

Consumer Watch

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EDITORIAL

ZICTA Warns Public against Online Scams

The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) says it has noted with concern the increase in the number of unsolicited messages consumers and users of ICT products and services have been exposed to.

ZICTA Corporate Communications Manager Ngabo Nankonde said that the unsolicited messages are from third parties asking users to send money to a specific mobile number through mobile money services.

Nankonde said the other messages are scams disguised as 'possible winnings', 'gift vouchers' and 'free Internet', usually containing a link which mimics official website platforms when clicked.

She said investigations carried out by ZICTA in collaboration with law enforcement agencies have revealed that fraudsters have adopted social engineering methods as a way of collecting and accessing personal information of consumers thereby exposing them to cybercrime.

"This conduct contravenes Section 42 (6), 99, 103 and 106 of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No. 21 of 2009. The Authority has engaged the service providers to ensure that they immediately suspend or terminate the service to perpetrators who have violated the Acceptable Use Policy as stipulated under 16.4 of the Consumer Protection Guidelines", she added.

Nankonde has since cautioned members of the public not to forward or entertain such messages but to rather ignore them completely.

She said clicking on links from unsolicited messages can expose consumers to malicious software that has intention of getting personal identifiable information.

"Consumers are strongly advised to refrain from requesting for videos/photos that have gone viral on social media through posting their mobile numbers as this makes them susceptible to cybercrime", Nankonde said.

She has however assured members of the general public that the Authority is collaborating with Bank of Zambia, the Zambia Police and mobile network providers to ensure that the people responsible for these crimes are brought to book.

*Taken from an article published in
The Lusaka Times on October 31, 2018.*



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NEWS

Zambia Slaps a 30 Ngwee a Day Tariff on Internet Phone Calls

The Patriotic Front (PF) government has announced the introduction of a 30ngwee a day tariff to be slapped on Internet based phone



calls. This decision was taken at 12th Cabinet Meeting held at State House chaired by President Edgar Lungu. According to Chief Government Spokesperson, Dora Siliya, Government has noted an increase in the use of Internet phone calls at the expense of traditional phone calls. Siliya said the use of Internet phone calls threatens the telecommunications industry and jobs in companies such as Zamtel, Airtel and MTN.

The Cabinet has also approved in principle, the introduction of the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Bill that will repeal and replace certain parts, clauses and sections contained in the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No. 21 of 2009.

(Lusaka Times, 13.08.18)

Bank of Zambia Commended over Regulating Bank Charges

Zambia Consumer Association (ZACA) has supported plans by the Bank of Zambia (BoZ) to start regulating exorbitant over the counter



withdraw charges that commercial banks are demanding from customers. Association Executive Director, Juba Sakala, says the decision is progressive and will go a long way in improving and promoting financial inclusion among the citizens in the country.

Speaking in an interview with ZANIS, Sakala disclosed that many people have started shunning services offered by the bank due to unreasonable charges on most transactions. He explained that the situation has also contributed to the high rate of unbanked population which is not good for the country's economy.

(Lusaka Times, 09.08.18)

Zambia's Risks to Inflation Heighten as Fuel Prices are Hiked

Risks to Zambia's inflation have heightened as the copper producer effects a long overdue fuel price hike effective midnight of October 02, 2018. In a statement by the Energy Regulation



Board – ERB, prices will adjust petrol 16.85 percent higher to K16.06, diesel 21.98 percent to K14.65 percent and Kerosene 28.14 percent to K11.34 per litre.

Key drivers of the ERB's decision were elevated Brent Crude prices of USD85/bbl. (25 percent higher than February levels) in light of a 22 percent depreciated local currency (kwacha) trading for K12.04/US\$. Crude is forecasted to flirt with highs of USD100/bbl. in the not so far medium term, as Oil Producing and Exporting Countries – OPEC member states tighten supply to support prices.

(Zambia Business Times, 02.08.18)

Bus Fares go up by 22 Percent

Bus operators have hiked passenger fares by 22 percent across the board following the upward adjustment in the fuel pump prices by the Energy Regulation Board (ERB).

Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA)
Head of Public Relations, Fredrick Mubanga



announced that this decision was arrived at after the agency held a meeting with Bus and Taxi Owners Association of Zambia (BTOAZ), where it was tentatively resolved that fares be increased by 22 percent across the board.

Mubanga however stated that the fares would be less than 22 percent for certain routes, as guided by fare charts that will be prepared by the BTOAZ in consultation with RTSA.

(News Diggers, 10.10.18)

JCTR Predicts an Upward Rise in the Cost of Living for October

The September 2018 JCTR Basic Needs Basket (BNB) for a family of five living in Lusaka



which stood at K5,356.36 was K46 less than the August BNB which stood at K5, 402.31.

Significant changes in prices were noted in Kapenta which decreased by K42 from K229.75 in August to K188 in September per kg. Charcoal decreased by K25 from K165 in August to K140 in September per 90 kg bag. Dry bream fish increased by K8 from K124 in August to K132 in September per kg.

As can be seen from the BNB survey, even with the noted reduction, the cost of living has remained high and below incomes of many Zambians who continue to struggle to access basic needs of life.

(Lusaka Times, 12.10.18)

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