



By Staff Reporter

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(Continues on P2)

LOCAL CONTRACTORS URGED TO TAP HIGH-VALUE PROJECT



Kabuswe Cracks Down on Illegal Mining Around Tailings Dams



Wheelbarrow pushers carry charcoal along Kalusha Bwalya Road in Lusaka's Soweto Market, one of the city's busiest streets, nearly overtaken by traders and almost impassable during peak hours. - Picture by Mubanga Chileche



Local Contractors Urged to Seize High-Value Infrastructure Opportunities

By Staff Reporter
Government has called on local contractors to position themselves more aggressively for participation in high-value infrastructure projects, warning that limited Zambian involvement in large-scale works continues to constrain the sector's full economic potential.

Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development Permanent Secretary, Prof Albert Malama, said despite the majority of registered contractors being Zambian-owned, their footprint in major infrastructure developments remains disproportionately low.

Speaking during the National Council for Construction (NCC) 12th Combined Graduation Ceremony on Friday, Prof Malama stressed that local firms must step up and take advantage of emerging opportunities by strengthening technical capacity and improving financial readiness.

"The graduation we witness today is a clear demonstration of Government's commitment to strengthening skills development. The knowledge and competencies acquired by the graduates will contribute directly to improving standards within the construction industry and enhancing the quality of infrastructure delivered across the country," he said.

He noted, however, that skills development alone is not sufficient unless local contractors actively position themselves to compete for large-scale contracts.

"While the sector continues to grow, participation of Zambian contractors in high-value projects remains limited. This calls for deliberate efforts to strengthen local capacity, improve access to finance, and ensure that local players are ready to take on complex, large-scale infrastructure works," Prof Malama said.

He emphasized

that increased local participation is critical not only for industry growth but also for retaining economic value within the country through job creation, skills transfer, and business expansion.

And NCC Executive Director, Prof Paul Makasa, underscored the central role of the

construction sector in Zambia's socio-economic transformation, noting that infrastructure development directly reflects the quality of skills within the industry.

"The construction sector remains one of the most critical drivers of Zambia's socio-economic development. From roads and bridges

to schools, hospitals, and housing, the work of skilled construction professionals is visible in every corner of our country," he said.

Prof Makasa added that the NCC will continue prioritising capacity building through the National Construction School to ensure that local

contractors are adequately equipped to meet the demands of increasingly complex infrastructure projects.

"Infrastructure development is only as strong as the skills behind it. This is why we remain committed to building a competent, competitive, and industry-ready local

workforce," he said.

The call comes amid growing recognition that empowering local contractors to take part in high-value projects is key to building a resilient and self-sustaining construction industry in Zambia.

Kabuswe Cracks Down on Illegal Mining Around Tailings Dams



By Staff Reporter

Minister of Mines and Minerals Development Paul Kabuswe has directed the Mines Regulation Commission (MLC) to bar illegal miners from accessing decommissioned tailings dams, citing serious safety concerns.

Speaking on Saturday during a visit to Chambeshi, where a decommissioned tailings dam recently collapsed, Mr Kabuswe said illegal mining activities were largely to blame for weakening the structure.

He warned that scavenging by illegal miners compromises the integrity of the dams, which were originally built to last.

"We must not encourage illegal mining. We even found someone excavating as we were driving here. We must be wary of illegal miners who come to excavate," he said.

Mr Kabuswe explained that despite the dam being decommissioned in 1965, it had remained structurally sound for decades, an indication that external interference may have contributed to its failure.

"For it to give in now, after being decommissioned in 1965, means it had very strong walls. Otherwise, it could have failed a

long time ago," he said.

The Minister has since tasked the MLC with conducting inspections on all decommissioned tailings dams across the country to assess their safety and prevent similar incidents.

He emphasized the

importance of a robust regulatory framework, noting that Zambia had, for a long time, operated without a dedicated regulator to oversee such facilities.

"What is important here is the role of the regulator. These structures date as far

back as the 1950s, even before independence. As government, through the regulator, we must ensure all disused tailings are checked," Mr Kabuswe said.

The directive comes amid growing concerns over illegal mining activities and their impact on infrastructure and public safety.



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Editorial

A Timely Lifeline for Business Amid Fuel Price Pressures

Zambia's decision to forgo an estimated US\$200 million in revenue through fuel tax relief is not merely a consumer-oriented intervention—it is a strategic buffer for the country's productive sectors at a critical moment. By suspending excise duty and

zero-rating VAT on petroleum products, Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane has effectively lowered a key cost driver that cuts across the entire economy.

For the business community, particularly in transport, manufacturing, agriculture, and logistics, fuel is not just another

input—it is a foundational cost component. Any volatility in fuel prices transmits

competitiveness. This policy intervention, therefore, acts as an immediate stabilizer.

allows them to maintain pricing structures without passing excessive costs onto consumers.

More importantly, the relief enhances short-term predictability. Businesses operate best in environments where cost variables are relatively stable. By softening fuel price spikes, government has created breathing room for firms to plan, budget, and sustain operations without abrupt disruptions. This is particularly critical for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which often lack the financial buffers to absorb sudden cost escalations.



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quickly into higher operating expenses, thinner margins, and ultimately, reduced

It cushions firms from external shocks stemming from geopolitical tensions and

More importantly, the relief enhances short-term predictability. Businesses operate best in environments where cost variables are relatively stable. By softening fuel price spikes, government

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What should I do if I get a job offer but I am still waiting for feedback from another company?

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Zambia's Public Debt Nears \$29 Billion as Economy Records Modest Growth

Zambia's total public sector debt rose to US\$28,959.69 million by the end of the fourth quarter of 2025, according to the latest bulletin released by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning.

The debt stock comprises US\$16,145.15 million in Central Government external debt, US\$1,368.81 million in Government-guaranteed State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) external debt, and US\$11,445.72 million (K253,727.19 million) in Central Government domestic debt.

The report further indicates that private sector external debt stood at US\$5,858.68 million as of the end of the third



Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane Ministry of Finance and National Planning

quarter of 2025. Meanwhile, total arrears at the close of the fourth quarter reached US\$8,019.78

million, with public sector external arrears accounting for US\$4,773.10 million and

domestic arrears at US\$3,246.69 million. On economic performance, Zambia recorded a

growth rate of 3.6 percent in the third quarter of 2025, up from 2.7 percent in the corresponding period in 2024—reflecting a 0.9 percentage point increase. The growth was largely driven by strong performances in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing (38.5 percent), arts, entertainment and recreation (25.6 percent), information and communication (21.6 percent), transport and storage (20.3 percent), water supply (17.8 percent), and professional, scientific and technical activities (13.1 percent). In terms of

external buffers, gross international reserves increased by US\$372.1 million to US\$5,582.69 million at the end of December 2025, compared to US\$5,160.52 million recorded in September 2025. This translates to 4.8 months of import cover, slightly down from 5.2 months, largely due to an upward revision in import values from US\$11.9 billion to US\$13.9 billion. The rise in reserves was mainly attributed to net purchases by the Bank of Zambia amounting to US\$387.5 million, alongside inflows from World Bank-supported projects.

Fuel Tax Waiver to Ease Cost of Living, But Not Sustainable – Economist



Economist Kelvin Chisanga says the Government's decision to waive taxes on petrol and diesel will provide immediate relief on transport and food prices, though he cautions that the measure is only viable in the short term.

Government recently suspended excise duty and Value Added Tax (VAT) on fuel in a bid to reduce pump prices and cushion households from rising living costs.

In an interview, Chisanga said the move would help lower transportation costs,

which are a key driver of food prices and overall inflation. He noted that this intervention is expected to ease pressure on households and businesses grappling with a high-cost economic environment influenced by global market dynamics.

"This will translate into reduced transport costs and gradually ease food prices, offering much-needed short-term support to households, businesses and the broader economy," he said.

However, Chisanga

warned that the policy comes at a fiscal cost, estimating revenue losses of between K1.2 billion and K1.5 billion over a three-month period due to the suspension of VAT and excise duty.

He stressed that while the intervention is timely, it is not sustainable in the long run, as prolonged implementation could lead to fiscal indiscipline and strain Government finances.

Chisanga further explained that the measure is largely a response to ongoing geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East, which have contributed to elevated global fuel prices.

He added that once global conditions stabilise, the policy is expected to be reversed, allowing the country to return to its normal tax framework and maintain fiscal discipline.

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Zambia Foregoes US\$200 Million to Cushion Fuel Price Shock

By Alexis Chilumbwe
 The Zambian government has forgone approximately US\$200 million in revenue as part of measures to shield citizens from rising fuel costs triggered by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Minister of Finance and National Planning, Situmbeko Musokotwane, said the relief has been implemented through the suspension of excise duty and the zero-rating of Value Added Tax (VAT) on petroleum products. Dr. Musokotwane disclosed this during the ongoing Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington, D.C., where he shared Zambia's approach to navigating the emerging global economic pressures linked to geopolitical tensions.

He warned that African economies face a heightened risk of an energy crisis within the next 12 months due to instability in the Gulf

region, noting that such a development could exacerbate inflation, increase production costs, and strain already tight fiscal positions.

Addressing delegates at the IMF Africa Fiscal Forum, Dr. Musokotwane urged African governments to adopt more strategic fiscal policies that go beyond managing recurring shocks, emphasizing the need to boost productivity, enhance energy security, and drive structural economic transformation.

"While support from institutions such as the IMF is welcome, African governments must continue implementing domestic reforms that strengthen resilience and improve the quality of public spending," he said.

The minister stressed the importance of reallocating resources from inefficient subsidies to high-impact sectors. He cited Zambia's shift from generalized fuel subsidies to investments in free education and



Minister of Finance and National Planning, Situmbeko Musokotwane

social services as a deliberate move toward more effective public spending.

Dr. Musokotwane

also highlighted reforms in agricultural support programmes, particularly the use of digital systems to

improve targeting, eliminate inefficiencies, and remove ineligible beneficiaries.

He further challenged

African nations to confront deeper structural challenges, including a limited productive base and declining participation in global trade despite the continent's abundant natural resources and youthful population.

"Africa has fallen behind in sectors where it once had strong footing. Countries that invest consistently in productivity, skills development, manufacturing, and value addition are better positioned to withstand economic shocks," he said.

He concluded by noting that nations that have successfully transformed their economies did so through deliberate policy reforms, expanded production capacity, and sustained economic growth, rather than prolonged reliance on external support.

Ukraine moves into Africa's food supply chain with Ghana wheat plant plan



A combine harvester cuts a field of wheat on a farm. Ghana is looking to process more of its wheat locally as imports surge and prices remain volatile. (Photo by James Wakibia/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images)

The proposal, discussed in Accra between Agriculture Minister Eric Opoku and Ukraine's Deputy Minister Denys Bashlyk, marks a shift from simple grain imports towards local processing and regional distribution.

The planned facility would form part of a broader agreement signed in 2025 to position Ghana as a hub for Ukrainian agricultural products in West Africa. Key details, including location and investment size, have not been disclosed.

The move comes as Ghana's dependence on imported wheat deepens. Imports rose by nearly 57 per cent over four years to about 1.09 million tonnes in 2025, according to US Department of Agriculture data, driven by growing demand for bread, noodles and other processed foods.

That dependence has left the country exposed to global shocks, particularly since the Russia-Ukraine war disrupted grain supplies and drove up prices across many African markets.

For Ukraine, one of the world's largest wheat exporters, the project offers a way to expand into Africa, where demand is rising but local processing capacity

remains limited. The country exported more than 20 million tonnes of wheat in 2024 despite ongoing conflict.

The talks also reflect Kyiv's wider push to deepen ties with African economies through its "Food from Ukraine" initiative, launched to sustain exports and build new trade partnerships.

Beyond the flour plant, both countries are exploring support

for Ghanaian farmers, including the distribution of five million seed packets and investment in storage and value chains.

Mr Opoku said the partnership aligns with Ghana's Feed Ghana Programme, which aims to boost domestic production and reduce reliance on imports.v

Analysts say such investments

could become more common as African countries seek to move up the value chain from raw imports to local processing, while exporters like Ukraine look to diversify away from traditional markets in Europe and Asia.

Businessinsider

Kemcore plans Africa-based mining chemical plants in bid to cut imports

Africa-based mining chemicals importer Kemcore is planning to build its own processing plants in Botswana and Angola, aiming for reduced exposure to geopolitical risk attached to imports from China and the Middle East.

Africa is a pivotal supplier of critical minerals and a battleground for the United States and China as Washington races to clip Beijing's dominance in the sector by securing supply chains. Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia anchor Africa's copper production, while Congo dominates global cobalt output, placing the central African

copperbelt at the heart of the energy-transition minerals contest.

However, chemical inputs, including sulfuric acid and sodium metabisulphite (SMBS) used to extract those metals, are mostly imported, exposing miners to supply disruptions, including from geopolitical risk, the latest being the war in Iran.

Sulfuric acid prices at Tanzania's port of Dar es Salaam are trading at a premium after the war disrupted sulphur shipments, Kemcore founder and commercial officer, Calisto Radithipa told Reuters.**CNBS**



Raw copper from Zambia awaits export in a warehouse at Newlyn Terminal at Bayhead at the port in Durban, South Africa, April 4, 2024. REUTERS/Rogan Ward/File Photo

Morocco and EU sign deals to become "third voice" in global AI

The European Union and Morocco have signed a range of deals aimed at fostering closer cooperation in artificial intelligence, as the two sides work to create a "third voice" in the global AI industry.

The EU-Morocco Digital Dialogue was launched yesterday, which is aimed at enabling "cooperation in areas such as AI, support for digital start-ups, secure and trusted digital infrastructure, as well as interoperability of public digital infrastructure solutions."

The Dialogue will also facilitate

advanced cooperation between Moroccan AI research institutes and AI factories, with four European supercomputing centres partnering with Morocco's Mohammed VI University, which is home to Africa's most powerful supercomputer.

Work also remains ongoing on the Medusa Optical Fibre Cable, which will connect Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia with Cyprus, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. When completed, the subsea cable will allow SMEs and universities in North Africa to benefit from greatly improved internet speeds.

The EU-Morocco Digital Dialogue aims to deepen cross-Mediterranean AI cooperation and chip away at US and Chinese dominance

'Morocco is moving very fast'

Speaking at this week's GITEC conference in Marrakech, Henna Virkkunen, EU's executive vice-president for tech sovereignty, security, and democracy, said that "Morocco and the European Union are bound by a very long and strategic partnership rooted in

history, culture, and innovation."

"From the other side of the Mediterranean, we see and feel that Morocco is moving very fast in the field of digital transformation," she said.

"Morocco is an African leader in terms of mobile and fixed connectivity rollouts, while it is also digitising

public services at a record speed, fostering a thriving startup ecosystem, and developing an ambitious AI strategy."

Virkkunen added that the EU would be working on further fibre optic cable projects in West and East Africa.

BusinessInsider

Zambia Off to Strong Start in Africa Qualifiers - Shimishi

(From page 8)

The men's 4x400m team is the closest, currently ranked 26th, while the mixed 4x100m team sits at position 30. Other rankings include men's 4x100m (59), women's 4x100m (64), mixed 4x400m (41), and women's 4x400m (33).

"While we are narrowly outside qualification in some events, we are encouraged by the progress being made and believe we

can improve moving forward," he said.

Meanwhile, Zambia will send an eight-member athlete delegation to the Southern Region Under-18 and Under-20 Championships in Mauritius, alongside two coaches and one official. The final team list is expected to be released next week.

Shimishi said the competition is a key development platform aimed at giving young

athletes regional exposure as part of a long-term growth strategy.

On preparations for the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Shimishi revealed that Zambia has so far secured only one slot for a male athlete, who will be unveiled next week.

He urged coaches across the country to intensify preparations, noting that additional qualification opportunities could still emerge.

In preparations for the Commonwealth Games, Shimishi confirmed that Samukonga has already qualified in the 400m,

with hopes that more athletes, including relay teams, will follow suit in the coming weeks.

He further disclosed that Zambian athletes and coaches continue to attract international invitations, signaling growing recognition of the country's athletics profile.

In a related development, Zambia has sent a four-member delegation to a high-performance Youth Athletes Development Project in Kenya, involving eight countries and organised in collaboration with the National Olympic Committee of Zambia, the National Olympic Committee of Kenya, and the African Athletics Development Centre.

The delegation includes coaches Mike

Musanda and Jeddah Godas Phiri, alongside athletes Nchimunya Munsanje and Thelma Kayinda.

Shimishi said the five-day camp is designed to enhance technical skills, provide international exposure, and equip both athletes and coaches with modern training methods ahead of global competitions.

"Building tomorrow's champions starts today," he said.

He also commended athletes, coaches and stakeholders for their continued efforts, urging them to remain focused and committed as Zambia pushes to strengthen its competitiveness on the continental and global stage.



Zambia Athletics Staff members, stakeholders and athletes pose for a photo during their preparations for the upcoming Africa Senior Championships

ICR Grows into Zambia's Largest Corporate Wellness Sporting Event



(From page 8)

"It is an honour to stand before you today as we officially launch the 26th edition of the Inter Company Relay," Bwalya said. "Over the years, this initiative has grown into the largest and most engaging health and wellness sporting event in Zambia, bringing together corporate leaders, government institutions, civil society, the diplomatic corps and the wider community."

Bwalya commended the event organisers for their professionalism

and commitment to ensuring the relay's continued success. He also paid tribute to sponsors, including Trade Kings Group under its Big Tree brand and ZSIC Life, for their sustained support, describing their contributions as critical to the growth of athletics in Zambia.

He further praised the Zambia Athletics secretariat for its coordination and behind-the-scenes efforts in delivering the federation's programmes and sustaining the vision

of the ICR.

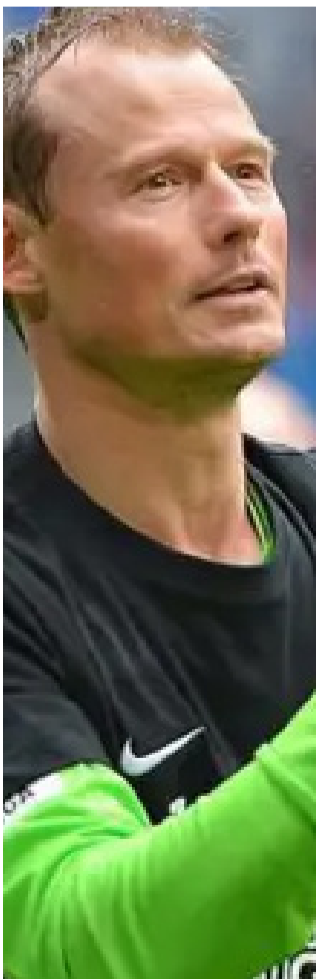
Meanwhile, Trade Kings Group Corporate Affairs Director Phil Daka described the ICR as more than just a competition, but a celebration of teamwork, endurance and excellence.

"This remarkable event continues to unite corporates, athletes and communities through the spirit of sport. From its inception, the relay has grown into more than a competition—it is a celebration of teamwork, endurance and a shared pursuit of excellence," Daka said.

He added that sports disciplines aligned with Trade Kings' vision as a key partner have continued to thrive through such initiatives.

The 26th edition of the Inter Company Relay is scheduled to take place on June 26 at the Lusaka Showgrounds.

Ex-keeper Manninger dies after car hit by train



Former Arsenal goalkeeper Alex Manninger has died at the age of 48 after his car was struck by a train.

Police said the incident happened at about 08:20 local time (07:20 BST) at a level crossing near Salzburg.

Manninger made 64 appearances for Arsenal between 1997 and 2002, winning the Premier League and FA Cup.

He won 33 caps for Austria and was part of the squad that featured at Euro 2008 in his home country.

"Alexander Manninger was an outstanding ambassador for Austrian football, both on and off the pitch," said Austrian Football Association sporting director Peter Schottel.

"His professionalism, composure and reliability made him an integral part of his teams and the national team.

"His achievements

deserve the utmost respect and will be unforgettable."

Salzburg police said first responders used a defibrillator on Manninger, who was alone in the car, after he was freed from the vehicle, which was dragged along by the train, but could not resuscitate him.

Police also said that the train driver was unharmed.

Manninger began his career with hometown club Red Bull Salzburg and spent time with 14 teams across Europe, including Sienna, Juventus, Udinese and Augsburg.

He signed a short-term deal with Liverpool as a 39-year-old in 2016 but did not play.

During his time at Arsenal, Manninger largely played second fiddle to David Seaman, but deputised for the injured England keeper late in the 1997-98 season.

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Z.A OFF TO STRONG START IN AFRICA QUALIFIERS - SHIMISHI

By Staff Reporter
 Zambia Athletics says five athletes have so far secured qualification for the upcoming Africa Senior

Championships, with General Secretary Teddy Shimishi expressing optimism that more will meet the standards before the end of April. Shimishi confirmed that Muzala Samukonga (400m), Niddy Mingilishi (400m), Sitali Kakene (100m), Emelda Kapunjila (400m), and Edna Ng'andula (100m) have all attained the required qualifying



Teddy Shimishi
 General Secretary - Zambia Athletics

ICR Grows into Zambia's Largest Corporate Wellness Sporting Event

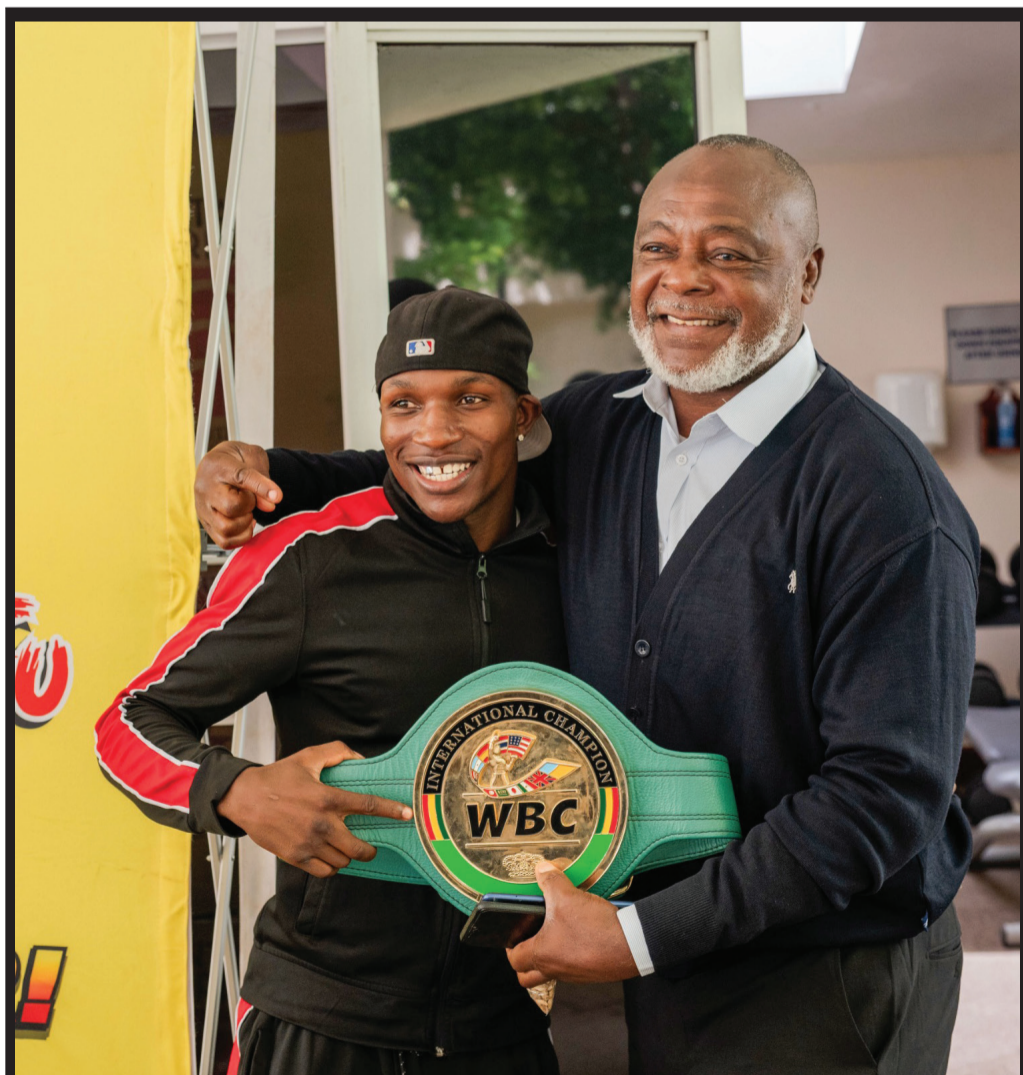


ZAAA President (C) Major Bernard Bwaly and stakeholders during the launch of the Inter Company Relay at Golfview Hotel in Lusaka on April 16, 2026.

The Inter Company Relay (ICR) has evolved into Zambia's biggest and most engaging wellness sporting event, Zambia Athletics (ZA) president Bernard Bwalya has said. Speaking during the official launch of the 26th edition of the ICR in Lusaka on Thursday,

Bwalya noted that the initiative, introduced in 1999, is a not-for-profit project aimed at raising funds for the development and promotion of athletics in the country, while fostering a holistic approach to health and wellness.

(Continues of P7)



World Boxing Council (WBC) International Bantamweight Champion David Mwale (left) with boxing legend Mike Chlambe during a press briefing in Lusaka, where Mwale's bout against South Africa's Charlton Malajika was officially announced. The fight is scheduled for July 25, 2026, at Government Complex. Picture by Mubanga Chileshe

marks. He added that Zambia has also secured qualification in the men's and women's 4x400m relay events, as well as the men's 4x100m relay team. "We remain optimistic that more athletes will qualify before the end of April, as several are very close to achieving the required standards," Shimishi said, noting that April 30 has been set as the cut-off date for qualification before the focus shifts to final preparations. However, Shimishi disclosed that Zambia's relay teams have missed out on qualification for the World Relays, with none of the teams making the top 24 global ranking required. (Continues on P7)

