



Home > GENERAL NEWS

GENERAL NEWS

“You will not shut down, resume operations” Baluba Mine told

08/09/2015

9



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GOVERNMENT has asked China Nonferrous Metal Mining Corporation Luanshya Copper Mines (CLM) management to reverse its decision to suspend operations at Baluba Mine and placing the mine under care and maintenance because this has been done without consulting the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Speaking during a press briefing in Luanshya yesterday, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services Chishimba Kambwili said CLM management cannot make a unilateral decision without engaging Government through the Labour Commissioner.

“Our serious appeal as Government, is that CLM must rescind its decision because as far as we are concerned, there is procedure to be followed in laying off workers, there has to be negotiations with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, which have not taken place.

“Therefore, CLM cannot just lay off workers with a unilateral decision and send workers on recess without consulting the Labour Commissioner and the Ministry of Labour,” he said.

Mr Kambwili, who is Chief Government spokesperson, said management should recall workers who have been served with letters asking them to go on forced leave.

The minister said Government will not allow Luanshya town to return to the days when Binani Group failed to operate Luanshya Copper Mines (LCM).

“We, therefore, appeal to them to rescind the decision. As far as Government is concerned, the mine is running and we expect employees to report for work. This memorandum that has been issued is not in conformity with the law and we will not allow any mining company to cease operations on the basis of shortage of electricity.

“There is an option to buy the power that is being imported at premium rates and continue with the operations,” he said.

Mr Kambwili said the matter will now be handled by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

And STEVEN MVULA reports that special assistant to the President for press and public relations Amos Chanda said Baluba mine has not closed contrary to reports by some sections of the media.

Mr Chanda said what is true is that the mine has been put under care and maintenance due to depressed copper prices on the international market and not power rationing as alleged in some sections of the media.

“The workers are on a paid leave. The issue of power is only 10 percent. According to the information we have, the mine is in an awkward position because of the depressed copper prices. Its copper is very low grade and so trading has become difficult for them,” he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Chanda said Government has stepped up fiscal intervention measures to ensure that there is sufficient liquidity in the market as far as foreign exchange is concerned.

He said State House is satisfied with the monetary measures the Bank of Zambia (BoZ) has put in place to monitor the status of the Kwacha in the wake of recent volatility of the local currency in recent days.

“State House remains confident that BoZ will continue to superintend matters of monetary policy and that the reserve bank will apply the relevant instruments deemed fit to ensure that there is no market instability,” Mr Chanda said.

He said President Lungu notes that the economic and market fundamentals are stable and that the volatility in the currency reflects more panic than problems in the market fundamentals.

He said State House expects market players to operate within the established rules and laws.

Meanwhile, MWILA NTAMBI reports that CLM has suspended operations at its Baluba Mine and placed the mine under care and maintenance, effective today.

But the Chinese-owned mining company has not indicated the number of workers to be affected although the Baluba Mine has a workforce of 1,800.

“This decision was arrived at after considering the escalating cost structure for Baluba Mine owing to the plummeting copper price, coupled with the energy deficit the country is currently experiencing,” CLM head of relations and local business development Sydney Chileya said in a statement released yesterday.

Mr Chileya said CLM management wants to conduct an orderly shutdown and clean-up of the operation with the controlled release of personnel except those who will form part of the care and maintenance team from the affected departments.

He also said miners who will not be part of the care and maintenance team will be receiving a monthly wage before devising the next course of action.

He said that the number of miners affected by the suspension of operations will only be known once the consulting process is concluded with departmental heads.

CLM management and union representatives from Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ) and National Union of Miners and Allied Workers (NUMAW) were in a meeting negotiating the number of workers to be affected by the decision.

Mine Workers Union of Zambia (MUZ) general secretary Nkole Chishimba said CLM should have engaged the unions before implementing measures that have resulted in some miners being placed on forced leave.

Mr Chishimba said workers are key stakeholders and deserve not only to be informed about the decision of the mine but to have their views heard.

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Humphrey Mweemba

08/09/2015 at 18:40

i am reliably informed that these directives hav been ignored. what next? revoke licence? deport some one?

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08/09/2015 at 14:10

nsingo yabila mumali

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Nsondo Mwenda

08/09/2015 at 12:37

Bushe ni company ya nyoko.

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08/09/2015 at 12:01

Akambwili kkkkkkk

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have these pipo reported for work today or ck has hit a wall again

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Jay Boy Jacobite

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ni operation ya nyoko

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08/09/2015 at 03:07

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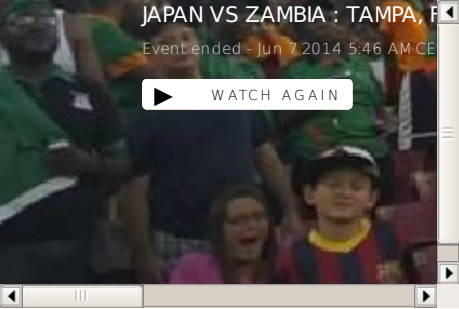
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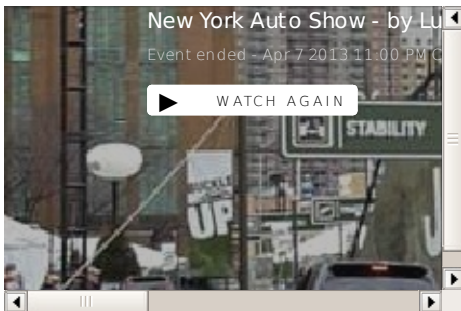
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
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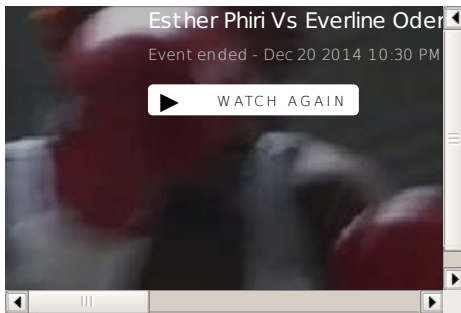
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