

ISSUE #11 - AUGUST 2026

AFRI-CAN

MAGAZINE

ONE-ON-ONE

With Cassia -
Electronic music artist

SOCCER

The Lost Pride of the
FIFA World Cup

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CHANGE



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HAPPY

HERITAGE DAY

03/08/2026

ALBERTA

WHAT'S I *TV* SIDE

05 Summer Lounge Essentials

You can create a lounge that is not just stylish for the season, but a genuinely beautiful and relaxing haven for the summer.



08 Zee Talks to Cassia

"To me, electronic music is space making. I try to craft a space that feels large and full: above you are sparkles, on either side of you are airy synths, underneath you, is a low, smooth bass, and in front of you is a lead or vocal track."



19 Not just any other project

UAE based Atif Rehman writes about how projects go over-budget without a single bad decision: effective project planning.



29 Gen Z: A different generation

Gen Zs have been raised in the era of algorithmic gratification. Social media platforms are engineered to deliver micro-doses of dopamine with every swipe, like, and comment.



24

Zambia Elections

Exercise your right to
vote - 13/08/2026

46

Messi Goes Home Empty Handed

34

Jamaica Scraps Visa for Zimbabweans

Letter from the *Editor*



AUGUST – A Month of Glory, Grace, and Great Responsibility



As we turn the page into August 2026, we find ourselves at the intersection of celebration and solemnity; a time to lift our voices in joy, and also to lower them in reflection.

First, let us raise a collective toast to Spain, whose indomitable spirit has earned them the FIFA's World Cup trophy. To every player who graced that pitch, and to every fan who painted their face and roared from the stands, you have given us a summer to remember. Football, in its purest form, unites us across borders, languages, and differences. Let that unity linger long after the final whistle.

But as the confetti settles, our gaze turns homeward; to Zambia, our beloved nation, which stands on the precipice of a defining moment.

*To the candidates,
we say: lead with
honour, concede
with dignity, and
govern with
humility.*

On 13 August 2026, Zambia go to the polls. This is not merely a civic duty; it is a sacred trust. We have seen the campaign trails, heard the promises, felt the heat of debate. We have also witnessed the weight of unfulfilled pledges and the sting of disillusionment. Yet, let us

not forget: the power of the ballot is not in the hand that casts it alone, but in the heart that accepts its outcome.

To the candidates, we say: lead with honour, concede with dignity, and govern with humility. To our voters, we say: speak with your vote, but silence your weapons. To every Zambian, we say: the nation is bigger than any one leader, any one party, any one grievance.



Let August 13 be a day of order, not chaos. Of hope, not fear. Of voices raised in ballots, not bullets.

Go well this August. Vote. Celebrate. And above all, choose peace.

The "CAN" in Afri-CAN is a verb. You can. You must.

Editor
Afri-CAN Magazine

Zee



3 ESSENTIALS OF A LOUNGE THIS SUMMER

This summer, the lounge is undergoing a quiet revolution. It's no longer just a place to sit; it's becoming a true sanctuary for relaxation, blending the comfort of indoor living with the freshness of the outdoors. At the heart of this transformation are three key essentials, made effortlessly beautiful by a palette of trending, sun-washed colors.

1. A Modular and Inviting Seating System



The first essential is the seating itself. Move over, static sofas. This summer's lounge is defined by modular and sculptural seating that invites you to sink in and stay a while.

Think deep, plush cushions, curved silhouettes, and versatile configurations. The trend is moving away from sharp, cold lines toward "bulbous and playful" forms that evoke warmth and approachability. Whether it's a sprawling modular sofa that can be rearranged for any occasion or a single, cloud-like statement chair, comfort is paramount.

How to style it with trending colors:

Choose your hero piece in a grounding, warm neutral. Olive green and terracotta are the season's stars for larger furniture items. An olive green modular sofa or a terracotta-toned lounge chair brings an earthy, Mediterranean feel that is both stylish and calming. For a lighter, more airy look, opt for cream or ecru as a versatile base.

2. The Color Palette: Sun-Washed Pastels Grounded in Earth

The second essential is the thoughtful application of color. This summer's trending palette is all about creating a "summer state of mind". It's a cheerful yet sophisticated mix of nostalgic pastels balanced by grounding earth tones.

The standout color of 2026 is butter yellow. It's showing up everywhere, from accent pillows to striped umbrellas, adding a dose of sunshine. Complement it with breezy seaside pastels like soft pink, mint green, and sky blue.

To keep this pastel palette from feeling childish or overwhelming, anchor it with earthy tones. Terracotta, clay, and olive are crucial for adding a grown-up, sophisticated touch.



How to style it with trending colors:

- For a simple, beautiful look: Start with a neutral base (cream sofa, olive rug) and introduce pops of butter yellow through accessories like throw pillows or a ceramic vase.
- For a bolder statement: Choose a pastel accent chair, like a mint green or soft pink lounge chair, and balance it with terracotta planters and olive-colored textiles.





3. The Connection: Seamless Indoor-Outdoor Flow

The final essential is the design principle of creating an indoor-outdoor flow. The best summer lounges feel like an extension of the home, blurring the lines between interior and exterior spaces.

This means choosing furniture and materials that are not only beautiful but also durable and weather-resistant. Think aluminum, teak, and performance fabrics that can handle the elements while looking chic. More importantly, it means creating a visual and textural connection between your lounge and the outdoors.

How to style it with trending colors:

Use a cohesive color story that bridges the indoors and outdoors. The warm neutrals and pastels of the season are perfect for this.

- **Pathways and rugs:** Use an outdoor rug that mirrors the tonal palette of your lounge to create the illusion of a continuous floor plan.
- **Planters and decor:** Bring the garden in with terracotta planters (in the trending terracotta color!) filled with lush greenery. Choose a buttery yellow or sky-blue planter for a cheerful accent.
- **Textiles:** Use striped or patterned cushions in your trending colors to add personality and tie the look together, whether you're inside or out on the patio.

By focusing on these three essentials: comfortable, modular seating; a balanced palette of pastels and earth tones; and a seamless connection to the outdoors, you can create a lounge that is not just stylish for the season, but a genuinely beautiful and relaxing haven for the summer.



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CASSIA

electronic music artist

"To me, electronic music is space making. I try to craft a space that feels large and full: above you are sparkles, on either side of you are airy synths, underneath you, is a low, smooth bass, and in front of you is a lead or vocal track. In my head I can almost see how all the sounds look travelling around the space."

**"MUSIC
IS MY
LIFE"**

ONE -ON- ONE WITH CASSIA

By Zvakwana Nomore Sweto

Lazy Friday after work, chilling at home with no plans whatsoever, then boom my 'partner in crime' calls. "Hey Zee, what's up? There is a show tonight and I think you need to be there, and I don't want to hear a 'NO' from you. We are going," she said.

I didn't waste time arguing, I simply got ready for the event...we are the news people, remember!



We arrived there, the setup was nice, artists took turns to perform their original songs. Then one artist showed up. She was dressed for the occasion, and I nodded my head in appreciation of pure art.

Her performance was smooth, infectious, and sweet. I had never paid attention to Electronic music, but on this day, I had my ears and eyes wide open not to lose any bit. Talk about going low on the beat for people to listen to the lyrics, then go hard on bassline and fuse instruments for people to know and value the essence of your music, that was Cassia's act.

I told my mate that this is it, I want a one on one with this amazing artist. Everything else was the background I finally had my interview with Cassia and here are the excerpts from the interview.



"My parents have always been extraordinarily supportive! They funded my piano lessons for so many years. They listen and give constructive feedback to every draft I send them. My dad especially gets so excited about my music - he's my biggest fan. He literally texts me every time he listens to one of my songs! My parents were my first audience and they have shown up to live performances of my original music in Edmonton—even though they live all the way in the small town of St. Paul! I am eternally grateful for their belief in me."

ZNS: When did you start music?

Cassia: When I was a little kid, my family had a toy synthesizer that I loved to play around on. My parents later bought a beautiful wooden upright piano that is a century old, and it was on this piano that I began my lessons at 9 years old. Throughout my lessons, I have studied a variety of styles in the Royal Conservatory of Music program, such as baroque, classical, romantic, impressionist, and modern piano.

Along with my repertoire, I studied harmony, technique, history, and composition, until I completed Level 10 in high school. As for electronic music, I began composing on Beatwave and GarageBand on my iPad when I was 13 years old. At 18, I got a MacBook with GarageBand and released my first album, Aphelion, under the name "Auklette," which you can still find on YouTube. I began focusing on adding vocals to my music and released my first singles under the name "Streetveil" in 2022. A few albums later, and I've switched to Ableton, a more powerful digital audio workspace. My next album will mostly be produced using Ableton.

ZNS: Tell us a bit about yourself.

Cassia: Every day you'll hear me say, "Do what you want!" For my whole life, I've been on a journey to self-acceptance. It's always been difficult for me to relax and trust in myself, so now I think: if I'm doing what I truly want to do, it can't be wrong. I try to focus most on having fun, feeling love, noticing the beauty around me, making art and music, and taking care of myself and those close to me.

I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from the University of Alberta a couple of years ago and have been a case worker at the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre since then. Almost every day, I wake up early to support unhoused women in the inner city with their wellness. Academically, I consider myself a postmodernist and an idealist; I am someone who constantly questions things that we think are normal and someone who dreams every day about how the world can change.

My hobbies include playing video games, watching animated shows and movies, and reading fiction and poetry. I also draw, paint, and am currently writing a sci-fi novel called Abstraction. I also play Dungeons and Dragons! Since I fell in love with my wonderful partner, Comet Dust, I have found more hope and become more connected to lifeways like cooking, sharing food, and gardening. I also have a 4-year-old tabby cat named Link. She is my best friend!

ZNS: Why Electronic music?

Cassia: I've always loved listening to electronic music. Trance, house, and breakbeat are my favourite genres. My family also loves it, we all can enjoy it together. What appeals to me about it is that it can sound like anything. You can design and manipulate every sound to exactly what you want. It allows me, as a single person, to create an orchestra. One of my favourite elements to design is the drums; I love to experiment with rhythm and try out styles from different genres.



To me, electronic music is space making. I try to craft a space that feels large and full: above you are sparkles, on either side of you are airy synths, underneath you, is a low, smooth bass, and in front of you is a lead or vocal track. In my head I can almost see how all the sounds look travelling around the space.

ZNS: Your sound feels distinct; what's your go-to synthesis method and how do you avoid sounding like everyone else?

Cassia: Thank you! My "go-to synthesis method" starts on Ableton. I go fishing for a MIDI instrument that I like and then create a 4 or 8 bar chord progression which will be the base of the song. I build the other song elements one at a time. I keep them layered together and listen to them looped over and over to ensure that they are all working together and occupying a different space in the soundscape.

Then, I separate and create variations of each element so that the song can evolve over time, usually starting simple and becoming more complex as the song goes on. Once I have an instrumental base, I start thinking about lyrics.

Every day, I write in my Notes app on my phone about my feelings and thoughts, and when writing songs, I return to these notes and create songs from them. I like to use words that evoke tactile sensations and subvert expectations. When designing a melody, I try to find notes that are unusual and add harmonic context to the rest of the song, but sometimes I just sing what comes to me!

As for why my music sounds unique...Well, I just make music that I want to listen to! I take inspiration from different genres, but one of my main sources of inspiration is video game music: from old gos drum-and-bass arcade tracks, to Nintendo main menu music, to the cinematic soundtrack of my favourite game, Nier: Automata. Another facet of what makes my music interesting is my classical music training, which taught me methods like counterpoint (combining two or more independent melodic lines), and my constant efforts to escape tradition! I want my music to make you feel like you're in another world. Like you're in my imagination, with me, dancing!

ZNS: Which non-electronic genre or artist has secretly influenced your production?

Cassia: One of my favourite bands is Cocteau Twins. There are elements of their music that are electronic, such as their use of electronic drum machines and analog synthesizers, but they primarily use guitars with effects pedals for instrumentation. I only recently discovered them, so they have been inspiring me lately to try to break the barriers further on my vocals. The lead singer of Cocteau Twins, Elizabeth Fraser, has an incredibly expressive voice. I feel like she's just playing, having fun with possibilities, not expecting her words to be understood.

Mother Mother is another of my favourite bands. I admire their versatility, every one of their albums is a different sonic experience. The three-layer harmonies they pull off are unique and unorthodox. I admire them lyrically for their ability to poke fun at dark topics, lament seriously, explore surrealist ideas, and challenge social norms.

While learning piano, I only explored jazz on the surface level. After moving to Edmonton for Uni (University), I began attending jazz clubs like the Yardbird Suite and studying jazz piano theory. To me, it is a totally new world and it's still not a genre I can play intuitively, but just being around it has expanded my ideas about harmony and free expression. I love how, at the Yardbird jams, each instrument gets a chance at a solo to show off during the song. I've been trying to incorporate moments like that where everything else takes a step away to show off a certain instrument. I also love Fleetwood Mac, The War on Drugs, Portishead, and Massive Attack.

ZNS: How do you write your music?

Cassia: As I said, I usually go through my journal and poetry to find song lyrics that work together. My instrumental tracks remind me of certain things, like landscapes, that inform the theme of the lyrics. The world and people around me do so as well.



One of my new unreleased songs, Permafrost, began as an instrumental track called "melting ice stars." The sounds I created made me think of water dripping from icicles and bright stars in the black winter night. At the time, the winter around me was melting and re-freezing with the dropping and rising temperatures of the unpredictable Alberta spring. My imagination ran with this to a far future where all of the glaciers have melted into a new ocean and yet the land has become a frozen tundra. I love to imagine impossibilities and contradictions.

I struggle with undiagnosed mental illness that affects me every day. I am troubled by anxiety, depression, and sensory discomfort. Therefore, my thoughts frequently go to dark places. I express these thoughts in my music... always returning to the idea that, no matter what, we can still dance. Love, of course, is a major theme. It's funny, my first songs were about fict-

-ional relationships, since I hadn't had much of my own romance to sing about. Now that I have the love of my dreams, my lyrics have taken a sweet and spicy turn!

ZNS: Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years of a professional music career?

Cassia: Well, I sure would love to be a famous pop star! Unfortunately, that takes a LOT of time and money, and I've never been good at advertising myself. For now, my goal is to establish myself as a local performer. I would love to have shows at venues frequently and find a global fanbase!

With my good friend Mika Haykowsky, AKA Sir Kadian, I imagine the perfect events to throw. We love to dream about a decentralized concert: one where the performer isn't on the stage but down with the audience. I'll feel satisfied when I play my tracks and sing and dance with my friends in some cool spot with flashing lights. Once I finalize my next album, I'll plan an album release party that'll be a blast!!

ZNS: How do you balance work, music, and social life?

Cassia: As a Case Worker, I work long hour shifts every week. My work is unpredictable and can be very emotionally and physically draining, so I often just have to rest in the evening. I'm lucky in that I have a partner who lovingly takes care of me when I'm exhausted, and that I have friends that listen to my worries and help me whether it's doing chores or having fun.

I play piano several times a week as it relaxes me and helps me express myself. I don't have trouble with making a ton of instrumental song drafts on Ableton since it's my favourite hobby and can be both meditative and exciting, but I struggle with recording vocals. I'm very picky about my vocal tracks sounding ethereal and pitch-perfect. I take every day as it comes and don't expect too much out of myself. If I make it through the day, I'm doing just fine.

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FACT: AGE IS JUST A NUMBER IN MODERN LOVE

Staff Writer

In the ever-evolving landscape of relationships, one trend is quietly rewriting the rules of romance: the reversal of the traditional age dynamic. We see young men proudly walking hand-in-hand with women a decade or more their senior, and silver-haired gentlemen courting vibrant younger women.

While society often raises an eyebrow, the reality is that these pairings are not anomalies, they are logical, emotional, and deeply fulfilling choices.

Disclaimer: This must not be misquoted with young men from poor backgrounds dating older women for financial gain and a better lifestyle.

Let's be clear: there is no problem with an age gap. The only pathology in love is incompatibility. What we are witnessing is not a crisis of generational confusion, but a maturation of what we seek in a partner.

WHY YOUNG MEN ARE CHOOSING OLDER WOMEN



For the modern young man, the appeal of an older woman is not about a "cougar" fantasy; it is about clarity. Young men today are overburdened with mixed signals. They are told to be strong, yet vulnerable; ambitious, yet present. An older woman offers a sanctuary from this noise.

First, there is emotional finality. Older women have played the games: the waiting-by-the-phone, the passive-aggressive texts, the "does he like me" spirals. They have graduated from that curriculum. When an older woman says she is fine, she means it.

When she is upset, she articulates why. For a young man building his career and identity, this direct communication is not just attractive; it is restorative.



Second, there is financial and emotional parity. The young man of today does not need a dependent; he needs a co-pilot. Older women are typically established in their own right. They choose a partner because they want him, not because they need him to pay bills. This removes the transactional weight that often crushes younger relationships, allowing for a purer form of romantic connection.

However, the most profound piece of this puzzle and the one least discussed is the older woman's unique grasp of the essence of love, submission, and respect, even when she is dating a younger man.

Let's redefine "submission" here. In the modern context, it is not about groveling or obedience. It is the conscious yielding of control. A woman in her 40s or 50s has spent decades being the CEO of her household, the fixer of problems, the "strong one." She is tired of the throne. When she submits to a younger man, she is not diminishing herself; she is actively choosing to let him lead in the areas of his strength.

Because she is secure in her identity, her submission is not born of fear of abandonment, but of profound respect. She respects his journey. She respects that he is still becoming. Unlike a younger woman who might resent a partner's lack of immediate success, the older woman has the foresight to see his potential. She respects his frame not because he demands it, but because she has learned that a man who is respected will naturally rise to protect and provide.

Furthermore, she understands that love is not a fairy tale, rather an action verb. She doesn't expect him to be perfect, because she has already learned that perfection is a myth. Her love is forgiving, patient, and rooted in the reality of human flaws. She loves the man he is today, not the man she is trying to mold him into.

This is what a man wants and will do everything within their capacity to make sure this woman is happy and has peace of mind.

WHY OLDER MEN ARE DRAWN TO YOUNGER WOMEN



Conversely, the older man's attraction to a younger woman is often misread as midlife desperation. In truth, it is often a return to wonder. After decades of boardrooms, mortgages, and loss, an older man has seen the grime of the world. A younger partner brings a freshness; not of naivety, but of untapped potential. She represents the future he is trying to stay connected to.

Most importantly, an older man has already "climbed his mountain." He is less concerned with proving his masculinity through dominance and more interested in mentorship and appreciation. He wants to share his hard-earned wisdom, and in return, he craves the vitality and spontaneity that

often fades with age. It is a symbiotic exchange: his stability for her energy; her ambition for his guidance.

WHY THEY DON'T TALK ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP & WHY IT MATTERS

The beauty of these age-gap dynamics is that they dismantle the ego. For the young man, an older woman teaches him that his value is not just in his paycheck, but in his character. For the older man, a younger woman reminds him that his value is not just in his past achievements, but in his present joy.



When an older woman respects a younger man, she does so with the gravity of experience. She knows that respect is the oxygen a man breathes; without it, he suffocates. And when she offers that freely,

without condescension, she unlocks a level of devotion in him that no amount of youthful flirtation can match.

Age gaps are not cracks in the foundation of love; they are expansions of it. They force us to discard superficial checklists and look at the soul beneath the skin.

Whether it is the younger man finding peace in the older woman's certainty, or the older man finding renewal in the younger woman's spirit, the principle is the same: Love matures, but it does not expire. The older woman's gift is her wisdom in wielding love as a tool of unity rather than a weapon of control. She submits because she chooses to, not because she has to. She respects because she has learned that a man, regardless of his age, will walk through fire for a woman who truly sees him.

And that, regardless of the years between them, is the only age-old truth that matters.



BRITISH-STYLE SCONES RECIPE

FAST AND DELICIOUS SCONES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



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- 2 cups (260g) all-purpose flour
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- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup (115g) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ⅔ cup (160ml) cold whole milk (or buttermilk)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)
- 1 egg (for egg wash, mixed with 1 tbsp milk)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl: flour, sugar, baking powder, salt.
3. Cut in butter using a pastry blender or your fingers until mixture looks like coarse crumbs (pea-sized butter bits).
4. Add wet ingredients – pour in milk and vanilla. Stir with a fork just until a shaggy dough forms. Do not overmix.
5. Turn dough onto a floured surface. Gently knead 2–3 times, then pat into a 1-inch-thick round.
6. Cut scones with a 2-inch biscuit cutter (don't twist – press straight down). Re-roll scraps once.
7. Place on baking sheet, brush tops with egg wash.
8. Bake 15–18 min until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for 5 min.

Serve warm with butter, jam, or clotted cream.

Pro tip: For extra flavor, add ½ cup dried currants or chocolate chips to the dry mix.



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BUSINESS NEWS



How Projects Go Overbudget Without a Single Bad Decision



By Atif Rehman

Every project has three numbers that matter: what was budgeted, what has been committed, and what has actually been spent. Most reporting only shows two of them.

That missing number, committed cost, is the difference between a project that looks healthy and a project that is healthy. Understanding why requires understanding what a commitment actually is.



THE THREE NUMBERS, DEFINED

Budget is what you planned to spend. Straightforward, and rarely the source of confusion. Actual cost is what has been invoiced and posted. Also straightforward. This is the number every finance report leads with, because it's the easiest to verify.

Committed cost is what you have already agreed to spend, whether or not an invoice has arrived. A signed purchase order. An awarded subcontract. A confirmed order for a long-lead item. The obligation exists the moment the agreement is made, not the moment the supplier bills for it.

Most project reporting compares budget to actual and stops there. That comparison answers "how much have we spent." It does not answer the more important question: "how much can we still afford to commit?"

WHY THE GAP EXISTS

The reason committed cost gets missed isn't carelessness. It's timing.

A steel package can be committed in month two and not invoiced until month six. An MEP subcontract is often awarded before design coordination is even finished. On a fast-track UAE project running multiple packages in parallel, months of commitments can accumulate before anyone consolidates them into a single view.

Individually, none of these are alarming. A PO here, a subcontract there. But consolidated, they represent real money the project no longer has, whether the accounts reflect it yet or not.

A SHORT DIAGNOSTIC

Before reading further, test your own reporting against this checklist. If you can't answer these with confidence today, the blind spot already exists on your projects.

- Can you see committed cost, not just actual cost, on a live project report right now
- Does a purchase order check against remaining budget before it's issued, or only after
- Are long-lead items tracked against both schedule and remaining cash
- Do procurement, project management, and finance work from the same live budget figure
- Would an unbudgeted commitment get flagged automatically or only discovered at month-end

Most contractors answer "no" to at least two or three of these. That's not a criticism. It's simply where reactive, spreadsheet-driven procurement naturally lands.

THE PRINCIPLE: VISIBILITY AT THE POINT OF COMMITMENT

The instinct when budgets slip is to add controls. More sign-offs, more layers of approval, more reviews. This usually makes the problem worse, not better, because it adds friction without adding information.

The actual fix is simpler and less bureaucratic: give the person about to make a commitment the same information finance already has, at the moment they're making it.

That means: Every purchase order is checked against remaining budget before issue, not after. Committed, invoiced, and remaining values sit side by side, by package and cost code. Unbudgeted commitments trigger approval automatically, not at month-end review. Long-lead procurement is planned against schedule and cash flow together, not treated as procurement's problem alone. One live number is shared across procurement, project management, and finance, instead of three reconciled spreadsheets.

None of this slows procurement down. It moves the moment of truth earlier, from "we found out at month-end" to "we knew before we signed."

WHERE THIS BREAKS DOWN IN PRACTICE

The blind spot rarely causes damage while a project is going smoothly. It causes damage the moment something changes: a price increase, an added scope, a delayed variation approval, and there's no room left to absorb it.



By then, the commitment is already locked in. There's no renegotiating a signed PO because the budget turned out tighter than expected. What's left is to eat the overrun, or dispute it, and neither is a comfortable position mid-project.



It's also where internal trust erodes. Project managers get blindsided by numbers finance was quietly carrying. Finance gets blindsided by commitments the site made -

- without flagging them. Nobody did anything wrong. They simply weren't looking at the same numbers.

A CLOSING PRINCIPLE

A budget report built only on actual spend tells you where you've been. Committed cost tells you where you're going. Most overruns aren't the result of one bad decision. They're the accumulation of small commitments nobody consolidated until the budget was already spoken for.



At Premier Construction Software, this is built into how job costing works from day one: purchase orders and subcontract commitments post against the project budget in real time, so committed, invoiced, and remaining values are always visible together, by package and by cost code. It's not a separate control layer. It's the same number, available to everyone, the moment it matters.

If you want to see what committed cost visibility looks like inside a live project, let's have a quick conversation.



Atif Rehman is currently the Director of Business Development (Middle East & Africa) at Premier Construction Software. Atif has helped organizations across the Middle East and Africa to rethink how they manage capital projects, from design through to handover to asset management.

ATIF REHMAN

As part of his career he has worked from digitizing document control to digital twins and rolling out full lifecycle project platforms. The goal has always been the same: connect the right people to the right data at the right time.





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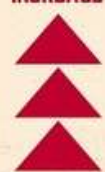
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Zambia's 2026

Election:

RECKONING FOR PRESIDENT HH AS UNFULFILLED PROMISES HAUNT HIS CAMPAIGN

Political Correspondent

On 13 August 2026, Zambians will head to the polls in a high-stakes election that may serve as a referendum on President Hakainde Hichilema's first term.



ZAMBIA President Hakainde Hichilema

While he swept into power in 2021 on a wave of hope, promising a new dawn of economic revival and good governance, many voters now question whether the man who promised change has delivered, or whether he has become what he once opposed.

President Hichilema's 2021 campaign was anchored on a pledge of "zero tolerance" for corruption, economic recovery, and a return to the rule of law. However, independent assessments paint a troubling picture. Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) gave the UPND administration a low score of 2.1 out of 5 on governance and anti-corruption promises, citing "selective application of laws" and a "gap between political rhetoric and action."

Critics point to the ZAMMSA scandal and the Sino Mine pollution cases as examples where the administration was slow to act, raising concerns that the fight against corruption has been politicized. Unlike the swift prosecution of former PF officials, cases involving UPND allies remain obscure, reinforcing the perception that justice is selective. Furthermore, key promises like lifestyle audits, asset declaration laws, and the full operationalization of the Access to Information Act remain unfulfilled.

The Hichilema administration points to impressive macroeconomic indicators: inflation has dropped from 24.6% in 2021 to 6.5%, foreign reserves have ballooned to \$6.5 billion, and a landmark debt restructuring deal has been completed. The government has also implemented a popular free education policy that has brought over 2.5 million children back to school.

Yet, for many ordinary Zambians, these figures don't translate to relief. The cost of living remains painfully high, and unemployment hovers at 13%, with youth unemployment at a staggering 24.7%. The Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) notes that while the economy has "stabilized," workers are still struggling with poverty and high living costs. This disconnect, between the government's story of recovery and the reality of empty pockets is the central tension of the election.

The main challenger, Brian Mundubile of the Tonse Alliance, is capitalizing on this frustration. The Tonse Alliance is an opposition coalition of political parties in Zambia formed to challenge and defeat the ruling United Party for National Development (UPND) in the general election. He has dismissed Hichilema's economic boasting as "big English" while "people are going hungry." Mundubile has promised to dip into the \$6.5 billion reserves to ease immediate suffering, a move Hichilema warns would destabilize the economy.



Zambian opposition leader Brian Mundubile of the Tonse Alliance

A New Era For Zambian Politics



POLITICAL UPDATE

However, the opposition remains fractured. While Mundubile leads the Tonse Alliance, candidates date like Fred M'membe (Socialist Party) and Harry Kalaba (Citizens First) are also in the race, alongside a crowded field of 14 presidential contenders. This fragmentation could split the anti-UPND vote, giving Hichilema the advantage of incumbency.

The irony is palpable: Hichilema, once the perennial opposition leader who decried authoritarianism, now faces accusations of suppressing dissent. Critics highlight the introduction of a vague cyber crimes law and allegations that opposition meetings are disrupted by police. As one observer noted, "Any dissenting voice is regarded as an enemy of the state." This shift from reformer to defender of the status quo has left many disillusioned.



therefore, our expectation that the Electoral Reform Technical Committee (ERTC) will embody an inclusive and comprehensive process in reviewing legislation and administrative procedures to improve Zambia's elections and the electoral process.

In conclusion, the 13 August election is a pivotal moment for Zambia. President Hichilema argues that his first term was about stabilization and that a second term will bring tangible benefits. However, with high poverty, unemployment, and broken governance promises, he is facing the same taste of opposition that once fueled his own rise. For Zambians, the choice is between the devil they know and a fractured opposition that promises a return to populist policies; a decision that will shape the nation's trajectory for years to come.



President Hakainde Hichilema has assured that the 13 August 2026 General Elections will be peaceful, credible and transparent.

Zambian voters have always been advocating for electoral reforms to address key challenges in the administration of elections including at administrative level arising from the Constitution, the Electoral Commission of Zambia Act, Electoral Process Act and the Public Order Act among others since 2016. It is



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GEN Z's

THE GENERATION OF CONTRADICTIONS

Understanding Gen Z's Paradoxical Pursuit of Effortless Success

By Maxwell Albert,

Walk into any home with a teenager or young adult, and you'll hear the same frustrations echoed by parents, employers, and even older siblings. Why won't they apply for jobs? Why do they talk back with such unearned confidence? Why do they demand a driver's license but refuse to take a single lesson?

Why does a simple request to clean their room ignite a philosophical debate about personal boundaries?

Before we write off an entire generation, let's understand the machinery behind these behaviors. Because the truth is more complex and more concerning than simple laziness.

Gen Zs have been raised in the era of algorithmic gratification. Social media platforms are engineered to deliver micro-doses of dopamine with every swipe, like, and comment. This isn't a character flaw; it's neurological conditioning.

The result is a deeply ingrained expectation that effort should yield immediate returns. Why spend months applying for jobs when a viral TikTok can bring fame overnight? Why study for a driver's test when you can watch a 60-second "hack" video and assume you've mastered it?

The "fast life" isn't a preference, it's an addiction to speed. Patience, delayed gratification, and the slow burn of skill-building feel foreign to brains wired for 15-second entertainment. The concept of earning anything through sustained effort has become almost alien.

Gen Z Using Social Media as Identity

For many Gen Zs, self-worth is now measured in engagement metrics. A job offer is private; a viral post is public. A clean room is invisible; a curated Instagram aesthetic is celebrated.





Cleaning up after themselves? That's mundane, unshareable, and offers zero likes. Talking back to elders? That's content; provocative, shareable, and often rewarded with social currency among peers. The disrespect isn't always born of malice; it's often born of a desperate need to perform rebellion for an audience.



Most parents can relate to this picture inside their kids bedrooms

Let's Talk About the Driver's License Paradox: Entitlement Without Effort

Perhaps the most baffling contradiction is the demand for a driver's license without any willingness to take lessons. This reveals a deeper mindset: the belief that credentials are entitlements, not achievements.

Why study traffic laws when you can just "figure it out"? Why practice parallel parking when you can argue that the test is "outdated"? This isn't confidence; it's a refusal to acknowledge that competence requires submission to process.

The license represents freedom, but freedom without responsibility is just chaos. And chaos, ironically, is exactly what they claim to despise in the world they mock.

Job Market Refusal: Rejection of Dignity or Fear of Rejection?

Gen Z's unemployment rates tell a troubling story. But it's not that they don't want to work. It's that they don't want to work in ways that feel degrading, underpaid, or invisible.

Entry-level jobs; retail, food service, cleaning; are seen as beneath their perceived potential. Social media has convinced many that they are "main characters" destined for entrepreneurship, content creation, or instant management.



The irony? They are smarter than anyone else...in their own minds. They consume information rapidly, spot hypocrisy instantly, and can dismantle an argument with savage wit. But wisdom?

Most teenagers do not want to work in entry level jobs

Perspective? Humility? Those require experience, failure, and the willingness to be wrong.

And being wrong is something this generation struggles with profoundly. Because in a world where your every opinion is broadcast and judged, admitting ignorance feels like social suicide.

Why They Think They're Smarter (And Why They're Not)

Gen Zs have access to more information than any generation in history. They can fact-check a politician in seconds, cite obscure statistics, and debate geopolitics with confidence.

But information is not intelligence. Knowing facts is not the same as understanding nuance. Parroting data is not the same as critical thinking. And confidently asserting an opinion is not the same as earning the right to have one.



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Their arrogance often masks a deep insecurity: the fear that without this performative confidence, they will be exposed as unprepared for a world that doesn't care about their follower count.

They talk back to elders not because they know more, but because they've never been taught the art of respectful disagreement. They've confused volume with validity, and confrontation with conviction.

The Unrevealed Truth

Here is the hard truth that no TikTok or social media influencer will tell them: There is no shortcut to substance.

- The job you refuse to apply for might teach you discipline.
- The driving lesson you skip might save your life.
- The room you refuse to clean is a reflection of your internal chaos.
- The elder you talk back to holds decades of hard-won wisdom that no algorithm can replicate.

The "fast life" is a mirage. Social media validation evaporates. Entitlement without effort leads to a hollow existence. And intelligence without humility is just noise.

This is not a condemnation; it's a wake-up call. Gen Zs are brilliant, creative, and deeply passionate about justice. But brilliance without grit is wasted. Creativity without discipline is fleeting. Passion without responsibility is dangerous.

The world does not owe them a living. But we, parents, mentors, employers, and society; owe them the truth. We owe them the uncomfortable lessons that social media will never teach:

- Respect is earned, not demanded.
- Freedom requires competence.
- Smart people ask questions; arrogant people give answers.
- And the most important validation comes from within, not from a screen.

Until they learn these lessons, they will remain trapped in a cycle of wanting everything and earning nothing, forever chasing a fast life that will never truly satisfy.



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From Reggae Rhythms to Shared Prosperity: Jamaica Scraps Visa for Zimbabweans

When Bob Marley took the stage at Zimbabwe's independence celebrations in 1980, his anthem "Zimbabwe" was more than a performance, it was a declaration of solidarity that cemented a cultural bond between two nations united by history and spirit.



The late Bob Marley performing in Zimbabwe

Decades later, that connection is evolving from symbolism into concrete economic and diplomatic partnership, with Jamaica's recent decision to scrap visa requirements for Zimbabwean travelers serving as the latest milestone.

Jamaica has joined a growing list of countries extending visa-free access to Zimbabwean passport holders, a move that signals deepening trust and a desire to boost people-to-people exchanges.

The decision comes as Zimbabwe itself has expanded its own visa-free list to include several Caribbean nations, creating a reciprocal ease of movement that officials hope will spur tourism, business, and cultural collaboration.

The Jamaican consulate in Harare, established in July 2022, has already laid the diplomatic groundwork for closer ties, and the visa scrapping is expected to accelerate face-to-face engagement between entrepreneurs, artists, and innovators from both countries.

Professor Amon Murwira, Zimbabwe's presidential envoy, described the evolving dynamic during a high-level visit to Kingston earlier this year: "The symbolic importance of Marley and the song 'Zimbabwe' binds our nations, but such connections should now open pathways for economic opportunity and collaboration."



Jamaica's Deputy Prime Minister Horace Chang echoed the same sentiment, stating, "We are not short of talent; what we need is to better utilize and connect our skills and technologies."

Climate change has emerged as another shared concern. While Zimbabwe grapples with droughts and Jamaica faces rising sea levels, both nations are exploring joint strategies to build resilience. They've also found common ground on global reparations advocacy, with Zimbabwe aligning with Caribbean-led efforts to address the enduring impacts of slavery and colonialism.

What began as a cultural and political solidarity forged in the fires of anti-colonial struggle is becoming a model for cross-continental cooperation; one that honors its roots while reaching confidently toward a future of shared growth and influence.

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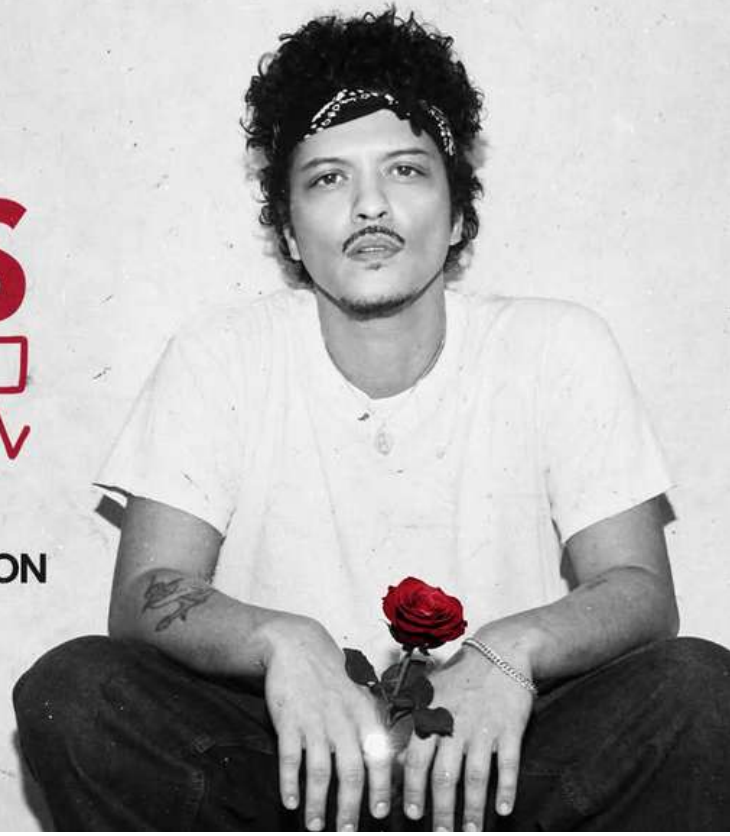
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NASHIE ZIM

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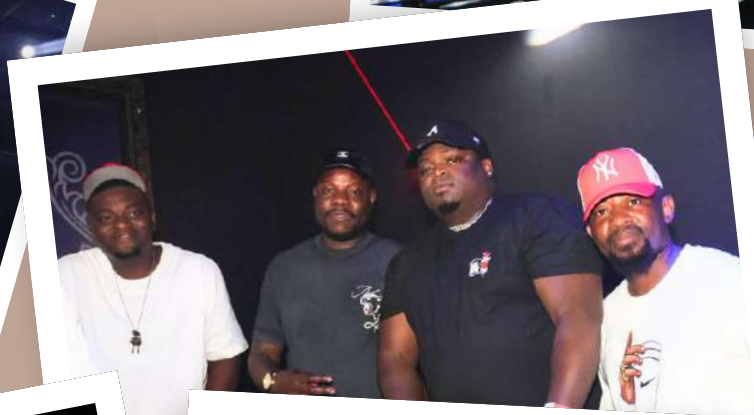
THE ALBUM

NASHIE ZIM

PAR

Nashie Zim has set October as the month for the release of his long awaited album. The 'man-of-the-moment' broke the news through his official social media handles. the artist is known for his captivating lyrics with deep meaning for those in love and his music has no age gap. He tries to balance the youthful at heart and adults who have survived the test of time, with lyrics that conjure those romantic moments.

PEMOH Tour Canada in Pictures



Edmonton

FIFA WORLD CUP



COMES TO AN END

MESSI GOES HOME EMPTY HANDED

The fairy tale did not have its intended ending. In the shimmering cauldron of the New York New Jersey Stadium, under the glare of a global audience, Lionel Messi's quest for a second consecutive World Cup title ended not with a bang, but with a whimper.



Lionel Messi

Spain, in a display of tactical mastery, dismantled the reigning champions 1-0 in extra time to claim their second FIFA World Cup crown, leaving the legendary number 10 to walk away with nothing but a silver medal and a trail of tears.

For 106 minutes, Argentina waited for a moment of magic. It never came. Spain's suffocating possession football rendered the defending champions, and their captain, completely anonymous.

In a performance that bordered on the surreal, Argentina failed to muster a single shot on target during regular time, a statistic that speaks volumes about the chasm in quality on the night. Spain, by contrast, unleashed a relentless assault of 20 shots, completing 738 of their 817 passes and dictating the rhythm of the game from the first whistle to the last.

The match was a masterclass in control, orchestrated by Spain's midfield and their relentless pressing. Fabian Ruiz and Pedri dominated the center of the park, while the dazzling width provided by Lamine Yamal, Dani Olmo and Nico Williams stretched the Argentine defense to its breaking point.

Argentina, reduced to 34% possession, their lowest share in a World Cup match since records began in 1966, simply could not escape their own half. The statistic that perfectly underscores their plight is that goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, who made a string of heroic saves, finished the game as the player with the most touches for Argentina.

Messi, at 39 years old, who had carried Argentina through the tournament with eight goals and four assists, found himself isolated and shut down. Every touch was greeted by a swarm of red shirts, every passing lane closed, every avenue of influence suffocated.

He registered just 55 touches and none in the Spain penalty area. It was a performance far removed from the player who had scored in his consecutive World Cup appearances and rewritten the competition's record books. Spain completely took him out of the game; he rarely received the ball, and when he did, it was often on the sideline with nowhere to go.

The deciding moment came in the 106th minute. Nico Williams delivered a cushioned header into the path of Ferran Torres, who fired a finish beyond the valiant Martínez. The goal was a long time coming for Spain and one that Argentina could not argue against. Their hopes had already been dealt a significant blow when Enzo Fernández was shown a red card in stoppage time for a foolish challenge, forcing his side to play the remainder of the match with ten men.

The final whistle triggered a wave of emotion. While Spain celebrated, Messi was left distraught. The tears that streamed down his face as FIFA president Gianni Infantino draped a silver medal over his neck painted a picture of a man wrestling with the end of an era. This was a stark contrast to the jubilation of Qatar just four years prior.



Whether this was Messi's last dance on the international stage remains the subject of intense speculation. He will be 43 by the time the 2030 World Cup arrives, and despite his enduring passion and ability to adapt his game, the relentless march of time is an opponent even he cannot defeat.



Lamine Yamal consoles Messi

In the end, the 2026 final will not be remembered for a moment of individual genius but for a display of complete team domination. Spain didn't just beat Argentina; they made them disappear. For Messi, who has given so much to the game, it was a heartbreakingly quiet end to a World Cup campaign that started with so much promise. He goes home empty-handed, but the debate about his status as the greatest of all time was settled long before this final whistle ever blew.

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The Lost Pride of the FIFA World Cup

Zvakwana Nomore Sweto

• Why Fans Are Losing Faith in Football's Greatest Stage

For generations, the FIFA World Cup stood as football's sacred cathedral; a tournament where the sport's purity transcended politics, money, and spectacle. The 2026 edition, co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, was supposed to be a celebration of expansion and unity. Instead, it may be remembered as the moment many fans lost faith in the beautiful game's governing body.

From mandatory hydration breaks that split matches into four quarters, to a Super Bowl-style halftime show that shattered the sport's most fundamental rules, this World Cup has tested the patience of a global fanbase like never before. The question is no longer whether FIFA is commercializing football, but whether there is any pride left to salvage.

Mid-Break Strategy: Turning the Whole Match into Four Quarters

Football has always been defined by its relentless, uninterrupted rhythm. That tradition was dismantled at this year's tournament with the introduction of mandatory three-minute hydration breaks in every match, regardless of weather conditions.

Previously, such breaks were reserved for extreme heat. This time, referees halted play around the 22nd and 67th minutes of every game; effectively dividing football into four quarters, mirroring the NBA and NFL structure of the host nation.

FIFA defended the move on player welfare grounds, but the skepticism was immediate. Broadcasters used the stoppages to air commercials, and critics pointed out that the breaks offered coaches tactical timeouts that fundamentally altered match outcomes.

As Arsène Wenger, FIFA's head of global football development, later admitted: "Sometimes people didn't like it." England manager Thomas Tuchel was blunter, saying the breaks "interrupt and change the identity of a football match."



The numbers tell the story: across 104 matches, the hydration breaks added over 10 hours of extra broadcast buffer; time FIFA's commercial partners happily filled with advertising.

The Half-Time Show



If the hydration breaks were controversial, the World Cup final's halftime show was an outright rupture with football's rulebook.



The IFAB Laws of the Game are explicit: the half-time interval "may be altered only with the referee's permission" and should not exceed 15 minutes. Yet the final between Spain and Argentina featured a star-studded performance curated by Coldplay's Chris Martin, featuring Madonna, Shakira, Justin Bieber, iShowSpeed, and BTS.

The result? A 28-minute half-time break, nearly double the legal limit. To accommodate the stage setup and takedown, FIFA simply ignored its own governing rules.

Critics have drawn inevitable comparisons to the Super Bowl, accusing FIFA of "Americanizing" the sport. "They've done a lot that's challenged the structure and integrity of the game," said Alan McDougall, a professor of history who has written extensively on football.

The structural changes were only part of the problem. This World Cup became a lightning rod for accusations of political interference and commercial excess.

Ticket prices reached obscene levels, with the cheapest final tickets starting at \$4,185 and VIP packages hitting \$8,680. Fans launched a formal complaint with the European Commission, accusing FIFA of abusing its monopoly power.

Political interference reached unprecedented depths. When US striker Folarin Balogun received a red card, President Donald Trump personally called FIFA President Gianni Infantino to review the case. Incredibly, FIFA complied, suspending the ban on probation; a decision UEFA called "unprecedented, incomprehensible and unjustifiable."

The governing body's reputation took a further hit when Infantino awarded Trump a first-of-its-kind "FIFA Peace Prize," a move widely seen as blatant political brown-nosing.



U.S. President Donald Trump

Discrimination and exclusion also marred the tournament. Iranian delegation members were denied US visas despite FIFA's assurances. A Somali referee was turned away despite holding a valid visa. As Human Rights Watch's Minky Worden noted, the tournament was played "against a backdrop of the US government's abusive immigration crackdown."

The cumulative effect of these controversies has been a profound erosion of fan confidence. Social media has been flooded with memes questioning the integrity of nearly every match, with the viral term "VARgentina" suggesting a refereeing bias on behalf of the eventual champions.

The football itself, in moments, was magnificent. Spain were worthy champions, Cape Verde stunned the giants, and underdogs thrilled the world. But the game was increasingly treated as a footnote to the spectacle.

The question now is: how much of this American-style makeover will survive?

FIFA has indicated it will review the hydration breaks after the tournament, but the commercial incentive to retain them is enormous. UEFA has already ruled out introducing similar breaks in European competitions, setting up a potential schism between the global and European game.

Meanwhile, Infantino has floated expanding the World Cup further; from 48 to 64 teams, adding even more matches, broadcast inventory, and commercial opportunities.

This was not the World Cup that promised to unite the world. It was a tournament where commerce dictated the rules, where presidents interfered with refereeing decisions, and where fans were priced out of the stands.

The lost pride of the World Cup is not about one bad call or one overly long halftime. It is about the creeping sense that FIFA no longer sees itself as the guardian of football's soul, but as its most aggressive commercial exploiter. And for millions of fans who grew up believing that the World Cup was different, that realization may be the hardest loss of all.



Donald Trump and FIFA President , Gianni Infantino: The man who has turned football into a circus

DARK CLOUD FOR ZIM FOOTBALL



CLUB STATEMENT

On the Passing of Our Club Chairman, Vice Chairman and Executive Committee Member Finance.

It is with profound sadness and heavy hearts that Highlanders Football Club confirms the untimely passing of our beloved Club Chairman, Rtd. Col. Kenneth Mhlophe, Vice Chairman, Sifiso Siziba, and Executive Committee Member Finance, Nkani Khoza.

Our three esteemed club officials tragically lost their lives in a road accident while returning from our league fixture against ZPC Kariba on Thursday evening, 23 July 2026.

They were far more than club officials. They were the architects of the Club's vision, the guardians of our values, and father figures to so many within the Highlanders Football Club family. Their leadership, wisdom, dedication, and unwavering commitment to Bosso will never be forgotten.

We extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to their families, loved ones, the football fraternity, our members, supporters, and everyone whose lives they touched. We ask that you keep the bereaved families in your thoughts and prayers during this incredibly difficult time.

Further details regarding funeral arrangements and other official matters will be communicated in due course.

Rest in peace and power, our leaders. Your legacy will live on forever in the heart of Highlanders Football Club.

Highlanders Football Club

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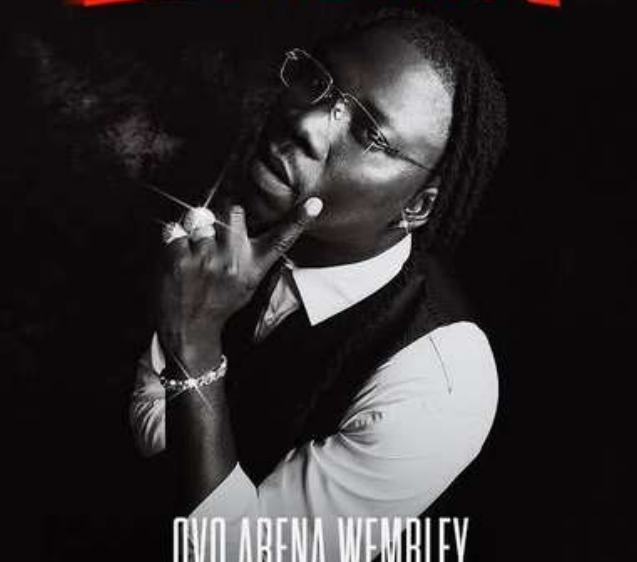
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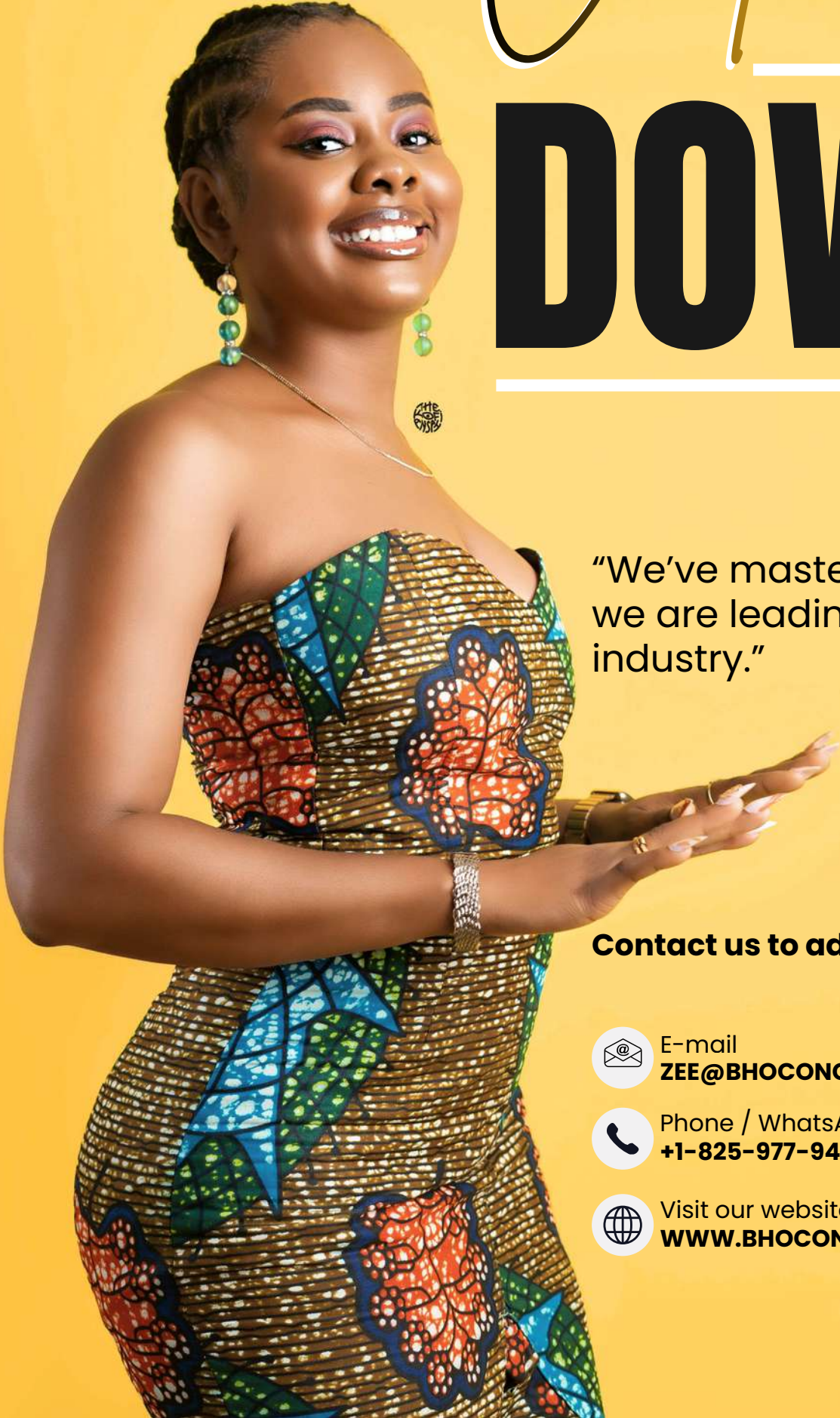


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