

# News from Zambia

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**WIDENING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION:** To equip learners in secondary schools to be think tanks and start applying knowledge in everyday life for the well-being of the country, the Ministry of General Education has escalated the teaching of science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) subjects. STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning which not only intends to enhance and promote human capital development, but to be able to contribute to national development. In Zambia, STEM is offered at four career pathways – Agricultural, General, Technological and Hospitality and Tourism. National Science Centre director Benson Banda says Zambia is currently piloting STEM education in 52 schools. (Zambia Daily Mail 2<sup>nd</sup>)

**LUSAKA WRITERS' CONFERENCE:** African Writers Space Zambia has challenged Zambian writers to show the world how rich the country is by telling local stories through their publications. Country Coordinator, Marita Banda, notes that Zambia has many talented writers who should come out of their comfort zones and contribute to the African hub of writers. Ms Banda was speaking during the 3rd African Writers Conference, held at Alliance Francaise in Lusaka this morning. Mrs Banda said Zambia is privileged to host the writers' conference with 30 participating countries after it was launched in Nigeria three years ago. (Lusaka Times 7<sup>th</sup>)

**LEST WE FORGET:** President Edgar Lungu today attended the National Cenotaph in Lusaka in memory of the fallen heroes during the World Wars one and two. A three-gun salute was presented in honour of the fallen heroes and a homily conducted by Director Chaplaincy at the Zambia Air Force, Colonel Reverend Malcom Nyambe. Later, the Head of State led members of the diplomatic corps and freedom fighters in laying of wreaths in honour of the fallen heroes. Nearly two million Africans fought in World War one and approximately 1 million Sub-Saharan Africans fought for their colonial powers in World War two. 'It was a great privilege indeed that WW1 witnessed its end in this country, Zambia on 25th November, 1918,' Lt Colonel Mfula, Chaplain Northern Command Military hospital, said. (Lusaka Times 8<sup>th</sup>)

**READY FOR TAKEOFF:** Zambia is eager to get Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine as soon as it hits the market, Zambia's Ambassador to Russia has revealed, adding that health ministers of the two countries were already in talks on the matter. Russia became the first country to register a vaccine against COVID-19 and it started rolling out Sputnik V before the end of the third phase of clinical trials. Zambia is very interested in the medicine and is waiting for it to go on the international market, the ambassador confirmed to Sputnik. (Lusaka Times 10<sup>th</sup>)

**LEMON SQUEEZY:** The high demand for lemons in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo has caused a shortage of the citrus fruits in most towns on the Copperbelt. Lemons in DRC are highly sought because they are used in the production of skin lightening creams. According to dermatologists, lemon juice has skin bleaching agents which slow down the development of hyperactive melanocytes cells which make the skin dark. A check in Kitwe, Kalulushi, Chingola and Mufulira districts revealed that the fruit has become scarce. (Zambia Daily Mail 12<sup>th</sup>)

**BILL 10 DEBATE:** Constitutional Amendment Bill 10 cannot be taken back to the National Assembly during the current parliamentary session President Lungu has confirmed. Speaking to members of the Kapiri Mposhi Pastors Fellowship, the president told his supporters to back PF candidates in next year's elections if they wanted to see the legislation debated again. The president reiterated his support for the bill on the grounds that it would split up larger constituencies and allow women to play a larger role in national development. (Zambian Observer 13<sup>th</sup>)

**FISHING BAN:** Fisheries and Livestock Minister, Nkandu Luo, has announced that there will be a fishing ban starting December 1 until February next year. Professor Luo says the 2020-2021 annual fish ban will include Lake Tanganyika, in Mpulungu, Northern province, and Lake Kariba in Siavonga. World Fish Country Director, Victor Siamudala, said the organization will continue to partner with government in promoting various innovations that are aimed at sustainably improving fish production. (ZNBC 13<sup>th</sup>)

**ZAMBIA'S DEBT PROBLEM:** Bondholders rejected Zambia's request for debt relief, setting the southern African nation on course to becoming Africa's first sovereign default since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Holders of Zambia's \$3 billion of Eurobonds voted against the country's proposal to suspend interest payments for six months, the finance ministry said on Friday. The government, which skipped a \$42.5 million coupon on Oct. 14, now has until the end of Friday to either pay the arrears or trigger a default event that could leave the government shut out of debt markets for years. In response, the finance ministry implied it's heading for a default, saying its only other option was to run up arrears, even after Vice President Inonge Wina said earlier Friday that Zambia would honor its debt obligations. The standoff is being keenly watched by other poor nations seeking debt relief, as well as fixed-income investors worried about where the next potential default may be. (Zambian Observer 13<sup>th</sup>)

**ZAMBIAN BAKE OFF:** In an effort to reduce dependence on other people, about 1,000 youths and women in Lusaka have been trained in cake-baking. Lusaka Mayor Miles Sampa says the initiative, which started when coronavirus spread to Zambia in March this year, is aimed at empowering women and youths. Mr Sampa said Cake Market Zambia embarked on the programme to contribute to household food security and poverty reduction by fast-tracking participation of women and youths in the baking industry. The mayor was speaking during a graduation ceremony for the one-week master class training in Lusaka. (Zambia Daily Mail 16<sup>th</sup>)

**RETREATMENT PLANT:** Two United Kingdom based mining firms joined hands establishing a tailings retreatment plant which will be processing mineral materials from tailings dams in Kitwe. Copper Tree Minerals and Jubilee Metals Group will be processing materials from the tailing dam behind Kitwe High Court, Nkana East and another place West of Mopani Copper Mines in Kitwe. The companies will also be involved in remediation of the land beneath the tailings dams to make them suitable for public and commercial use. (Lusaka Times 17<sup>th</sup>)

**HOLLYWOOD COMES TO ZAMBIA:** South Africa-based Zambian filmmaker, Frank Kasonde, is spearheading efforts to produce a movie titled The Struggle, aimed at reliving Zambian pre-independence events by depicting the life of first President Kenneth Kaunda from the day he was born to him becoming president in 1964. This is an inspirational story of an ordinary boy from Lubwa mission who grows up to be a teacher among the Bemba before taking up the struggle for independence. Project coordinator, Jack Mwale, says they need US\$20 million for the movie. "We want to attract top Hollywood actors and someone from outside the country is being earmarked to play the role of Dr Kenneth Kaunda," he says. "The former President Kenneth Kaunda, and his family have already endorsed the project and we want President Edgar Lungu to also endorse it. When that is done, then we will start knocking on the doors of the corporate world for financial assistance." (Zambia Daily Mail 21<sup>st</sup>)

**PROTECTING NATURE:** Government has partnered with Worldwide Fund for Nature Zambia to halt the extinction of plant and animal species in the country. Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Jean Kapata, says her ministry will incorporate the New Deal for Nature and People campaign with existing policies to enhance protection of natural resources. Ms Kapata explains that she will soon seek cabinet approval of about 2.5 to three million hectares of land in the country to be put under restoration. "It is sad that we are losing vital plants and animals. For example, the country has 20,000 Kafue black Lechwe compared to 250,000 Lechwe the country had in the 1930s and we need to protect our nature together for posterity to benefit," she stressed. She stated that the country has lost plant and animal species that are key to the country's social and economic growth. (Lusaka Times 27<sup>th</sup>)

**CURRENT CORONAVIRUS STATUS:** The current number of cases are as follows: There have been 17,589 positive cases of COVID-19 of whom 307 are still active, 16,925 have recovered and, sadly, there have been 357 deaths. (MSN World News 30<sup>th</sup>)

**Exchange Rates, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020: £1= K28.05    US\$1= K21.01**

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