

News from Zambia

December 2017

No. 929

NIGHT DRIVING: The Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD) has welcomed Government's intention to lift the ban on movement of trucks at night, stating this will enhance economic activity in the country. The Transport Minister, Brian Mushimba, is tomorrow expected to sign a revised Statutory Instrument (SI) to lift the ban restricting movement of trucks between 21:00 hours to 05:00 hours but Passenger Service Vehicles (PSVs) remain banned. CTPD head of programmes and research, Brian Mwiinga, said the move was progressive because time was crucial to efficient delivery of goods which also affected Government revenue collection. (Times of Zambia 5th)

IMF – DEBT DISTRESS: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says Zambia's public debt has been rising at unsustainable levels and is now at high risk of distress. Meanwhile, the IMF has described its relationship with Zambia as a saga. According to IMF, projections show that the country's debt levels could reach 90 per cent of GDP in 2021 in a shock scenario as the government's appetite for borrowing for infrastructure development continues. (The Mast 5th)

TWO NEW HOSPITALS PLANNED: The construction of a multi-million Cancer Diseases Hospital for Copperbelt province is expected to commence before the end of next year. Copperbelt Permanent Secretary Elias Kamanga said the Hospital, which will cost approximately USD25 million, will be amongst two major health facilities earmarked for construction in Kitwe. He said the other facility set for construction is a specialised Hospital to attend to cardiovascular, renal and other specialised health complications. "We are also convinced that the two Hospitals will not only serve the people of the Copperbelt but reduce similar pressure on people in the Northern part of Zambia." (Lusaka Times 5th)

DEFIANT FISHERMEN RISK ARREST: Chief Nsama of the Bwile people in Nsama District has warned fishermen abrogating the fish ban that they risk being prosecuted. He says government policy to implement the fish ban is critical for preserving the fish stocks in the area. The traditional leader has commended government for deploying marine commandos to patrol water bodies in Mpulungu. Chief Nsama says since the marines were deployed in the area, reports of local people being apprehended on Lake Tanganyika have drastically reduced. (ZNBC 7th)

ROALD DAHL CLASSIC: Barefeet Theatre will this weekend present its latest stage production at the Lusaka Playhouse. 'Matilda', an adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic children's book, will be told through Barefeet's world of sound, song, dance, puppetry, circus and spectacle, all wrapped up with a Zambian Christmas message. Founded by former street children in 2006, Barefeet Theatre uses play, creativity and empowerment to give vulnerable children in Zambia a chance at a better life. The NGO was established as a response to the plight of young people living on the streets. "Supporting Barefeet means supporting the most vulnerable children in Zambia," stated Malesardi. (The Mast 8th)

BETTER NEWS FOR COPPER: Zambia's 2017 copper output is expected to increase to between 800,000 and 850,000 tonnes due to stable power supply and higher copper prices from 774,290 tonnes in the last year, mines minister Christopher Yaluma said on Thursday. Zambia's copper production is likely to increase further to reach 1 million tonnes next year, Yaluma said, citing improved power generation and higher prices. (Reuters 14th)

WORLD FIRST FOR NATIONAL PARK: Luambe National Park, which forms a part of Zambia's famous Luangwa Valley, has achieved a conservation milestone by becoming the most carbon neutral national park in the world. Luambe's carbon neutral status is a result of the United States AID-funded Community Forests Programme, implemented by BioCarbon Partners, in partnership with the Government. This world-first level of carbon neutrality means the emissions of all tourism and conservation management activities within the park are offset, including all international tourist airline travel. USAID-Zambia economic development director, Jeremy Boley, said this status showed the world that Zambia took emissions reduction seriously. (Times of Zambia 17th)

OLYMPIC SCHOLARSHIPS: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has awarded four-year scholarships to runners Sydney Siame and Kabange Mupopo and two others ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Zambia Amateur Athletics Association (ZAAA) president Elias Mpondela, at a briefing in Lusaka on Saturday, named the other two as Hazemba Chindamba (100m) and his daughter Suwilanji (100m). Siame is a 100m and 200 runner while Mupopo competes in 200m and 400m. (Zambia Daily Mail 18th)

LAND OWNERSHIP REFORMS: Government is formulating a policy to reduce the tenure of land ownership by foreigners from the current 99 years to 25 years. Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Jean Kapata, has also said her ministry will re-advertise 13,000 plots that have been offered to Zambians because of failure by some beneficiaries to pay for the pieces of land. Ms Kapata said during a Patriotic Front interactive forum yesterday that the new policy will address the issue of foreigners owning vast pieces of land at the expense of Zambians. (Zambia Daily Mail 18th)

PEACEKEEPERS RETURN: A contingent of Zambian soldiers who were on a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Central African Republic are back home after a one-year tour of duty. The 223 soldiers were part of the battalion which was deployed in the Central African Republic last year. The troops were commended for their exemplary performance in the mission area, and the female soldiers were also praised for their role. The Central African Republic has been in conflict since its independence in 1960. (ZNBC 21st)

ARMY WORM CATERPILLARS ON THE MARCH: Army worm, the crop-eating caterpillars that wreaked havoc in farmers' fields in different parts of the country last year, have been spotted in Mumbwa District in Central Province. The latest emergence comes barely two days after authorities in Southern Province revealed that Mazabuka, Monze and Pemba districts had also been invaded. Central Province Permanent Secretary, Chanda Kabwe, described the situation as bad and needing immediate remedy to save the crops. He said about two hectares of maize field in the area had been ravaged by the pest while fears among the farmers were growing. Mr Kabwe, however, said that K36 million was released last week to fight the breakout and assured that the Government was prepared to help the farmers secure their crops. (Times of Zambia 26th)

CONTROLLING CHOLERA: President Edgar Lungu has directed all the three wings of the Defence Force to join the Ministry of Health and Lusaka City Council in escalated efforts to contain the spread of cholera in the city. This morning the President reviewed the ongoing interventions led by the Ministry of Health and Lusaka City Council and came to the conclusion that emergency steps needed to be taken to stem the tide of the epidemic which has now spread to new areas outside the zones where the deadly waterborne disease broke out in October this year. Lusaka has been recording an average of 60 new cases every day. The President notes with great sadness that a total of 41 people have died of the disease since its outbreak. (Lusaka Times 29th)

DRILLING DEEP: Katete district in Eastern province has had about 42 boreholes drilled in different parts during the 2017 third and fourth quarters. The boreholes are meant to enhance residents' access to clean water. Katete District Council Rural Water Sanitation Coordinator, Maggie Mvula, said out of the 42 boreholes, 20 have been drilled by government at a cost of K 740, 000 while 11 other boreholes were drilled through the District Commissioner's office and 11 more by World Vision. She said the boreholes were meant to increase sanitation, access to clean water and reducing the distance which people cover to water points. (Lusaka Times 29th)

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

Exchange Rates, 31st December 2017: £1= K13.47 US\$1= K9.99

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