THE WEEKLY TABLOID

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The financial cost of a bumper harvest

K14bn proposed for farmers' payments

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Zambia plots Chinese Yuan payouts for Copper exports

Zambia is considering receiving payment for some copper exports to Chinese buyers in renminbi from 2027, in a move aimed at reducing currency conversion costs and easing financial transactions with China.

PAGE 3



...as 670,371 farmers redeem FISP as farming season starts

ABOUT 670,371 small-scale farmers, representing 65 percent of targeted beneficiaries, had redeemed agricultural inputs by October 22, 2026, as government intensifies preparations for the 2026/2027 farming season amid anticipated El Niño-related rainfall disruptions.

Finance and National Planning Minister Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane said the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) targets 1,024,434 farmers across all 116 districts. Of these, 761,666 farmers had received redemption codes, representing 74 percent of the target.

Dr Musokotwane said Government had approved 805 agro-input suppliers out of 1,734 applications to improve input availability and distribution. The farmer database covers approximately 4.6 million farmers, with biometric details captured for 1.9 million and another one million targeted in 2026.

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K14bn proposed for farmers' payments

The success of Zambia's bumper maize harvest has come with a substantial financial obligation, with Government seeking an additional K14.7 billion to settle payments owed to farmers who supplied grain to the Food Reserve Agency (FRA).

The amount forms the largest component of the K19.9 billion Second Supplementary Budget for 2026 presented to Parliament by Finance and National Planning Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane.

The funding requirement reflects the scale of FRA's maize purchases, which reached 2.7 million metric tonnes against an initial target of 500,000 metric tonnes, as Government moved to capitalise on increased production and strengthen national food reserves.

In effect, the additional allocation is intended to address the financial obligations arising from a harvest that exceeded initial procurement expectations.

For farmers, however, the significance of the proposed funding goes beyond the figures in the national budget. It represents the money owed for produce already delivered and an opportunity to restore liquidity in the farming sector.

Timely settlement of the outstanding payments is particularly important as farmers begin preparing for the next agricultural season, which requires resources for seed, fertiliser, labour and other production inputs.

The supplementary allocation also includes K1.1 billion for the 2026/2027 Farmer Input Support Programme e-voucher system.

The proposal places agriculture at the centre of the supplementary spending plan, highlighting the financial demands of expanding national food reserves while ensuring that farmers receive payment for their produce.-EXCEL

Medicine thieves' days numbered

Zambia is introducing a national digital medicine tracking system to curb the theft and diversion of medicines from public health facilities and strengthen accountability across the pharmaceutical supply chain.

The system will use unique product identifiers to monitor medicines from manufacturers to their intended destinations, helping authorities detect suspicious movements and protect patients from falsified products.

Health Minister Professor Roma Chilengi told Parliament on 16 October 2026 that the planned platform would support real-time monitoring, with the main database hosted by the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) and a mirrored database maintained by the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC).

The initiative forms part of wider reforms involving the Ministry of Health, ZAMRA and the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA), aimed at improving medicine security, transparency and distribution.-EXCEL





Copperbelt Permanent Secretary Lawrence Mwanza (left) visits First Quantum Minerals exhibition stand during the 10th Zambia Chamber of Mines Occupational Health, Safety and Environment National Conference in Ndola last week. (Picture courtesy of FQM)

Mining boom: Local firms want a piece of the pie

As Zambia races towards its ambitious target of producing three million tonnes of copper annually by 2031, another important question is emerging: how much of the anticipated mining boom will translate into opportunities for local businesses and ordinary Zambians?

The question took prominence at the 10th Zambia Chamber of Mines Occupational Health, Safety and Environment National Conference in Ndola, where discussions extended beyond mining operations to local participation, skills development, technology and community well-being.

Chamber of Mines president Anthony Malenga said technological advancement must be accompanied by investment in skills development to ensure Zambian workers are not left behind as the industry modernises. He reaffirmed the industry's commitment to working with relevant institutions to equip workers with emerging skills.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development Dr Hapenga M. Kabeta and Copperbelt Permanent Secretary Lawrence Mwanza underscored the importance of responsible mining in achieving national development aspirations.

Mwanza said increased mineral production must go hand in hand with environmental protection, worker welfare and community well-being.

The Government's local content framework also presents opportunities for Zambian suppliers, contractors and manufacturers to participate more meaningfully in the mining value chain.

The bigger test, however, will be whether increased copper production creates lasting local enterprises, skilled employment and economic benefits beyond the mine gates.-EXCEL

Zambia plots Chinese Yuan payouts for Copper exports

From Front Page

The arrangement could allow Zambia to use proceeds from copper sales to repay part of its debt to Chinese creditors directly, without first converting the funds into US dollars. This could help reduce transaction costs and provide an alternative way of managing foreign exchange obligations.

The Bank of Zambia is also discussing a possible currency swap arrangement with China, which could further strengthen the use of the renminbi in trade and financial transactions.

However, the move will not change how Zambia's copper is priced, as international market benchmarks will continue to determine its value. The proposed arrangement would only affect the currency used for settling some payments.

The potential benefits will depend on the volume of copper sold under the arrangement and how the proceeds are utilised, particularly in relation to debt repayment and foreign exchange management.-MoFND





FARHI

ZAFFICO Invests $30m in particle board factory

ZAFFICO PLC is investing US$30 million in a particle board factory expected to be commissioned in 2028, as the company shifts from timber harvesting towards value addition and manufacturing.

The company has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Micro Financing Zambia Limited to improve access to financing for beneficiaries across its value chain.

The project is expected to support economic growth through local production of engineered wood products, reducing timber waste and potentially lowering reliance on imported particle board.

It will also create jobs, stimulate businesses in forestry, transport and furniture manufacturing, and generate additional tax revenue.

The investment is expected to strengthen Zambia's manufacturing sector and diversify the economy beyond copper, supporting long-term economic growth.-EXCEL

Israel investment in Zambia eyes growth

ISRAEL Ambassador to Zambia OFRA FARHI says Israeli Investment in Zambia is likely to grow in the future especially in sectors such as mining.

Ms FARHI says that Zambia's mining sector represents a lot of business opportunities for Israeli companies.

She says that one potential area for Israeli investment in the mining sector in the country is the management of water in the mines.

Ms FARHI says that she has taken it upon herself to reach out to the business community in Israel with expertise in water management to come and explore the investment opportunities in Zambia's extractive industry.

She also hailed the improving bilateral relationship between Israel and Zambia since the reopening of the embassy.

Ms FARHI says that Zambia remains one of the top priorities for Israel in Africa for collaboration purposes in the agriculture sector and technology.

She says that the two countries are looking to work together in many areas, and have shared ideas on leveraging resources such as water.

Ms FARHI also reiterated the Israeli Government's commitment to support the Grow Zambia Agenda under President Hakainde Hichilema.

She says that the 10-10-5-3-3-1-1-1 growth targets in the mining, and agriculture sectors are a brilliant idea to grow the economy of Zambia, and very much achievable.

Ms FARHI says that the Israeli economy has been using this model for growth and it has worked well that is why during President Hakainde Hichilema's visit to Israel a lot was shared on what can be achieved if a country sets targets for growth.

And she also described the Israeli, Africa and Zambia relationship as something that can go beyond even amid any changes in Israel's political landscape.

Ms FARHI later called Zambia a thriving country democratically and economically and a good friend of the people of Israel.-EXCEL







Indicative Forex Rates

07:43 | 30TH October, 2026

Currency	Buying	Selling
USD	20.2060	20.5496
GBP	27.0458	27.5056
EUR	22.5974	22.9816
ZAR	1.2159	1.2366
CNY	3.0365	3.0882

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YOU FIRST

PUBLIC NOTICE

26th October, 2026

APPLYING FOR PENALTY WAIVER UNDER THE EXTENDED VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE SCHEME (EVDS)

The Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) informs taxpayers seeking relief under the Extended Voluntary Disclosure Scheme (EVDS) that all applications for penalty and interest waiver (amnesty) must be submitted through the Tax Relief Module on TaxOnline II.

Taxpayers are advised not to use the "Penalty Waiver" option in the Compliance menu for EVDS applications. The Tax Relief Module has been configured to facilitate the processing of EVDS applications and the granting of eligible relief.

Why Use the Tax Relief Module?

The Tax Relief Module provides a faster, more efficient process for taxpayers participating in EVDS:

- Penalty and interest waivers are processed automatically once the corresponding principal tax payment is received and allocated to the appropriate account.
- No manual intervention is required in eligible cases.

How to Apply for EVDS Amnesty Through TaxOnline II

Step 1: Log in to TaxOnline II using your credentials.
Step 2: From the menu on the left-hand side of the screen, select Tax Relief.
Step 3: Click New Application.
Step 4: Review and confirm your demographic details or update them where necessary through the pop-up window.
Step 5: Select the relevant Tax Type. The system will provide feedback where:

- There are no outstanding liabilities; or
- Outstanding returns need to be submitted.

Step 6: Complete the application and submit.
Step 7: Receive and retain the acknowledgment of successful submission.
Step 8: Make payment towards the outstanding principal tax liability, where applicable.
Step 9: Once payment is allocated, the corresponding eligible penalty and interest waiver will be applied automatically.

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CONNECT WITH US

Star Trek, X-Men star Patrick Stewart dies at 86

Sir Ian McKellen has led tributes to Sir Patrick Stewart following his death at the age of 86, calling him "the most respected and beloved actor of his generation".

Tributes to the renowned British actor have poured in since his death at his Los Angeles home after "a brief and poignant journey" with Alzheimer's disease and Lewy Body Dementia was announced on Thursday.

"He wore his heart on his sleeve, which made him a man to rely on, to admire and, in my case, love," Sir Ian, Sir Patrick's X-Men co-star, said.

Famous for his role as Captain Jean-Luc Picard in Star Trek, Sir Patrick was a versatile actor who won multiple awards, balancing Hollywood roles and a career in classical theatre.

Sir Patrick Stewart: Actor who moved effortlessly between Star Trek and Shakespeare

'RSC was where Sir Patrick Stewart felt at home'

William Shatner, who also helmed the USS Enterprise in Star Trek, said Sir Patrick brought "intelligence, grace and a deep sense of humanity to everything he did".

"Captain Picard stood for the best of us and so did the man who played him. I was



STEWART

filled with affection and admiration for him and his work," Shatner added.

Stewart depicted Picard in more than 170 episodes of the hit sci-fi TV series between 1987 and 1994, as well as in four feature films. He returned to the role for Star Trek: Picard in 2020.

Dame Judi Dench said she was "shocked" and "very sad" to hear of Sir Patrick's death, adding: "He's never been one of those actors who never felt like it that night, he was always very, very committed... He'll be much missed and he was much admired."

George Takei, who played Hikaru Sulu in Star Trek, said the actor "inspired a whole next generation of star-gazers who looked longingly ahead to a brighter future for all humanity".-BBC

Jay-Z to Headline 2027 Super Bowl

After producing the halftime show alongside Roc Nation since 2020, the rapper gives himself the nod for the Feb. 14 Super Bowl.

The news was announced during Monday Night Football (Oct. 26) after ESPN teased a "special announcement" heading into halftime. A teaser soundtracked by "Public Service Announcement (Interlude)," off 2003's The Black Album, plays across a black-and-white video of Jay-Z in stadium seats, kicking off with the famous line: "Allow me to reintroduce myself, my name is HOV — H to the O-V." The tease was posted to social media after.

In fact, the rapper was expected to announce the news over the weekend, when he played a pair of shows at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, which will host the 2027 Super Bowl, on Friday and Saturday. Those shows came and went without an announcement, as did a full day of NFL games on Sunday, but now the news is official.

Given the Feb. 14 date of next year's Super Bowl, fans are hopeful that Jay might be joined by his superstar wife Beyoncé for an unconventional Valentine's Day celebration on the football field, among other possible special guests the rapper has collaborated with over the years.-BILLBOARD



K28m Czech water project underway

The Czech Republic and the Zambian government are working on a twenty eight million Kwacha project to set up mobile mini water treatment plants in communities affected by mining pollution on the Copperbelt.

The project dubbed Mine Water Atlas Zambia Copperbelt (MWAZACO) is being done through the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development and the Copperbelt University.

Project Manager Karel Raus said that the project aims to process mine water and make it safe for drinking and support irrigation farming in mining communities.

"What we are trying to do is to assess the effect of mining companies on water resources on the Copperbelt. Not only surface water but also the ground water," Mr Raus said.

The Czech Republic's ministry of foreign affairs representative Krstof Knejp called the project as also one way of supporting Zambia to prepare for the El Nino weather phenomenon.

Mr KNEJP said that the project is funded through the Czech Development Agency.

He says that the MWAZACO is a two year pilot project that was scheduled to run from 2025 to 2027.

Copperbelt University Assistant Dean in the School of Mines Kenny Nyirenda said the pollution hotspots to benefit from the project have already been identified.

Dr Nyirenda said that the identified pollution hotspots that will benefit from the mobile mini water treatment plant include Chililabombwe, Chingola, Mufulira, Luanshya and Kitwe.

"The plan is for the water treatment plant to be moved elsewhere once the pollution in the affected area is under control, "he said.

Meanwhile, Czech Agricultural Researcher Jan Stas says that under the MWAZACO project local farmers in mining areas will also be trained in irrigation farming and aquaculture.-EXCEL

2027 National Budget expectations

1. What are your expectations for the 2027 national budget, particularly regarding measures to support businesses and stimulate economic growth?

We expect the 2027 national budget to be a growth-oriented, private-sector-driven budget that prioritises job creation, business expansion and economic diversification. Government should create an enabling environment where businesses, particularly SMEs, can access affordable finance, reliable energy and markets to grow, invest and employ more people.

2. What tax measures, incentives or policy changes would the business community like to see in the 2027 budget to reduce the cost of doing business and encourage investment?

We would like to see a reduction in the tax burden on businesses, a review of tax incentives for local manufacturers, and simplified tax compliance processes, particularly for SMEs. Government should also ensure timely VAT refunds, predictable tax policies and fewer administrative bottlenecks. Businesses need a fair, stable and predictable tax environment to invest with confidence.

3. Which sectors or economic challenges should the government prioritise in the 2027 budget to support businesses, create jobs and improve the competitiveness of local industries?

Government should prioritise energy security, manufacturing, agriculture and agro-processing, transport and logistics, mining value addition, and SME development. Addressing the high cost of production, limited access to affordable financing, unreliable electricity and infrastructure gaps will be critical. Our focus should be on producing more locally, adding value to our resources and creating decent jobs for Zambians.-NDOLA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Education Ministry, UNESCO launch WhatsAPP e-learning platform

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNESCO, has launched the Online Learning Platform in Zambia (Ola-ZED), a WhatsApp-based digital learning initiative aimed at expanding access to educational resources and improving learning outcomes.

Ministry of Education Permanent Secretary for Administration Noriana Muneku says the platform will help address challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate learning materials and inequalities in access to education.

Speaking through Assistant Director for Digital Infrastructure Francis Hachoombwa during the launch at Munali Boys Secondary School in Lusaka, Ms Muneku also disclosed that the Ministry has received 5,000 tablets from the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats), which will be distributed across all provinces in the first quarter of 2027.

Meanwhile, UNESCO Team Leader



MUNEKU

Alice Saili said the platform will provide learners with access to reliable information while strengthening digital literacy, personal development and informed decision-making-MOE / UNESCO

FIC uncovers $90m fraud scheme

The Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) has uncovered suspicious transactions exceeding US$90 million and K70 million involving a company and six Zambians allegedly recruited to facilitate the movement of funds abroad.

According to the FIC's 11th Money Laundering Trends Report, the transactions occurred between January 2024 and February 2025, with funds reportedly transferred to destinations in Asia and the Middle East.

The report identifies an Asian national, referred to as Mr O, as the alleged mastermind who used personal US dollar accounts belonging to six Zambians to receive funds before transferring the money into a company account for onward movement abroad.

Investigations revealed that all six accounts were opened at the same bank within the same month, received deposits almost daily and handled amounts consistently below the statutory reporting threshold, raising suspicions of deliberate attempts to evade financial scrutiny.

The FIC launched investigations after receiving Suspicious Transaction Reports involving Company B and a Spontaneous Disclosure Report concerning the six account holders. Investigators reportedly established that the transactions were inconsistent with the individuals' declared sources of income.

The case highlights suspected financial fraud and the use of personal bank accounts to conceal the movement of large sums of money across borders.-NEWS DIGGERS

Dr Nduna Chansa's dream: *No child should leave Zambia for specialist care*

Transforming Arthur Davison Children's Hospital (ADH) into a leading paediatric specialist centre capable of handling complex childhood illnesses locally is the ambition driving its Senior Medical Superintendent, Dr Bwendo Nduna Chansa.

She believes Zambia has the expertise to provide advanced treatment for children but needs greater investment in infrastructure and specialist training to reduce referrals abroad.

"We really don't want patients to be referred outside the country. We want to minimise on that because we are able to do it. We have the expertise in the country. We just need to increase on it and improve," she said.

Dr Nduna Chansa was speaking when she featured on the Trailblazers talk show by Excel Magazine and Techno Series during the week.

She said the hospital, which opened in 1966, was experiencing increased demand due to population growth and referrals from several provinces.

Her vision includes expanding neonatal intensive care services, establishing a standalone isolation facility, strengthening subspecialties and developing a paediatric college of nursing.

"We really need to see an expansion in the number of services in terms of subspecialisations," she said.

Although approved plans for expansion and modernisation are in place, she identified funding as the major requirement.

Beyond her institutional ambitions, Dr Nduna Chansa, a mother of four, attributed her professional journey to God's grace and family support.



DR CHANSA

Recalling gender stereotypes during her early years in medicine, she said some patients initially mistook her for a nurse.

"People kind of initially don't believe in you until you actually prove yourself," she said, emphasising that respect in the profession is earned through competence and positive outcomes.

> **"People kind of initially don't believe in you until you actually prove yourself,"**



Great Lakes Region urges formalisation of gold sector

...as central banks show interest

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) says growing interest by central banks in purchasing locally produced gold presents an opportunity to formalise the sector, particularly among artisanal and small-scale miners.

ICGLR Deputy Executive Secretary Yasir Mohammed said the initiative could help diversify national reserves and ensure greater economic benefits from mineral resources, provided gold is acquired through transparent and traceable supply chains.

Speaking during the ICGLR Audit Committee meeting, Mr Mohammed stressed that gold can only serve as a reliable national reserve asset if its origin and supply chain meet responsible sourcing standards.

He called for stronger mechanisms to accommodate legitimate small-scale miners while addressing traceability challenges associated with gold production and trade.

Mr Mohammed said responsible sourcing should facilitate formal trade rather than restrict it, opening opportunities for market access, investor confidence and economic growth.



MOHAMMED

Meanwhile, the ICGLR regional certification mechanism provides for independent audits to ensure mineral exporters comply with regional requirements and international due diligence standards.

Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development Permanent Secretary Hapenga Kabeta said the region's mineral wealth must be managed with transparency and accountability to support peace, stability and sustainable development.

Source: International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

...as 670,371 farmers redeem FISP as farming season starts

From Front Page

Meanwhile, about 600,000 farmers have received climate-smart agriculture training to prepare for possible below-normal rainfall, prolonged dry spells and erratic precipitation. Additional measures include drought-tolerant and early-maturing seeds, meteorological advisories, disaster preparedness plans and expanded agricultural extension services.

The Zambia Integrated Agriculture Information Management System has also been linked to Zamtel, MTN and Airtel to strengthen beneficiary verification, while integration with the Food Reserve Agency will support monitoring of maize sales and compliance with farmer obligations.

Dr. Musokotwane urged farmers to redeem inputs personally and protect their redemption codes against misuse. The measures support the Grow Zambia Agenda's target of achieving 10 million metric tonnes of agricultural production by 2031 while strengthening food security and climate resilience.

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Planning



EDITOR'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP NUGGETS



Psalms 46:10. Be still and know that I am God.
Do not lean on your own understanding and strength, but lean on God's protection and preservation of your good name in the market place.

#Entrepreneurship&PersonalleadershipNuggetsbyDianaKabaila.

SUDOKU # 3

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Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.

If you use logic you can solve the puzzle without guesswork.

Need a little help? The hints page shows a logical order to solve the puzzle. Use it to identify the next square you should solve. Or use the answers page if you really get stuck.

DROP SUMS PUZZLE

Drop Sums FC485S4R

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19	28	14	27	26	31	25	18	37



Ndola City – Industrial glory days! P1

Dr Kenneth Kaunda (MHSRIP) is known for many things. One thing that perhaps many may not know is his desire to industrialize Zambia so that our nation could gain economic sovereignty, so he thought.

So in April 1968, the watershed Mulungushi Reforms, identified by many as Zambia's Magna Carta for Industrial Development, was crafted to create as policy for economic independence for the country, providing opportunities for Zambians to take control of its own resources and destiny.

It is this watershed that fueled the industrialization agenda of our City. Ndola eventually became the major industrial, manufacturing and distribution hub of Zambia. Nearly 80% of our daily household goods were produced by the numerous factories in Ndola.

Our City was once the giant households and other consumer goods manufacturer. Its glory days included companies like ROP (1975) Zambia Ltd, Colgate-Palmolive, Unilever and Johnson & Johnson that produced all kinds and flavours of soap, detergents, toothpaste, health, baby care, hygiene products, among the famous ones were Wendi and Strike washing powders and Ebu soap; Reckitt & Colman that produce a variety of cleaning and hygiene products like cobra; Vitafoam (by Abraham Mokola), Furncoz, Zambezi Paper Mills, Swarp Spinning Mills and others for mattresses, furniture, pillows, all kind of beddings, paper, tissue, stationery and carton boxes, textile, other cotton related industrial products respectively.

For the food processing industry, we had Indeco Milling, Lyons Brook Bond, Copper Harvest Foods (part of Mahtani Group), Sunrise Biscuits, Supa Loaf, Zambia Breweries, Schweppes and others that produced tea, beverages, cookies (my favorite 8 pack milk biscuits) and many other processed food.

Continued in the next issue.





Has Zambia's search for goal scoring machines finally paid off?

Zambia U-15 picture perfect W/Cup trip

From a 13-0 demolition to bringing England, Senegal and Portugal to their knees, Zambia's Under-15 boys have announced themselves as a generation worth watching.

Zambia's Junior Chipolopolo may be young, but their performances at the inaugural FIFA Under-15 World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, have carried the confidence, fighting spirit and attacking ambition of a team that refuses to be intimidated by big names.

What began as a promising campaign has developed into a remarkable demonstration of youthful football talent, with the Zambians dismantling opponents, surviving difficult moments and producing comeback victories that have captured attention.

The most striking statement came in the group stage when Zambia demolished Montserrat 13-0, a result that underlined the team's attacking potential and ability to punish defensive weaknesses.

But it was not just the number of goals that made this team special. It was their response when the odds were against them.

Against England, the youngsters found themselves trailing 2-0 before mounting a stunning comeback to win 3-2. Maxen Msimuko pulled one back before Samuel Musonda equalised, with Chrispine Katoba completing the turnaround.

That victory was particularly significant because it demonstrated that the team possessed something beyond individual brilliance: resilience, belief and the mental strength to recover from adversity.

The momentum continued against Niger, whom Zambia defeated 2-0, before overcoming Slovakia 3-1 in the quarter-finals.

The semi-final against Senegal provided another test of character. In a seven-goal thriller, Zambia came from behind three times to secure a dramatic 4-3 victory. Msimuko scored twice, taking his tournament tally to 13 goals, while Musonda contributed a goal and two assists.

The final against Portugal provided the perfect ending. Zambia produced another commanding performance, winning 5-2 to lift the Tier B championship.

Beyond the trophy: What Zambia's success tells us

There are three important lessons from this campaign.

1. Zambia has attacking talent in abundance.

The 22 goals scored during the group stage, followed by their impressive knockout performances, suggest that the country has a promising pool of young attacking talent. Msimuko's 13-goal contribution is particularly impressive.

2. Mental strength could be their biggest asset.

Coming from behind against England and Senegal suggests that these youngsters are not easily discouraged. Their ability to remain composed under pressure could prove invaluable as they progress into higher levels of football.

3. Grassroots football deserves greater investment.

The involvement of players from local academies and clubs, including Kafue Celtic and Sporting Lusaka, demonstrates the importance of structured youth development. Zambia cannot afford to celebrate these youngsters today and abandon them tomorrow.

The bigger picture

There is, however, an important distinction. Zambia finished second in its qualifying group and therefore competed in Tier B rather than Tier A, which determined the overall world champions. Their victory over Portugal crowned them Tier B champions and placed them 33rd in the overall classification.

That does not diminish their achievement. Winning a competitive international division against teams from different footballing backgrounds is an accomplishment worth celebrating.

The real challenge now is what happens after Baku.-EXCEL

Why has Caf abandoned plans to hold Afcon every four years?

After a shock announcement 10 months ago that the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) would be held every four years, the governing body of football on the continent has reversed course.

The Confederation of African Football (Caf) will instead retain the tournament's traditional biennial staging, with its president Patrice Motsepe saying the U-turn was based on "advancing, protecting and promoting" the interests of the African game.

The first indication that the frequency of Afcon was being reconsidered came at Caf's strategy conference in Cape Verde earlier this month.

Questions are now being asked about the decision-making process and what this means for the future of African football.

Why was the planned change controversial?

Afcon has predominantly been held every two years since its first edition in 1957, barring two three-year gaps in the 1960s and one year between the 2012 and 2013 tournaments.

On the eve of the 2025 finals in Morocco, Motsepe announced all that would change from 2028.

The South African said the shift to a four-year cycle was, in part, to help the global calendar "be significantly more synchronised and harmonised".

In recent years Afcon has been staged midway through the European club season, leading to recurring disputes over the release of African players.

FIFA general secretary Mattias Grafstrom was sitting aside Motsepe when the plan was announced, and critics highlighted that the scheduling change favoured football's world governing body more than the African game.