenue targets contributed to the loss-making position of the Company," the Report revealed.

The Report also revealed that in 2017 and 2018, Zamtel lost revenue amounting to over K7.1 million due to Zamtel's network failure.

"According to the Zamtel Revenue Loss Reports (Tracker) for 2017 and 2018, the Company lost revenue in amounts totalling

K7,110,562 (2017 - K5,142,800 and 2018 - K1,967,762) due to Zamtel's network failure. Further, the reports revealed that due to poor network quality and failure to comply with other requirements, Zamtel was charged penalties in amounts totalling K7,415,000 (K2,400,000 in 2017 and K5,015,000 in 2018) by the regulator Zambia Information Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) resulting in loss of revenue," it stated.

The Report further revealed that Zamtel's short-term borrowings increased from over K1.3 billion in 2017 to over K3.2 billion in 2018, representing a 148 per cent increment and attracted interest cost of K166,409,000.

"Current ratio is a liquidity ratio that measures a company's ability to pay off its short-term

liabilities as and when they fall due using its current assets. The ideal ratio is 2 to 1. During the period under review, Zamtel's current ratio worsened from 0.13:1 in 2015 to 0.05:1 in 2018. The working capital of the company worsened from negative K1,464,701,000 in 2015 to negative K4,519,714,000 in 2018. The low current ratio and worsening working capital implied that the company had challenges to meet its short-term obligations. Consequently, the short-term borrowings increased from K1,322,656,000 in 2017 to K3,275,248,000 in 2018, representing a 148 per cent increment and attracted interest of K166,409,000," read the Report.

"According to the Company's Accounts Payable and Disbursement Policy, all payable and purchases must be settled within a month or 30 days. During the period under

review, the payable days increased from 223 days in 2015 to 1,047 days in 2018 representing a percentage increase of 370 per cent. As at 31st December, 2018, Zamtel had not settled statutory obligations and accumulated penalties in amounts totalling K168,992,539; K80,437,781 in Pay as You Earn; K88,439,093 as penalties to NAPSA; and K115,664 as penalties to Workers Compensation Fund Control Board."

The Report revealed that Zamtel also had no title deeds for 75 of its properties valued at nearly K88 million.

"The Lands Act No. 29 of 1995 requires that institutions or individuals owning land should have or possess title deeds as proof of ownership. A review of the asset register and other relevant documents carried out in December, 2019, revealed that Zamtel did not have title deeds for 75 properties such as Mwembeshi Earth Station, warehouses, workshops and repeater stations valued at K87,951,277. In addition, the Lands Act No. 29 of 1995 provides for renewal of leases upon expiry for institutions or individuals owning land and have or possess title deeds. A review of the title deeds in respect of Zamtel properties revealed that 38 properties valued at K6,026,275 whose title deeds expired during the period from 1990 to 2007, had not been renewed as at 31st December, 2019," disclosed the Report.

"On 30th December, 2011, Zamtel entered into a lease agreement with Amazon Security Service Limited for the lease of Kitwe Motor Workshop. The lease agreement was for a period of one year at a monthly rental charge of US \$1,500. The following observations were made: Although the tenant was still occupying the premises, the lease agreement availed for audit was for the period from 1st February, 2012, to 31st January, 2013. There was no evidence that the lease had been renewed. As at 31st December, 2019, Zamtel had not collected rentals in amounts totalling K176,396 (US \$16,500) for the period from February to December, 2018."

COVID-19 has exposed inadequate education infrastructure – NAQEZ

By Mirriam Chabala

THE National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ) has called for enhanced investment in education infrastructure across the country to make it more resilient to pandemics such as COVID-19.

In an interview, NAQEZ executive director Aaron Chansa observed that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed the weaknesses in the country's education system.

"This pandemic has actually exposed the gaps or the weaknesses that we have as a country in terms of the education system; it has clearly shown us that our system is very weak and cannot stand these pandemics; and if we look at the pupils from non-examination classes, it is now very clear that we are in a limbo, we don't know when these children are going to go back to school. We have seen a very sharp rise in the number of cases of the Coronavirus; we are getting more Coronavirus cases! Many people are testing positive and we have recorded more deaths. We have even heard of some schools in Rufusa District where some teachers have been tested positive. We also hear some schools on the Copperbelt of having some cases...so this has clearly shown that because schools don't have enough infrastructure, this is going to make the situation more complicated and eventually damage the entire calendar for the pupils in non-examination classes," Chansa said.

"For those that are in examination classes, learning is going on well. But the fear is for those that are not in school now because their progression to the next grade is going to be affected; their academic standing will be disoriented because they are not learning as we speak. Even those that have access to Television are not able to learn properly because of load-shedding, which has affected the country. So, what we are saying is that we need to improve our electronic platforms. We need to make electronic education much more affordable by improving the electronic landscape, making sure that towers are planted across the country, schools have got computers and we also need to train teachers in alternative

teaching methods because we need to make sure that electronic platforms of learning are brought on-board."

Chansa also appealed to government to buy more desks and employ more teachers to address the challenges affecting schools.

"We have been pleading with the (General Education) Ministry to make sure that learning using local radio stations is introduced, but up to now, they haven't done so. Our fear is that our learners in rural areas are going to be behind always. Schools have been closed and these people are not learning anything. So, we still appeal to the Ministry to make sure that they begin to teach on community radio stations and make sure that our people also in remote areas are catered for. Our other appeal is that the government must buy desks. If desks are not going to be bought, then it will be very difficult at any time to bring on-board pupils from non-examination classes because most schools

have no desks. We also want the government to consider recruiting more teachers to help in reducing the pathetic teacher-pupil ratios that are very bad in most areas," Chansa said.

He further noted that it would be difficult for learners in rural areas to continue learning and maintain the country's academic standards if the pressing issues were not quickly addressed.

"COVID-19 has exposed the weaknesses that we have in the education system. The calendar has almost been vandalized. But we feel that if electronic learning through radio, TV and other platforms is enhanced, then the effects could be reduced because at the moment, we don't see light at the end of the tunnel for most pupils, especially those that are not in examination classes. It is difficult for those in rural areas to continue learning and maintain the academic characteristics. So, we appeal for more investment in the education sector," said Chansa.

Ndola indecent assault victim absconds court

By Daniel Chansa

TRIAL in a case in which two Ndola sisters are in the Magistrates' Court for indecently assaulting another woman on Monday failed to take off because witnesses, including the victim, were not before court.

In this this case, Delphister Malasa, 26, a house wife, and Serah Malasa, 20, a grade 12 pupil both of Kabushi Township, are charged with indecent assault on a female.

It is alleged that the duo, acting together, willfully and unlawfully indecently assaulted a female.

The incident is alleged to have taken place on June 9, this year, when Delphister discovered that her husband was allegedly having an affair with the victim who was also believed to be her best friend.

Upon discovering this, Delphister, in the company of her younger sister Serah, went to the victim's house and started beating her.

The two sisters allegedly undressed the victim, removed her underwear and inserted an iron bar into her private parts.

When the matter came to court before Magistrate Changa Chitabo, Monday, Public Prosecutor Francis Mulenga told court that the state was unable to proceed due to the none availability of witnesses, including the victim.

"As such the state has applied for an adjournment. Let the matter come up on a later date," he said.

Magistrate Chitabo then adjourned the matter to July 24.

Exploit domestic revenue potential to avoid debt contraction, IMF tips govt

By Natasha Sakala

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the best way for Zambia to reduce its fiscal deficit is to tap into its domestic revenue potential and improve priority spending in a debt-free fashion.

And the IMF has projected that the country's growth could contract by about five percent due the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued effect of the drought the country experienced during the 2018/2019 season.

Speaking during a webinar hosted by Consumer Unity Trust Society (CUTS) Zambia, Dr Dhaneshwar Ghura, the IMF Zambia team leader during the Fund's recent virtual meeting, said despite Zambia's ongoing fiscal pressures, the country still had huge potential to increase domestic revenues to spend on priority sectors without contracting debt.

"Once this current crisis subsides, policy would not be geared to re-orient fiscal policy, but to significantly lower the budget deficit while making fiscal space to scale up social and priority spending. The way to do that, of course, is to have a significant increase in domestic revenue. There is a lot of potential in Zambia to tap domestic revenues and that's a good

way to finance priority spending as we have been recommending to countries in a debt free fashion. So, the more of the domestic resources a country can mobilize, the less it has to rely on external loans," Dr Ghura said

"Zambia is a huge country with massive size and there are a lot of areas, which are sparsely populated regions so there needs to be access to these regions so the government has been investing massively in roads, infrastructure and bridges and so on. So, that is one. But a large part of these loans has been on concessional terms and as you know the cost of these types of loans are quite expensive, but what has happened also in Zambia is given the expensive nature of these loans over time, the debt service bill has grown, and in the absence of commensurate growth and revenue generation, a larger proportion of scarce resources have had to be used to be used to pay the external loans and, therefore, less available to Zambia for other priority spending. As a consequence, there has been a shortage of liquidity and also crowding out of the private sector."

He advised the Zambian government to increase public spending in health and scale-up the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programmes.

"So, the main area of support as we

see them, that's the advice we have been giving to countries across the board is to increase public spending in health, to scale-up social transfer programmes, that is installed basic social safety net. Zambia has actually a very nice social safety net framework in place and what is missing, of course, is financing for it. So, we have strongly encouraged the authorities to look into that and try to scale it up, the infrastructure is already there for the Social Cash Transfer programme, the framework from any indicators for scaling-up are there, all the elements are there in light of additional financing to scale it up. But, also, we have encouraged the government to supplement what it has already been doing in terms of temporary tax relief, to continue supporting the private sector. You know, the private sector is the lifeline, it is a sector that creates jobs in the country so you want to give that sector going post-COVID so the sector will remain there and be able to re-absorb employment and jobs," Dr Ghura said.

"And we have all seen, all over countries, we are encouraging authorities to do all of that in a very transparent fashion, and the authorities have already started in this area of the use of COVID-related funds. So, what are the immediate government policy

priorities in response to this COVID-19 crisis; Zambia is facing the situation from a very difficult starting point as I had laid out. In this context, your immediate priority is to implement measures to address the social, health and economic consequences. The government had introduced measures in this context in terms of help to the health sector, in terms of help to the private sector and also the central bank has been taking measures to help accentuate the impact of the COVID; it had eased the Monetary Policy (Rate) back in May, and it has also put in place a Medium-Term Refinancing Facility of about K10 billion to help financial institutions on-lend to the private sector and to individuals."

And Dr Ghura observed that Zambia's growth is expected to be worse than -4 per cent recorded last year in per capita terms.

"...But we also have to keep in mind that there was a major drought last year and the ripple effect of that still continues. Rainfall is normalizing, but this drought had a major impact on agriculture last year. As a result, as you know, growth was registered only at 1.4 per cent, which is, in per capita terms, growth was minus four per cent so this year is going to be even worse," said Dr Ghura.

By Julia Malunga

DEPUTY Inspector General of Police in charge of operations Bonny Kapeso says Patriotic Front cadres should refrain from taking over the work of the police service.

And Lusaka Province PF secretary Kennedy Kamba says if the party feels Police are not doing things right, they will air out their grievances just like any other Zambian.

Speaking when PF officials led by Kamba held a meeting with him at Sikanze Camp, Tuesday, Kapeso said the ruling party's security should not try to supersede the police service.

"We will continue providing quality security services to the Zambian people. My honest appeal to you is that we are not ready to create two parallel security organizations in Zambia; private and public. Yes, security is important in your party but your security must not supersede that of the Zambia Police Service. Even when we have national rallies, I have noticed, let us begin to advise our members that the security of the Head of State is a very important thing. Security of the Head of State shall be the responsibility of Zambia Police because that is a VIP and we are trained to handle such situations. I want to discourage political party cadres to refrain from taking over from police officers where you even go inside and cordon off and then you put the police officers at the back, let us reverse that trend because it is dangerously a risk," Kapeso said.

"Because even a PF member could be treated as an enemy according to the police officers who are mandated to secure the security of the VIP. Your job as security officers... yes, open your eyes and ears and keep your mouth shut. But when you see something, beckon a police officer and tell him or her that 'we have noticed something fishy' and the people who are mandated to ensure that the VIP security is maintained will move in accordingly and handle the situation. And we are going to begin to do these things, this is a crusade we have started that needs everybody's support. And Lusaka having given this example, we will move to the Copperbelt and we will also move to other provinces. I want people of Zambia, especially politicians to use politics of ideas, not politics of confrontations. You are not winning anything. Ensure that your manifesto is totally accepted by the people of Zambia."

Kapeso told the PF officials to respect institutions of governance.

"We have decided that arising from our immediate past confrontations, if you term it the way, it was portrayed in the papers because I was pictured taking a law breaker physically leading him to my officers for custodial purposes, there were quite a number of issues, quite number of reactions and we have decided as the High Command that in the interest of peace for the Zambian people, Zambia Police Service will begin to engage all political parties on violence. And since the PF

Respect institutions of governance, Kapeso tells PF cadres

is the party in government, we have decided that it is more convenient to begin to engage the party in power. And Lusaka, being what it is as capital city, we have decided to invite our colleagues from Lusaka Province hence the provincial secretary of the PF and his delegation. When you begin to respect the institutions of governance, especially the Zambia Police, I think security in the country will be something that all of us take pride in," said Kapeso.

And Kamba said the misbehavior of an individual member of the ruling party should not be considered as the position of the PF.

"We are not above reproach and we will never be. That's why we want the police to engage the party leadership if by any means, any of us who are members of the PF attempts to undermine or interfere with the works of the police. The misbehavior of an individual perceived to be a member of the PF should not be considered as the position or general conduct of the PF. The law must take its course on such individuals. This, however, does not mean that the general membership of the Party and its leaders will not air their grievances when they feel mistreated or unfairly treated by the police," Kamba said.

"We have a right to respond and protest peacefully of any mistreatment or on any matters that affect us just like any other Zambian or organization. That is why we feel we must dialogue with the custodians of the law. The police now being a service and not a police force should not be brutal towards or against the citizenry. There must be civil means of engagement. The law and the police code of conduct is very categorical on what can be done and what cannot be done. As the PF, we recently protested against the Anti-Corruption Commission because we are convinced it was being used by the opposition to try and ridicule or weaken the Presidency. If we feel that the Police is not doing things right, we will air out our grievances just like any other Zambian has a right to do so but within the confines of the law."

He said the party held the police in high esteem.

"I want to assure our distinguished men and women in uniform and the general public that contrary to what some people may wrongly perceive as a rift between the police and PF supporters or cadres, the leadership and indeed the general membership of the party enjoys a very cordial relationship with the

police command considering that we are expected to be exemplary and lead by example as law abiding citizens. Let me reiterate what I said a few days ago that some people want to portray that the ruling PF as a political monster following a few isolated incidents where some individual members of the party misconducted themselves and found themselves in conflict with the law. The PF has remained true to its core values of a political party that was founded on love

for humanity, pro-poor basis and respect for the law. We hold all police officers and the entire police command in high esteem," he said.

Kamba pledged that the party would work with the police to create a conducive environment for all political players.

"We are wary of the fact that some people who don't mean well want to continue misleading the public whenever we express displeasure on matters that

affect us and our members as a party and they try to think we are taking over the duties of the police. We can't do that and that's not our position. We respect the police and their works. As we head towards the elections, we must condemn any form of violence and avoid such misconduct from anyone regardless of political affiliation. We must all pledge to work closely with the police and create a conducive environment for all political players," said Kamba.

LWSSC wasted K13m on faulty meters – AG

From P3

It added that the company also procured a faulty Vacuum Jetting Combination Truck at K1.2 million and has not been replaced since its delivery in March 2018.

"Procurement of a Vacuum Jetting Combination Truck On 6th February 2017 LWSSC signed a contract with Multi-Industries Limited for the supply of a Vacuum-Jetting Combination truck with accessories at a contract sum of K1,200,000. The vacuum tanker was to be delivered within six (6) weeks after signing the contract. The

contract was amended to vary the delivery date to 30th June 2018. The truck was delivered in March 2018 and the supplier had been paid in full. However, inquires with management revealed that the truck only worked for one day and was returned to the supplier as it had developed a fault with the jetting combination unit. As at 31st December 2019, twenty (20) months after it was returned, the truck was still with the supplier," it read.

The report did however

note that during the period under review, the company generated enough income to cater for its operational budget.

"During the financial years ended 31st December 2016 to 2018, the Company generated income in amounts totaling K838,806,278 against the budget of K770,818,824 resulting in a variance of K67,987,454. In addition, the company also received Government Grants and other income in amounts totaling K114,995,162," read the report.

Over 300 doctors seek Lungu's intervention in payment of arrears

By Natasha Sakala

THREE hundred and nine (309) resident doctors have appealed to President Edgar Lungu to intervene in their plight to have their employment normalized as they risk losing five months' worth of wages.

The resident doctors were employed on March 25, 2019, and deployed to their various stations on the said date, but were only given appointment letters from the Public Service Management Division (PSMD) in September, 2019 that stated that they were only employed on September 1, 2019, thereby, making it difficult for them to claim their dues that were not given to them during the five months that they had worked prior to receipt of the letters.

The doctors then wrote to the PSMD Permanent Secretary Boniface Chimbwali demanding payment of arrears, settling-in allowances and correction of the dates of employment.

But in response, PSMD Director of Special Duties notified them that the matter had been referred to the Ministry of Health.

"The division wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 26th June, 2020, regarding the payment of salary arrears and settling-in allowance in respect of Junior Resident Medical Officers employed on 25th June, 2019. Kindly take note that the case has been referred to the Ministry of Health for consideration. You are, therefore, advised to follow up the matter with the

Ministry," read the response from the PSMD in part.

However, in an interview, representative Dr Brian Sampa expressed concern that resident doctors were being considered as having been illegally employed when they were publicly employed, with Health Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya having attended their induction ceremony.

"The main hold up here

is that from what we've found so far, PSMD has not acknowledged that we were employed, but we have a letter from MoH and it's not like it was done in private, they announced. I am sure you heard when they announced that government has employed 400 doctors, we were 309 and we even held a meeting, which was held with the Minister at Chainama and it was all over ZNBC,

the induction ceremony. So, I don't know why today, it comes out like PSMD was not aware and that we are illegally employed after six months. If they told us immediately that we were illegally employed, obviously, we wouldn't have even gone for induction, they would have already chased us from work, but not after you work for six months and then in September, you are given another letter to say, 'you were employed on 1st September'. So, we really need the President to help us. This is nothing political or anything, that's why we are not even hiding, it's a wrong thing which was done and people are trying to cover it up," Dr Sampa complained.

"So now, we noticed that the biggest challenge we faced in our quest to ensure that this was done was that PSMD has not acknowledged or they don't want to be part of this employment, it's as if when MoH submitted at first when it was supposed to be done, they refused because our HR told us that when they met in Kabwe, they were told that, 'no, you guys were employed illegally by the government so PSMD can only pay starting September,' meaning all these months we won't be paid, it's just supposed to be like that. So, it has been quiet because no one has spoken out. Now we are just tired because we know the longer it takes, it will just die a natural death and we've been working like that."

He added that the move to have the doctors sign new arrival advice forms to

conform to September 1, 2019, meant that government was trying to forego the months that they had worked from March 25, 2019.

"So, when we were given this letter ...on 1st September, we expected that we will be paid the arrears for all that time because that's how it's always been. Some of our friends actually got the arrears, but a lot of us never got anything and now after working for all those months, the HRs started bringing new arrival advice forms this year that we should change to 1st September as though that's when we reported because we have been thinking that the government knows that they owe us so they are supposed to pay us that money and then we thought they are going to normalize this. But from the fact that they started now bringing in the issue of changing these, it meant that they wanted to erase it, they wanted to forego it. So all that time, we were trying to push through the RDAZ, but we saw that things were not moving so we decided to write a letter ourselves as a group, the 309 doctors," narrated Dr Sampa.

"For us, we want the President to help us. It will just be a battle of Ministers, Ministries and no one wants to take up responsibility, but we know that if the President can help change this...because once they normalize this, we know that even the issue of payment of arrears and everything else can be done, so that's why we are doing this."



President Edgar Chagwa Lungu (right) talks to Home Affairs Permanent Secretary Masiye Wilfred Banda after the Swearing-in-Ceremony at State House in Lusaka on Tuesday, July 21, 2020. Picture by: Salim Henry/ State House ©2020

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
HEALTH Minister Dr Chitalu Chilufya the country may record up to 20,000 health facility admissions and close to 1,000 COVID-19 deaths per day if people continue flouting the health regulations.

And Dr Chilufya says the country has recorded 60 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours and zero deaths.

Meanwhile, Dr Chilufya says it's unacceptable that only six, out of 156 members of parliament voluntarily tested for COVID-19.

Speaking when he rendered a ministerial statement to Parliament, Tuesday, Dr Chilufya said 60 new cases of COVID-19 were recorded in the last 24 hours.

"In the last 24 hours, we have recorded 60 new COVID cases out of the 369 tests that we conducted. Looking at the geographical distribution, 21 were from Kalumbila, 11 from Lusaka, and six (06) were from Mufulira. These 38 are contact to known cases. And for those

We'll record 1,000 deaths per day if guidelines aren't followed, warns Chitalu

from the Health Facility-based screening 11 were from Lusaka, four (04) from Kitwe and one (01) Sesheke. And under routine community screening in Lusaka, we picked six (06)," Dr Chilufya said.

Dr Chilufya said 16 patients had been discharged from Lusaka and Copperbelt centres.

"Mr Speaker, eight people have been discharged from the Levy Mwanawasa COVID Centre and eight from the Copperbelt COVID facility. In terms of the patients we have in admission, 18 patients are on oxygen support and two are in very critical condition. One (01) is a known hypertensive and one (01) has severe pneumonia which is a very common presentation in the cases of COVID-19. The rest of the patients are in a stable condition," Dr Chilufya said.

"Mr Speaker that brings

the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases recorded in the country to 3, 386 including 128 deaths and 1, 628 recoveries. In Zambia, the increase in the number of cases is attributed to the cold weather and the laxity in compliance with public health and social measures."

Dr Chilufya said 97 of the total 128 deaths recorded as a result of COVID-19 were Brought In Dead.

"Mr Speaker, there is a sharp rise in the proportion of Brought In Dead cases

testing positive for COVID-19 [disease]. 97 of the total 128 deaths that we have recorded associated with COVID-19 have been Brought in Dead. Of the cumulative deaths of 128, 31 are COVID deaths, 97 are COVID associated deaths. For the avoidance of doubt, COVID-19 deaths are those in whom the virus is detected but is not the primary cause of death. And for COVID deaths are those where the virus and its complications are the cause of death," he said.

He said close to 1, 000

deaths per day will be recorded if people continue ignoring the COVID-19 health regulations.

"Mr Speaker, the modelling that we have done in conjunction with our partners has shown that figures will skyrocket if the poor compliance with public health and social measures continue. We project that with the current laxity we see, we may be recording up to 20,000 health facility admissions and may reach even 900 to 1,000 deaths per day if we do not change the way we do things as a community," he warned.

Meanwhile, Dr Chilufya said out of the total 156 members of parliament, only six tested for the disease.

"As honourable members of parliament, we need to lead in this fight. National Assembly seats at the apex of political leadership and it is anticipated that their actions would advocate for improved community practices that would avert the crisis earlier. However, I have noted with dismay that out of the 156 members of parliament, only six (06) tested voluntarily at the clinic despite having a dedicated team at the parliament clinic for the whole period that we have been in session. Only six tested for COVID-19. Mr Speaker, this is not acceptable. The importance of testing cannot be overemphasized. I, therefore, urge members

of parliament to respond to the call to respond and advocate for this high impact intervention in the fight against COVID-19," he said.

Dr Chilufya said more COVID-19 testing points would be set up at Parliament on Wednesday where all MPs and National Assembly staff would be tested.

"Government working hand in hand with the National Assembly is giving yet another opportunity to all members of parliament to get tested. We will set up increased COVID-19 testing points for all honourable members of parliament and National Assembly staff tomorrow Wednesday, 22nd July 2020 starting at 07:00 hours and we will do the testing the whole morning and part of the afternoon. And all the results will be released by close of business on Thursday. This is important to avoid members of parliament infecting family members and friends when they go back to their constituencies and also members of parliament falling ill and then intervening when it is late. I, therefore, urge all members of parliament to take advantage of this opportunity to know their COVID-19 status when travelling back to their constituencies. We need to lead by example," said Dr Chilufya, adding that the pandemic had so far affected 44 districts.

Lungu wonders why some State Counsels demonise govt

By Mirriam Chabala
PRESIDENT Edgar Lungu has urged the newly-elected Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) executive to address the situation whereby some State Counsels are in the habit of "demonising" the state.

According to a statement issued by Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Isaac Chipampe, President Lungu was speaking when he met newly elected LAZ president Abyudi Shonga State Counsel at State House, Tuesday.

The President wondered why some lawyers opted to oppose government instead of working with the state when elevated to the status of State Counsel.

"State Counsels are lawyers for the State, but we have State Counsels demonizing the Executive," President Lungu wondered.

The President asked LAZ to look into the matter, stating that State Counsels only needed to write to the President for a meeting when issues arose.

President also expressed hope that his administration would collaborate more with the LAZ executive stating that the association should find it easy to work with the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary because they are all headed by lawyers.

And Shonga thanked President Lungu for the meeting and offered to work with government in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shonga said Government should feel free to work with LAZ in the constitution making process because the association's core mandate demands that LAZ participates in the legislation, quoting Section 4 of the LAZ Act.

Meanwhile, Mr Shonga

says LAZ is concerned that despite a huge number of graduate lawyers, there are few job opportunities.

He asked government, through the President, to create opportunities for the lawyers.

Shonga promised that the new executive would work within the confines of the LAZ Act.

He also urged the President to help ensure next year's presidential elections are free and fair.

In response, President Lungu assured LAZ that the elections would be free and fair and expressed confidence in the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to manage the elections.

Shonga was escorted by new LAZ vice president Lungisani Zulu and new treasurer Ngosa Simachela.



By Julia Malunga
ITEZHI-TEZHI UPND member of parliament Herbert Shabula says it is foolishness for the ruling Patriotic Front to continue forcing the Constitution Amendment Bill No.10 of 2019 on Zambians because it is now a dead Bill.

In an interview, Shabula argued that Bill 10 was now an expired proposed piece of legislation following a second adjournment of Parliament Sine Die, Tuesday.

Bill 10 is now dead - Shabula

"How many times has Bill 10 been brought to Parliament? All the times that the Bill was brought to Parliament, it failed to attract the two-thirds majority. Now, on those bases, PF through the Speaker (Dr Patrick Matibini) had to find a way of deferring it. The last time, they used an excuse for Coronavirus. Thereafter, when we opened

(Parliament), it was brought again, it was not debated because they could not get the two-thirds majority and so they decided it will be deferred to an unknown date. That is why the Speaker instructed the Executive, the Minister of Justice, Given Lubinda, to ensure that the Bill is brought before closure of this sitting. The end of this sitting was to be on Friday and there is no indication that it was going to be brought to the table. When the Vice-President (Inonge Wina) was outlining the activities for this week, there was nowhere where it was appearing that it was going to be tabled," said Shabula.

"This means that Bill 10 is a forgotten Bill, it is a dead Bill, an embarrassment Bill and it is something that the government is trying to push before the people. And people have rejected it through the MPs. Now, the PF don't know how to bring back this Bill for it to go through. To make it worse, I pity the families that have lost the two MPs with this loss, it becomes very difficult for them to raise the necessary two-thirds majority. It is a buried Bill; we are just waiting to put leaves on the grave. Doing one wrong thing time and again and expecting a different result is foolishness. I am sure PF is not foolish enough not to see that they

will not be able to get the two-thirds majority."

Last Month, Dr Patrick Matibini said there was something unusual about Bill 10 that had confused the nation and hoped that the debate on the matter could come to an end.

"Indeed, yesterday, there was a request he (Given Lubinda) made to defer. But I also recall that it ended at a mere request. If you have heard his statement, he has provided a preface to events leading to his request. And this is a statement he wanted to update the House on as circumstances leading to his request. I agree with you, Honourable member of Mongu Central (Mwilola Imakando) that this matter insofar as the deferment is concerned, is a concluded matter. But I find this entirely innocuous. I must state, by the way, that there is something unusual about Bill 10 that has confounded us as a nation and I hope that sooner or later, somehow, we will put this matter to a final rest. In its current form, this is the last opportunity I have given the promoters in its meeting. The last meeting of the fourth session to complete business surrounding Bill 10. And I truly hope that we will bring this matter to a close," said Dr Matibini.

ZPPA bans Diaspora Support Ltd over forged certificate

By Natasha Sakala
THE Zambia Public Procurement Authority (ZPPA) has suspended Diaspora Support Initiative Limited for a period of two years for submitting a forged compliance certificate.

In a statement, the ZPPA stated that the suspension did not affect ongoing contracts, but applied to any "success in interest," which employed or was associated with any partner or director of Diaspora Support Initiative Zambia Limited.

"The ZPPA has with immediate effect suspended Diaspora Support Initiative Limited from participating in public procurement in Zambia for a period of two years, for submitting a forged Compliance Certificate. This is pursuant to Section 65 of the Public Procurement Act No. 12 of 2008 and Regulation 167 of the Public Procurement Regulations of 2011, which mandate the Authority to suspend a supplier/s from participating in public

procurement, for providing false information in a bid or any other document to a procuring entity in connection with a procurement process or contract. The Authority is directing all procuring entities to enforce the suspension by ensuring that they do not: award contracts to Diaspora Support Initiative Zambia Limited; sell or issue solicitation documents to Diaspora Support Initiative Zambia Limited or in any way invite bids from them; and enter in any other dealings or communication with Diaspora Support Initiative Zambia Limited except in respect of existing contracts placed prior to the suspension," read the statement.

"In a circular dated 16th July, 2020, ZPPA Director General Christopher Chichoni stated that the suspension did not affect ongoing contracts, but applied to any 'success in interest,' which employed or was associated with any partner or director of Diaspora Support Initiative Zambia Limited."

By Sipilisiwe Ncube
 MINISTRY of Finance Permanent Secretary Mukuli Chikuba says COVID-19 has impacted Zambia's economy as evidenced by negative economic growth projected at -4.2 per cent.

And Chikuba says government has applied for debt relief under the G20 DSSI Facility to try and reduce expenditure.

Speaking when he featured on ZNBC's Sunday Interview, Chikuba said economic growth this year was projected at -4.2 per cent.

"The impact that has been brought about as a result of COVID-19 has presented a tough economy. However, I should mention here that some of the measures that we are taking, not all is glum. So, as much as we may make projections now, it depends on how the path of COVID-19 will roll out. Should the situation demand that we go into 2021, we will have to take a few more extra measures and mitigate the impact. And just as you have mentioned, growth this year is projected to be in the region of negative -4.2 per cent. But what we have done this far, and even the numbers that we have worked out with international partners, we think that next year, we will start with some modest recovery of about 1.8 per cent. We are projecting a re-shaped kind of impact. But this year, yes, it's quite deep and that is the reason why, therefore, measures such as the COVID Bond and some of the tax measures that we took to help the economy were put in place," Chikuba said.

"The major sectors that have been impacted the most are wholesale, trade, and tourism. Then we have, of course, under the primary sectors, we have mining, construction, and manufacturing that have been hit. It's not easy and the aim is not to balance it off soon, but to make adjustments that will enable us to meet at least the

COVID-19 has kept 2020 economic growth at -4.2% – Chikuba

basic things this year, but in the medium-term, try and build it back. COVID-19 has hit us on two sides: one side is the social sector side and the other side is the economic side. If you look at the interventions that we have made this far, starting with the initial stimulus [package] that we gave of K2.5 billion, we were largely trying to address is: how do you unroll yourselves on the sides of social spending so that you mitigate the impact? That is why we were paying pensioners on the economic bond. But also, on the economic side, which is also on two ends (i) do refunds to companies that you owe, at least the domestic ones, so that you put back liquidity into the system on arrears, on VAT refunds (ii) and also on the banking side. The Bank of Zambia (BoZ) put up a facility to try and help the private sector that is distressed during that time."

Chikuba explained that his Ministry had a revised budget, which highlighted a reduction in revenues, but an increase in expenditures.

"The other issues we are looking at on the fiscal side is: how do we ensure that some lines in terms of expenditure we bring them down. We have done a revised budget, which is coming up with those same numbers of the reduction in revenues and the increase in expenditures. And in that regard, again, we have done revisions on the expenditure side to try and match-up that position," Chikuba said.

And he said government had applied for debt relief under the G20 DSSI Facility to reduce debt expenditure, which increased due to the kwacha's depreciation against major currency convertibles.

"We have applied for debt relief under the G20 DSSI Facility. Within there, we are trying to reduce expenditures. Expenditures on debt have increased as a result of the depreciation of the exchange rate. That is in the immediate term, just to try and waiver it out. In the medium-term, we are implementing the measures around debt and you have seen

[that] we have hired advisors (Lazard Freres) to advise us on the issue of debt cancellations, debt refinancing, re-scoping of projects, and also the extra measure that was taken on a moratorium on commercial borrowing. Those are the two buckets. But we have extra buckets that we are looking at and the third one is on growth. How do we stimulate back growth," he said.

Chikuba also explained that this year's national budget had to go down due to the revenue gap.

"For 2020, we have restated the budget. We have increased social spending and we have slowed down non-essential lines, particularly those to do with non-essential expenditure. Non-essential expenditure is that expenditure that is not economical. For example, there is infrastructure spending that we think should support the economy that we have gone ahead with, there is also that which we have

re-scoped downwards, like even in the road sector, from bituminous standard to gravel. Certainly, the budget figure will go down as you have seen there is a revenue gap. That revenue gap certainly tells you that we need to scale back the budget," Chikuba added.

Chikuba further said that the K2.5 billion COVID Fund, which was earlier released, had fully been disbursed.

"The K2.5 billion is fully disbursed in full so we do not have anything outstanding under that. Now, we have started disbursing the money that we have put up under the COVID Bond to build on the first K2.5 billion that we had released. A number of contractors have been paid, third-party arrears have not been totally cleared from the K2.5 billion. But I am going to mention that under the COVID Fund, we have just released K800 million more for them to be paid. Under the K2.5 billion, we paid third-

party arrears of K515 million. Now, most of the third-party arrears are coming almost to a current position. With the extra release of funds, we should catch-up on the third-party arrears. Third-party arrears are funds that are deducted, for example, from civil servants that had borrowed under micro-finance (institutions). Those were salary-based deductions. We had a backlog in terms of remitting that to micro-finance institutions, the same with banks, and some insurance companies. With the COVID Bond, we expect to come to the current position," he said.

Meanwhile, Chikuba announced that government had raised K6 billion under the COVID Bond out of which K5.2 billion had so far been released.

"Under the COVID Bond, we have allocated K585 million for PSPF, we have allocated LASF K150 million, retirees under the Ministry of Justice (compensation and awards) for those that had gone to court and those who were working for parastatals in the

past, we have allocated K300 million for that. So far, we are sitting on about K6 billion and in terms of the monies that we have raised and this is a bond that is spanning about 10 to 15 years depending on who is subscribing to it. So far, most of the subscriptions are around a 15-year horizon. In reality, yes, this is a debt. A bond is a debt instrument. It does add to the debt stock, but the sustainability of the debt stock is judged on the amount of the economic activity you have. I am confident that it will be fully subscribed," said Chikuba.

"From the K6 billion, so far we have disbursed K5.2 billion. Under dismantling of arrears to suppliers and contractors, we had a K1 billion that was set aside for this and we have released K500 million, currently, VAT to SMEs, K250 million has been released, recapitalization of Natsave, we have released the entire K900 million, pensions we have released K585 million as allocated, and about K800 million for micro-finance institutions. Youth empowerment, we are releasing the K30 million this week. So, the total anyway, is K5.2 billion that has been released thus far."

By Ulande Nkomesha

EASTERN Province Minister Makebi Zulu says the UPND is being misled by trying to oppose Constitution Amendment Bill Number 10 of 2019 outside Parliament in an attempt to prevent it from being enacted into law.

In an interview, Zulu insisted that the success or failure of enacting Bill 10 could only be determined in Parliament.

"I think that is the problem when people are constantly being misled. It is not the first time that the issue of Bill 10 was taken to court; LAZ took the matter to court and they failed on the same basis that the UPND failed this time around. So, we have our processes and we should respect those processes that exist. Parliament has power to legislate, let them legislate. If the Bill is going to pass or fail, let it fail on the floor of the House. After all, the people that are in the House represent the people, including the youths. So, it is important all arms of government carry out the roles that they were enacted for or were given to by the Constitution," Zulu said.

UPND's attempts to stop Bill 10 outside Parley will fail – Makebi

He argued that the UPND did want Bill 10 to succeed because it rejected the chance to participate in the process.

"From inception, when the Bill started and they decided to pull out, it is obvious that they wouldn't want something in which they did not have an input to succeed because that renders them irrelevant on the political scene. So, for purposes of maintaining their supposed relevance, they wouldn't want something that they did not participate in to succeed," Zulu argued.

"It is for that reason that even when they are saying, 'Bill 10 is evil,' they won't point you to a particular clause that they think is evil. Even after all the amendments that have been proposed and moved by the government to suit what the people of Zambia want, they have not in any way agreed to anything. At any given time,

they have an excuse, so it is not strange. It is just those bad archaic politics that they are practicing."

And Zulu charged that the UPND had continued to spread lies about the Bill by insinuating that if it was enacted, it would lead to the PF hanging on to power.

"It (Bill 10) has no bearing whatsoever on the elections. They should point to a particular clause that it is intended to stop them from being in power or perpetuate PF staying in power, they will not point at any clause, they certainly will not. So, they just dream of things and say, 'this is it' and taking advantage of those people that don't read," said Zulu.

Monze Central UPND member of parliament Jack Mwiimbu renewed his application for leave to

commence judicial review proceedings before the Court of Appeal against Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Patrick Matibini's decision to allow continued consideration of Bill 10 in Parliament despite it lapsing.

Mwiimbu's renewed application followed the Lusaka High Court's refusal to grant him leave.

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Why does Mwila want Lubusha to act against Jay Jay, when he overturned the decision last year?

ADMITTING a mistake does not symbolise defeat. It is not a sign of weakness when you admit a wrong. It's a commitment that a wrongdoer makes towards enhancing trust and confidence from the people. When someone admits making a mistake, it shows that they were committed to doing the right things, and they regret their failure in achieving that. This is why when you make a mistake, the next step is to apologise.

Although an apology that comes after you have been confronted is less impactful, it is still a necessary virtue. Others may say an apology that comes after you have been caught lying or in the wrong act is not an apology per se, but the fact is that it still stands as important admission of guilt. Even though a person in such a situation only apologises because they have nothing else they could say or do to conceal their wrong or mistake, once an apology is offered, the burden of forgiveness shifts to the aggrieved.

We have reached a conclusion that the Patriotic Front is too stubborn to be in charge of

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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government. This party and its leaders have no shame or remorse. They don't care what people say about how they are governing and they don't give a damn about the people's complaints or concerns. As long as they are eating and they are happy, the rest is useless. This is why they don't find it necessary to apologise when they are found wanting. They fear no one, not even the law.

Now, we are not saying the Patriotic Front should be perfect. In fact, no one should expect that there is a political party that will form government and run the affairs of a country without making mistakes. It's simply impossible. In every political party, just like in a family, there will be unruly thugs with no clear life goals. And Politicians are not angels, so it is normal sometimes to err. Citizens are expected to

understand that human beings are bound to make wrong decisions and pronouncements from time to time, regardless of the positions they hold. The problem comes when there is failure to acknowledge wrong actions.

We have been watching very closely how the Patriotic Front is treating the scandal involving their Eastern Province Youth Chairman, Emmanuel Jay Jay Banda. This is not a story that is difficult to verify. Police have confirmed it and in fact, they are on a manhunt for the culprit. But because the PF leadership fear no one, they have opted to say nothing about it. They have decided not to comment on the matter because they don't care about the law. In our view, such a political party is not fit to be in charge of government.

What could be

so difficult about apologising for a wrong act? Why does the PF consider an apology a sign of defeat or weakness? A few days ago, the Eastern Province PF chairman Andrew Lubusha gave an interview to our reporter where he said the party was eager to hear why Banda did what he did at the police. We published his remorseful statement under the headline: "PF apologises to Police IG". What followed was condemnation from Mr Lubusha's superiors in the party who were not so pleased with his apology. Indeed, he called our reporter to express concern about the headline, and he had to put our reporter on a conference call to prove to those who were questioning his apology that he didn't mean it as it was reported.

Surely, how can such a political party claim that it detests

violence when they are failing to condemn the actions of their own official? The Patriotic Front should not take Zambians for fools. Mr Davies Mwila cannot claim that he does not know about this scandal, and neither can he claim that it is so insignificant to warrant his involvement. Why is he pushing the Eastern Province Chairman to make a decision?

Last year when the same Jay Jay Banda conducted himself in a manner that the Provincial executive deemed to have tarnished the image of the party, Mr Lubusha took action against him. What happened? The President, through Davies Mwila himself, issued a directive to overturn the decision. It was not long afterwards that Jay Jay ascended in the party hierarchy.

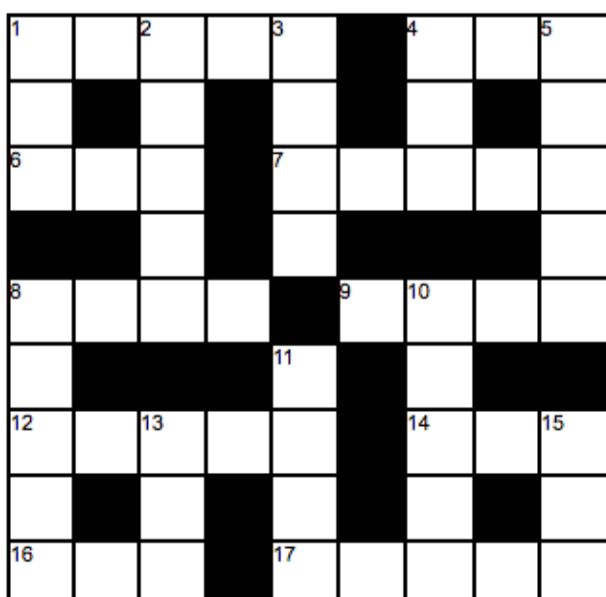
So why is Mr Davies Mwila pushing the man whose actions

he overturned last year to do the same action today? Why is he washing his hands on Lubusha? What does the Patriotic Front want Lubusha to do? Why can't the President, who protected Jay Jay last year, decide what to do with him this time around? The ruling party knows that there is nothing that Mr Lubusha can do, and they are trying to use him as a pawn in their violent scheme.

Again, we say, this is taking Zambians for fools and the Patriotic Front must own up. This case against Jay Jay is not a party issue. What the people of Zambia expected from Mr Mwila and his President was a condemnation of the attack on the police and an apology. The rest is for the police to deal with. If Jay Jay is facing aggravated robbery charges, he must surrender himself to the police and allow justice to take its course. If he is innocent, the courts will free him.

Mr Mwila's stance on this matter is even more embarrassing than Jay Jay's actions. The Patriotic Front should never be heard condemning any act of violence until they first condemn what their official did at the police.

Crossword puzzle No 651

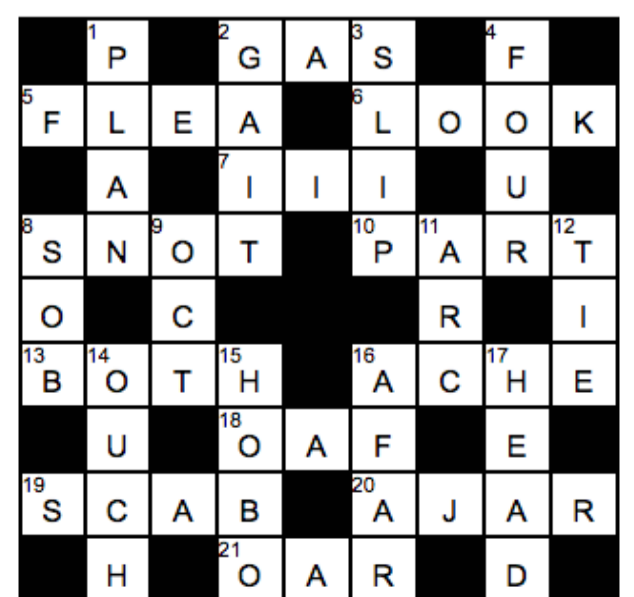


“Once you embrace your value, talents and strengths, it neutralizes when others think less of you.”

- Rob Liano

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|---|---|
| <p>Across</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diamond surface 4. Tavern 6. Colour your hair 7. Eskimo house 8. Alert 9. Material from a tree 12. Result of excessive rainfall 14. Toll 16. Scoundrel 17. Less common | <p>Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In thing 2. Shout from a fan 3. Bit of kindling 4. Buddy 5. Worry 8. Communion offering 10. Buyer's proposal 11. Fragrance 13. No longer in vogue 15. Talent for music |
|---|---|

Crossword puzzle No 650



Readers' Feedback

Mwale's explanation that COVID-19 bond will help infrastructure projects

Dear editor,

"Why concentrate on infrastructure when thousands of people are losing income everyday because of the coronavirus? What benefit is a road to people who have no goods to transport on it? Guys please think, or as KBF says, at least pretend to think!" - Mwiza Nzila

"Stop joking like this.. Let the money be used for covid19, pay the frontline workers and buy ventilators!" - Naomi Muchanga

"Getting a bond for infrastructure projects disguised as Coronavirus bonds???" - Mike Cairns

"We thought this should have gone into the stimulus package to kick start the economy, to support the productive sectors of the economy affected by Covid-19, Tourism, education, SME sectors etc? This is increasingly beginning to look like campaign funds!" - Kanyata Mubita

"Raising money for projects that were previously budgeted and planned for but have stalled is not economic stimulus but rather a sign of poor execution and controls". - Lombe Lumbwe



Aspiring MP on PF needing an alternative candidate in case ECZ rejects Lungu

Editor,

"MMD wasted almost 2 years fighting for FTJ unconstitutional third term bid. By the time FTJ was bowing down to pressure, in May 2001, the party only had few months to choose and market their candidate.. The outcome: Mazoka of UPND emerged winner though his victory was stolen in favor of the MMD candidate Mwanawasa. Please refer to the Under The Tree meeting where FTJ confessed and apologized to Mazoka". - Friday Kashiwa

"Lungu is not eligible and even if he was eligible, he doesn't deserve another chance because he has failed to rule". - Adams Kambila

"I have studied a lot of rise and falls of many great men, 98% of the great men are destroyed by people close to them. PF has a lot of very rich ministers who only lacks power which Lungu has. Let's wait and see who's Lungu's real enemies". - Webster Fungai

"Awe just let Adada stand. We want Adada so that we watch him be humiliated!" - Mwimanenwa Kamona

"This man will be hated soon. PF doesn't want progressive suggestions". - Mwambande Wasi

"This man is wise he truly

knows what he is saying". - Ezra Kalaluka

"Just pick KBF and Kambwili if you want PF to survive. Because if Kambwili and HH join forces, PF will be history. I'm talking as a PF supporter. Bola naikosa.

"Incase what naimwe... its not upto ECZ to determine whether he qualifies or not, but the constitution. And experts on the matter constitution court lawyers, including SC John Sangwa has already chipped in on the matter that ECL does not qualify to run for a third term bid". - Donald Kawhi

World Bank on Zambia lacking transparency in debt reporting

Editor,

"This makes very sad reading. The million dollar question is WHY THE SECRECY? These are public debts and every citizen deserves to know how much he/she owes others. This is reason enough to believe our governors do not mean well because logically good things are touted and publicized". - Pascal Bwalya

"When you have PF government that believes in corruption, even just data reporting has to be manipulated. PF is a cancer, a curse!" - Noritah Mwanza

"This should be reason for concern, because these are not personal loans. Do we need the IMF to tell us how to be accountable for the loans Zambia has acquired". - Ben Kauzeni

"Smh.... Glad it's coming from an external institution... We have been called bitter for suggesting that the official debt figure we get fed with are far from the truth". - Dennis Wei Mulenga

"IMF has been sponsored by opposition... Muzamvelako". - Elias

"Don't write off the debt until they learn how to account for it". - Alfred Fred Sakala

"No wonder they want parley oversight removed from DEBT oversight as per Bill 10". - Muna Chikale

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.

Police's arrest of Chipepo

Editor,

"He was charged with desertion after his resignation. Why not before because he's alleged to have stopped reporting for duty a long time ago? Is it a way of diverting attention from issues he raised as reasons for his resignation?" - Asa Amisi

"Well known calculated move, why didn't they arrest him before he resigned? Why now, were they waiting for him to

resign? Are they telling us that they could not find the fellow cop, kikkkkkk... Zambia police awe sure". - Chipo Chilwana Shimuunza

"Our rules mustn't imprison us. He wants to leave. Let him do so. There is no rule on earth stronger than the people. He has problems in and with the service. Letting him go is

the best. Even US Marines can stop. Kkkkkkk". - Steven Siamachila

"I can not understand this. Uku leka incito mulandu? If he is a deserter, you simply strike off his name from the payroll. Capwa! We know why failed PF police have gone another mile on him. Revelations!" - Tukafililamunsenga Kambwili

By Julia Malunga

TRANSPARENCY International (TI) Zambia Chapter president Rueben Lifuka says the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) should immediately rescind the appointment of Nsengiyumva Appolinaire as a member of the firm following allegations levelled against him.

And Lifuka says government should seriously address the allegations levelled against President Edgar Lungu, adding that the statements which have been made by State House and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so far, are confusing.

A News Diggers Investigation revealed that the Rwandese national called Nsengiyumva Appolinaire, who was named by that country's rebel leader Maj Nsabimana Sankara Callixte in a court testimony as his link to President Edgar Lungu is actually a member of the IDC procurement committee in Zambia.

Responding to a press query on this investigation, Lifuka asked President Lungu to rescind Appolinaire's appointment.

"Given that the government has expressed a desire to go and investigate why Major Nsabimana made allegations against Zambia and President Lungu, we would like to urge that the starting point should be to talk to Mr Nsengiyumva Appolinaire who is reported to be in Zambia. There should be no stone left unturned and no sacred cows in the search for the truth in this matter. Given the allegations against Mr. Nsengiyumva, we call on the Group CEO for the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), to immediately rescind his appointment on the IDC Procurement Committee," Lifuka said.

"Similarly, government should relieve Mr Nsengiyumva of any positions where he serves as Board member or Board subcommittee member of other State Owned Enterprises or parastatals. Government entities should be insulated from these allegations and the gentleman should cease any association with public entities. We want to see seriousness in the way that this issue is handled and not the usual pedestrian approach we have witnessed in response to previous media exposes and allegations against government officials."

Lifuka said the government had an obligation to seriously address the matter.

"The revelations made by Major Nsabimana in his ongoing court case in Rwanda, make for very sad reading and it is our sincere hope that there is no iota of the truth in it. The Zambian government has an obligation to address this matter in a serious manner given the potential strain that this allegation may cause in the cordial relationship that this country enjoys with Rwanda. In instances of this nature, obfuscation in government statements in response to the allegation, simply serves to add to further and unnecessary speculation. We want to urge the Zambian government to provide clear, and relevant information on this matter to the public and this should be done at the earliest opportunity. The statements made so far from

Revelations in Rwanda issue deserve serious action from govt, IDC – TIZ

State House and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are ambiguous and still leave a number of questions unanswered," stated Lifuka.

IDC confirmed to News Diggers that Appolinaire was a procurement committee member of the country's parent company of government owned enterprises.

"Mr. Nsengiyumva Appolinaire, a procurement specialist, is one of the external members of the IDC Procurement Committee. He was first appointed in 2015 by the then Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the PPA of 2008 Section 13(2) (a) and Section 17(1). He was re-appointed in 2018, in accordance with the PPA of

2008. He holds no other position at the IDC," read the response to a press query.

Asked who appoints procurement committee members, the IDC said it was the responsibility of the the Chief Executive.

"Members of the IDC Procurement Committee are appointed by the Group Chief Executive Officer in his capacity as Controlling Officer, as stipulated in the Public Procurement Act (PPA) of 2008. The IDC Board of Directors does not participate in the appointment of the Procurement Committee or any other matters related to IDC as a procuring entity, as these are handled in accordance with the PPA," the response read.

And Appolinaire told News Diggers! that he has heard about the allegations levelled against him, but declined to explain his links to the rebel movement in Rwanda and his association with President Lungu, saying he was not in a position to talk about the issue because he had been unwell for the past seven months.

President Lungu has vehemently refuted media reports linking him to terrorist financing in Rwanda.

Rwandese rebel leader Maj Sankara, who faces 17 charges including Terrorism and murder in Rwanda, told that country's High Court for International and cross-border crimes that his group, National Liberation Force (FLN) received money

from the Zambian President to launch attacks against that country's current regime.

"Early 2019 before I was arrested, One Nsengiyumva Appolinaire a leader of PDR, one of the many political parties that form MRCD travelled to Zambia to meet Lungu to discuss how he would offer them more

support," Maj Sankara told the court, Monday, claiming they received US\$150, 000 towards the cause.

On Friday last week, upon returning from Kigali where he met President Paul Kagame as President Lungu's special envoy on diplomatic engagements around the issue, Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Malanji said the allegations bordered on national security, and as such government would launch investigations to establish how the rebel leader could link President Lungu to his terrorist activities.



TI Zambia Chapter president Rueben Lifuka

CEC records COVID-19 case

By Diggers Reporter

Copperbelt Energy Corporation Plc (CEC) has recorded a COVID-19 case at its Head Office in Kitwe.

According to a statement issued by CEC senior manager corporate communications Chama Nsabika, there were also two confirmed cases at Power Dynamos Football Club, which is sponsored by CEC.

"Consequently, the majority of staff will immediately revert to working remotely for an initial period of 14 days. Only the necessary staff as demanded by the need to maintain uninterrupted service provision to our customers will be maintained at our operations head office and in other work stations. The Company has notified the relevant health authorities with whom it is collaborating to observe further recommended guidelines including fumigation of offices and all work areas," stated Nsabika.

"The Company will continue to enforce the observance of the highest degree of preventive measures among its staff, individually and collectively, as it has done since the beginning of the pandemic and is looking into other measures to enhance the safety of its staff, family members and all stakeholders. CEC assures its customers of continued seamless service delivery at all times and will, to the furthest extent, rely on our existing high-end digital platforms for communication and provision of the same level of quality and reliable service that our customers are accustomed to. We encourage our stakeholders and the public to make full use of the variety of digital communication channels utilised by the Company to stay abreast."

AG's report reveals drastic drop in enrolment for special needs learners

By Mirriam Chabala

THE Auditor General's report has revealed that there is a drastic decrease in the enrolment rate of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) as well as those progressing from primary to secondary school.

The report has also revealed that there is no adequate infrastructure in schools to accommodate learners with special education needs, which forces schools to teach all learners with various disabilities in one classroom using different boards at the same time.

The report has also revealed that learners with special education needs are made to write the same examination as mainstream learners without considering their different abilities and are not even allocated separate classrooms.

Meanwhile, the report has revealed that the Special Education Unit does not have its own budget line under the Ministry of General Education, which makes the funding to the unit insufficient and difficult most times.

In the performance audit on the provision of special education in primary schools for the period 2014 to 2018, it was revealed that for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, learners who enrolled into primary school were 89,134, 89,646 and 103,218 respectively, while those progressing into secondary school were only 7,471, 17,369 and 20,092 respectively.

"Progression of LSEN Statistics show that the enrolment rate of learners with special needs reduces drastically

from primary to secondary. For the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, learners enrolled into primary school were 89,134, 89,646 and 103,218 respectively, while those progressing into secondary school were 7,471, 17,369 and 20,092 respectively. [And] according to interviews with the ministry management, there were no laid out standard guidelines on infrastructure development for SE (Special Education) under MOGE (Ministry of General Education). A further review of the Educational Statistical Bulletin (2015, 2016 and 2017) showed that statistical information on infrastructure in special schools was not included in the bulletins. Despite the lack of guidelines, some schools visited had built ramps and walkways to aid the physically disabled to have mobile access in the school," the report revealed.

It also noted that teaching and learning materials to ensure quality special education were not provided to LSEN at all levels of the education system.

"Appropriate assistive devices and teaching and learning materials are essential. Examples of learning and teaching aids for LSEN include braille materials, hearing aids, large print, augmentative and alternative communication devices.60In an interview, the Ministry management indicated that SE did not have a specific budget line allocated to it for the purchase of learning and teaching materials. Instead, each of the four directorates under the ministry

allocated an arbitrary figure towards the purchase of requisite materials and therefore, purchases were only made as and when the directorates provided funds. According to management, learning and teaching materials were not procured regularly due to insufficient funding," the report read.

It further revealed that there was no adequate infrastructure in schools to accommodate learners with special education needs who were further made to write the same examination as mainstream learners.

"LSEN are expected to sit the same exam as children in the mainstream, except they are eligible to 25% extra writing time. However, these guidelines did not consider the different disabilities as well as the degrees of disability in these children. For instance, those without limbs or had autism or other specific learning disabilities were still expected to write the same exam. Interviews with ministry officials also revealed that children with health-related disabilities such as intellectual disabilities could not handle stressful situations such as examinations for a lengthy period. For example, the grade seven exams have two exam sessions held on the same day, an hour apart. Interviews indicated that learners with such disabilities needed to rest for a bit more than two hours before they could be in the right frame of mind to sit the next exam," the report read.

"Then on information on infrastructure, ministry management revealed that there was no laid out

standard guidelines on infrastructure development. Physical inspection of eight schools and 14 units revealed that there were no specialised rooms available such as sickbay, multi-purpose gym, resource rooms, assessment and observation room and multi-sensory rooms. All of the 14 units visited were allocated one room for all grades or levels under SE. The Ministry was to construct a special school in each province in 2015 and 2016. However, no schools were constructed as at August 2019. Interviews revealed that due to inadequate funding, only one specialised school was being constructed in Lusaka out of all the 10 Provinces."

The audit also noted the absence of measures that ensured equal opportunities to education for children with special needs.

"Identification and screening educational assessment such as speech and reading were done by teachers while more complex cases were referred to local health facilities. However, the SE schools and local health facilities were not able to assess severe cases as they lacked equipment and referred these to the assessment centres. There are only four SE assessment centres in the country, namely University Teaching Hospital (UTH), Zambia Institute of Special Education (ZAMISE), University of Zambia (UNZA) and Holy Family in Monze. Three are in Lusaka Province and only one in Southern Province which made it difficult for those in other provinces to access these centres," read the report.

Solskjaer backs 'mentally strong' goalkeeper De Gea

OLE Gunnar Solskjaer insists David de Gea is mentally strong enough to bounce back from the mistakes he made against Chelsea ahead of Manchester United's crucial meeting with West Ham.

The Spaniard came under fire for the part he played in all three of Chelsea's goals at Wembley in the FA Cup semi-final, with Solskjaer having said the former Atletico Madrid star knows he should have done better with Mason

Mount's 25-yard effort at the start of the second half.

There have been calls for De Gea to be dropped ahead of United's two crucial Premier League games this week as they look to secure Champions League

qualification but Solskjaer would not be drawn into a debate over the goalkeeper.

Ahead of United's clash with West Ham on Wednesday evening, the Norwegian told reporters: "This is not going to become a David de Gea

press conference. We're just going to stick together.

"David's mentally strong enough to know his job is to perform in training the next day and be ready for the games."

When pushed on whether or not De Gea should be dropped in place of Sergio Romero, he added: "That's your job to talk about and write about and my job is to prepare a team for West Ham.

"We're not going to talk about individuals because no one here will fear we put more pressure on them."

Meanwhile, Solskjaer is likely to be without Eric Bailly for his side's final home league game of the season as the defender continues to

recover from a nasty clash of heads against Chelsea which saw him leave the pitch on a stretcher and wearing a neck brace.

The Ivory Coast international spent Sunday night in London receiving treatment before returning to Manchester on Monday and while the centre-back appears to be okay, Solskjaer does not think he will be available for the game.

"I don't think he'll be ready for this game, I've not seen him this morning yet," he said. "I think everyone is available apart from that, we've just got to stick together, stay strong, two games to go and we've given ourselves a good chance." **GOAL**

Arteta 'confident' on Aubameyang contract extension as Arsenal remain 'perfect place'

MIKEL Arteta remains "confident" that Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will sign a new contract at Arsenal, with the Gabonese striker considered to be in the "perfect place".

Uncertainty continues to reign when it comes to the future of a talismanic presence at Emirates Stadium.

Despite entering the final 12 months of his current deal, the Gunners' club captain is yet to commit to fresh terms.

With Arsenal in no position to allow another top talent to run a deal down

towards free agency, big decisions need to be made in north London.

There has been plenty of speculation regarding a move elsewhere for Aubameyang, with the 31-year-old striker hardly short on suitors, but Arteta still believes that an extension will be thrashed out.

Quizzed again on a long-running saga by Sky Sports, the Arsenal boss said when pressed on whether there is a deadline in place: "I don't know, to put a date right now is very difficult.

"I like the way the

conversations are going, I like what I'm hearing. I'm sure for both parties, the quicker we can do it, the better for everyone.

"I am confident he will extend his stay."

Asked where that confidence comes from, Arteta added: "He's generally happy. I think he is enjoying his football. He is settled in the country and his family are good.

"I think he can sense - and we've told him - how much we like him, how much we value him. I think the connection he has with

the fans is unique. I believe he is in the perfect place for him.

"Everything I have from him and the people around him is the same. So I don't have any arguments to say something different." **GOAL**

Ibrahimovic 'out of reach' for Monza, admits Galliani

MONZA will not be signing Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic ahead of next season, Adriano Galliani says.

The veteran forward has been linked with a move to the Lombardy club, who won promotion to Serie B after being taken over by former Milan president Silvio Berlusconi.

With ex-Rossoneri CEO Galliani also installed at the club, it has been suggested Monza could launch ambitious bids to sign Ibrahimovic and fellow former Milan star Kaka, who announced his retirement in December 2017.

Berlusconi admitted in June he remains "very attached" to the players, although Galliani later clarified that they would be considered in their spending, telling Sky: "Our budget will be used to get into Serie A. We won't go crazy, but we will do what's

necessary."

Speaking to Binario Sport, Galliani appears to have accepted defeat in any attempt to bring Ibrahimovic to the club.

"I met with Ibrahimovic last week," he said. "There's always a great bond between us, but I think his signing is beyond our reach and the reach of many Serie A clubs."

Ibrahimovic returned to Milan, where he won the Scudetto in 2011, as a free agent in January after leaving MLS side LA Galaxy.

However, he stated this month that he was playing for the club "purely for passion" and that he would not extend his stay beyond this season if Europa League football was the best they could offer.

"We'll see how I feel in

two months," he told La Gazzetta dello Sport. "We'll also see what's happening with the club. If this is the situation, to be honest, it's unlikely you'll see me at Milan next season.

"Ibra is not a player for the Europa League and Milan are not a club who belong in the Europa League."

Milan face Sassuolo on Tuesday knowing that a top-four finish is beyond them with four games remaining.

They are seventh in the table, 13 points behind Lazio in fourth but only two adrift of Roma in fifth.

Zlatan has played an important role for the club since joining in January, scoring five goals and contributing a further four assists in his 14 Serie A appearances to date. **GOAL**



Assembly takes Kitwe UTD in midweek clash

By Tim Zulu

EDEN University National Division One League side National Assembly Coach Misheck Lungu has declared his side ready for battle against Kitwe United in the FAZ Week 23 midweek rescheduled match set for Queensmead Stadium in Lusaka.

"We expect a tough match. As you are aware, there are no easy games in this league, but looking at the quality of friendlies we have had and how we fared against the Super League side, I can confirm the team is in good shape," Lungu confidently said.

The former Mumbwa Medics mentor said the team's current position on the log was "not that good" so they needed to "go flat out and fight for three points".

"Of course, it will not be easy but we will throw in everything to get a positive result. It will be a 50/50 affair but pressure is with them, because they know if they lose this one, it will be a disaster in their search for championship. So we expect they will come gun blazing especially after that Saturday loss (to Police College). Whichever way, we are ready for them," Lungu said.

"And the fact that they are in the recovery process, who knows? That can work in our favour. So whether they have recovered or not, we are geared for them and ready to fight for three points."

And Kitwe United coach Steven Mwansa said the 1-2 loss against Police College is "water under the bridge".

"We have a very important game on our hands today (Wednesday) so we don't want to focus on that painful loss. This is football, you can't keep mourning. We messed up our chances on Saturday and now we have this last chance to go top on the table, otherwise if we let go of this one, then we shall make life quite difficult for ourselves. So we have no choice but to go flat out and get the maximum points. If anything, we are good to go," said Mwansa.

Kitwe United who blew up their chances of taking the Eden leadership against Police College have another chance begging to get to the top of the table, only if they play their cards right against 10th placed rejuvenated Parliamentarians.



Chelsea enter talks for €76m Leverkusen star Havertz

CHELSEA are in contract talks with Bayer Leverkusen star Kai Havertz but the Blues are yet to have agreed a fee with the Bundesliga club.

Peter Bosz' men missed out on qualification for the Champions League, accelerating the Germany international's desire to leave in the near future.

Leverkusen were open to selling the 21-year-old but publicly stated that they wanted upwards of €100 million (£90m/\$111m) for their prized asset.

Goal has learned that Chelsea are keen to negotiate a lower fee of around €76m (£70m/\$87m), and it remains unclear when discussions will reach a conclusion.

The Blues are in a strong position to sign Havertz, with no other teams currently in talks to land the midfielder, who is keen to make the switch to Stamford Bridge.

Although Chelsea need just one win from their final two league games to seal Champions League football for next season, it is understood that Havertz would still join the Blues

even if they don't seal a place in Europe's premier club competition.

Having scored 17 goals and provided eight assists in all competitions in 2019-20, the versatile forward has emerged as Germany's outstanding young talent, with Frank Lampard having publicly referred to him as a "top player".

Chelsea initially faced competition to sign Havertz, but with the financial repercussions of the coronavirus crisis taking hold, it is likely to be a far more cautious transfer market this summer.

Indeed, the Blues were able to secure the signing of Timo Werner as Liverpool pulled out of the race due to financial concerns, with the west London outfit having also signed Ajax star Hakim Ziyech.

Bayern Munich and Real Madrid have both expressed an interest in Havertz in the past but are unable to raise the required funds to do a deal this summer.

As well as wanting to sign Havertz, the Blues are also exploring options at both centre-back and left-



back, while the signing of a new goalkeeper could also be on the cards.

Leicester City are not interested in selling Ben Chilwell - who is at the top of the club's left-back wish list - while Ajax star Nicolas Tagliafico is also an option, amid competition from Atletico Madrid.

Should the Blues move to bring in Atleti goalkeeper Jan Oblak, the Liga side

are set to demand that his €120m (£110m/\$138m) release clause be activated if they want to lure the highly-rated Slovenian to Stamford Bridge.

As for outgoing, Chelsea could raise further funds by selling Emerson Palmieri - who has significant interest from Inter - while Juventus are monitoring Jorginho's situation.

Meanwhile, Michy Batshuayi will likely leave the club this summer, along with loanees including Tiemoue Bakayoko, Danny Drinkwater and several other wantaway stars. Olivier Giroud is another who is on Inter's radar.

Despite it being likely a number of first-team players will leave in the summer the west Londoners are still keen to

keep 31-year-old winger Willian, whose contract is expiring at the end of the season. **GOAL**

Juve want Poch to replace Sarri



THE Old Lady could be looking to switch managers Juventus have started talks with Mauricio Pochettino's representatives as they consider to bring in the Argentine coach to take over from Maurizio Sarri.

Despite Juve leading the Serie A by eight points with four matches remaining, Sarri's job is under threat because of the team's decline in performances, according to La Stampa.

The Italian publication states Juve have sounded out Pochettino, who remains without a job since being sacked by Tottenham in November. **GOAL**

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