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# General News

## 11 head teachers interdicted by GES for charging unapproved fees

A total number of 11 headteachers have been interdicted by the Ghana Education Service (GES) for imposing unapproved fees during the admission of first-year students in their institutions.

Seven headteachers in Senior High Schools (SHSs) across the Ashanti Region have been directed to step aside for this alleged misconduct.

In press statements, the GES announced the initiation of investigations into the actions of the implicated headteachers. The affected individuals include Mrs. Selina Anane Afoakwa (Headmistress of Kumasi Girls SHS), Mr. Nataniel Asamoah (Headmaster of Asanteman SHS), Mr. Andrews Boateng (Headmaster of Kumasi Senior High Technical School), and Mr. Kwadwo Obeng-Appiah (Headmaster of Manso-Edubia SHS). Additionally, Mr. Daniel Boamah Duku (Headmaster of Agric Nzema Community SHS), Ms. Gladys Sarfowah (Headmistress of Nkawie Senior High Technical School), and Mr. Among Ahmed Omar (Headmaster of Collins SHS) are part of the list.

The GES accuses these headteachers of charging students various unapproved fees, including payments for house dues, books,

calculators, admission processes, printing of slips and files, and hymn books.

This action follows similar interdictions of headteachers in the Greater Accra and Eastern regions for unauthorized sales of items to students. Mr. Afi Yaw Stephen, Headmaster of Berekum Senior High School, and Mr. Joseph Jilinjeh Abudu, Headmaster of Odomaseman Senior High School, were directed to step aside for selling items not approved by education authorities.

Mr. Afi Yaw Stephen faced allegations of charging unauthorized fees such as "Borla fees," "motivation fees," and "lunch bag" charges. Meanwhile, Mr. Joseph Jilinjeh Abudu was accused of charging students GHC45 for hymn books, SRC fees, brown khaki, and other unapproved items.

Headteachers of O'Reilly Senior High School and Ghana Senior High School, Nadia Lartehoe Annan and Patience Naki Mensah, respectively, were suspended for unauthorized activities, including the collection

of admission fees and the sale of ceremonial cloth, tracksuits, and other items to incoming Form One students.

In response to these incidents, President of the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), Angel Carbonu, issued a stern warning to headteachers nationwide, urging them to adhere to the government's policy prohibiting the sale of items to students within school premises.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*



*Kumasi SHS*

## PPA boss' daughter reportedly burnt house catches fire

A fire outbreak has reportedly destroyed properties worth hundreds of thousands of Ghana Cedis at the residence of the Board Chairman of the Public Procurement Authority (PPA), Professor Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi, in Techiman, Bono East Region.

The incident, which occurred on Saturday, December 9, 2023, also allegedly left his daughter, who is in her 30s, with severe burn injuries. She was the only one at home when the fire started.

Professor Ameyaw Akumfi, who is a former Education Minister under the John Kufuor administration, was away attending a funeral at the time of the incident.

According to preliminary investigations, the fire was caused by an explosion in one of the rooms, which resulted in a thick smoke. Before the officials of the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) could intervene, the whole building was engulfed in flames.

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*Burnt house of Board Chairman of the Public Procurement Authority (PPA)*

# General News

## PPA boss' daughter burnt as house catches fire

- Continued from page 2

An aide to the PPA Board Chairman allegedly disclosed, No single property was saved from the house. Onlookers only managed to push one of the vehicles to safety,

but the whole building has been reduced to ashes."

The daughter, in her attempt to escape, suffered severe burn

injuries and was promptly rushed to the Holy Family Hospital in Techiman.

While the cause of the fire remains

unknown, the aide has not ruled out the possibility of a power surge.

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey**

## Govt delays payment of 30% allowance to MPs' bodyguards

**N**ingo-Prampram Member of Parliament, Samuel Nartey George, has expressed concerns about the delay in disbursing a promised 30% allowance to police officers assigned to provide security for Members of Parliament.

During his contribution to the discussion on the business statement for the upcoming

week, as presented by Majority Leader Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu on Friday, December 8, Mr Sam George highlighted the adverse impact of this delay on the morale of the officers.

He conveyed, "There is a critical issue that is affecting the morale of bodyguards assigned to MPs in the house. The issue of current mistreatment is because when

the signal came for them to be transferred from their various units to the parliamentary protection unit, that signal came with a certain benefit of 30% allowance to be paid to them."

"It appears that the majority of our police are not receiving that, and it is affecting the well-being of bodyguards," he added.

To address the situation, the Ningo-

Prampram legislator called for the Minister of Interior, Ambrose Dery, to be summoned to Parliament.

"If the Interior Minister can be brought to come and explain to us what that is, we will be grateful," he urged Speaker Alban Bagbin.

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**



Samuel Nartey George, Ningo-Prampram Member of Parliament

# General News

## Menstrual pads, others being used by nurses, midwives to cheat during exams – School of Nursing and Midwifery reveals

The Dean of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University for Development Studies (UDS), Dr. Vida Nyagre Yakong, has exposed a shocking form of examination malpractice among nursing and midwifery students in Ghana.

She revealed that some students use menstrual pads to hide phones and other unauthorized materials in their private parts, and then sneak them into examination halls.

She said this was one of the several ways that students engage in unprofessional and unacademic conduct during examinations, which undermines the quality of healthcare delivery in the country.

She made these revelations during a keynote speech at the graduation and matriculation ceremony of the Nursing and Midwifery Training College in Zuarungu, Upper East Region, on Saturday, November 25, 2023.

The ceremony was themed: “Quality Nursing and Midwifery Education: The Role of Stakeholders.”

“There is a particular paradigm shift that is emerging among trainees all over. This shift is from quality to quantity and from pursuit of knowledge to pursuit of lack of appreciation and

respect for knowledge, but must earn a certificate. Many training institutions witness an upsurge in unprofessional and unacademic conduct during examinations,” she said.

“Students’ engagement in examination malpractice has become so common and, to some extent, normalised among students. They enter examination halls

with phones containing content for examination and wrapped in papers and used as menstrual pads,” she added.

She also disclosed that some students download artificial intelligence apps on their phones that find answers online for their questions, while others write content under their dresses and on their thighs to copy.

She warned that such students risk cancellations of their papers, rustication or even dismissals, and that such behaviour was an embarrassment to the profession that values truth, hard-work and academic excellence.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Dr. Vida Nyagre Yakong, Dean of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University for Development Studies (UDS)*

## Bagbin to shut Parliament’s doors at 10am to check lateness by MPs

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, has proposed stricter measures to address the issue of late attendance among MPs.

Starting next year, entry points to the Chamber will be locked at 10:00 AM on each sitting day, and MPs arriving late will be locked out until the Speaker decides to open the doors again.

Alternatively, the Speaker has suggested starting sittings at 2:00 PM instead of the current 10:00 AM schedule, allowing committees to

hold meetings in the morning and present reports in the afternoon.

Speaker Bagbin encouraged discussions between the two caucuses to find alternative solutions.

“At 10 am, the doors will be locked. The Speaker will be in, and it will take some time before the doors will be opened. Not that they won’t be opened, but it will take some time. And so if you are not able to comply with it, let us all agree

- continued on page 5



*Alban Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament*

# General News

## Bagbin to shut Parliament's doors at 10am to check lateness by MPs

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that we will start sitting in the afternoon, from 2 p.m. or 4 p.m.; the Committees will have their meetings in the morning; reports will be ready for us to consider in the afternoon; and then by the time we adjourn around 8 p.m., the traffic situation will have improved," he said.

The Speaker added that "your coming to Parliament too will not be that early, so you can decide to leave at noon and by that time, there would have been less traffic, and you won't consume more fuel and then you can come in. I can see that it is not easy for members to report that early for sitting so the two Caucuses either have joint

Caucus meetings or, at your level, discuss these things and come back with proposals. If not, these are the measures that I want to put in place, which will take effect from our next meeting."

The Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, has emphasized that if no consensus is reached, the proposed measures to address

late attendance, including locking entry points at 10:00 AM, will be implemented starting the next session.

He conveyed this decision to the legislators on Friday, December 8.

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

## Roads Minister defends using asphalt to fill pothole-ridden motorway

The Minister of Roads and Highways, Kwasi Amoako-Attah, has justified the use of asphalt to patch potholes on the Accra-Tema motorway, saying it is a valid engineering practice.

He said this while answering some questions in parliament on the repair works on the motorway, which is a concrete road.

"There are various ways of patching potholes. The motorway obviously

is a concrete road, and it is rigid and from an engineering point of view, there is absolutely nothing wrong in patching potholes with asphaltic concrete. From an engineering point of view there is nothing wrong, and I have indicated that we had to do a cost-benefit analysis of what method to use," he said.

He explained that using concrete to patch concrete would require closing the road for a period, for

it to cure, which would cause inconvenience to the motorists and commuters who use the motorway daily.

"Normally when you want to use concrete to concrete, it will mean closing the road for a period, for it to cure and even if you want to use any additive, you still need to close the road because the additives will only mean that you are giving it a faster rate, for it to cure, but

it cannot be cured instantly. The nature of traffic on the motorway is such that you cannot close the motorway for any length of period," he noted.

He assured the public that the use of asphalt was a temporary measure, and that the government had plans to reconstruct the entire motorway in the near future.

**Source: The Independent Ghana**



**Kwasi Amoako Atta, Roads Minister**

# General News

## Climate Crisis: Ghana's Lands Minister urges world leaders to match words with action

As Ghana concludes its participation in the 28th session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP28, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel A. Jinapor has emphasized the need for global leaders to take decisive, urgent, and crucial measures in addressing the repercussions of climate change.

Addressing a team of local and International press on Saturday, 9th December 2023, the Lands Minister stressed the need for the leaders to demonstrate their commitment to the fight against climate change by acting on the agreements, promises and resolutions reached at COP28, hosted by the UAE.

Mr Jinapor warned of the ruinous impact of climate change already being felt across the globe and cautioned of the risk of total capitulation if global leaders do not back their promises with actions.

"The world is witnessing the relentless and devastating impacts of climate change. We cannot ignore the dire consequences we have experienced, the tragedies that have befallen us, and the challenges that lie ahead. We have seen seasons of droughts, woes of intense flooding, prolonged hunger, and the emergence of diseases, including the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. These are just a few among the myriad of challenges we face as a result of climate change," he said.

He bemoaned that two years of the Paris Agreement which is a legally binding International treaty on climate change adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12th December 2015, the world appears to be regressing when it comes to climate change crisis and its impact.

"At COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015, Parties to the UNFCCC reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change by pursuing efforts to limit global temperature increases as close as possible to 1.5

degrees Celsius. Eight years down the line we continue to grapple with the devastating effects of climate change," he said.

"Indeed the 1.5-degree benchmark for limiting the effects of climate change, cannot be achieved without nature. It is an indisputable fact that forests possess great potential to generate a third of the global climate solutions needed by 2030 as major sinks of greenhouse gases. This is amply supported by reports from the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Food and Agricultural Organizations, and other renowned scientists," he added.

Mr Jinapor also reminded the world once again that the forest and nature-based approach which is the policy direction being

championed by the government of Ghana is the most ideal and globally-accepted method of dealing with climate change crisis.

"Undoubtedly, the Forests and Land-Use sector has been globally recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a significant contributor of nature-based solutions to help attain the 1.5 degrees target under the Paris Agreement. "Actions such as protecting natural ecosystems from loss and degradation, restoring ecosystems that have been degraded, and sustainably managing working lands can contribute significantly in mitigating climate change and in reaching the Paris Agreement role of keeping global warming below 1.5°C," he said.

He reiterated the commitment and

determination of the government of Ghana to partner with countries, public and private agencies to build a resilient climate.

The Minister, therefore, charged the global superpowers to commit funds to the execution of nature-based solutions to the menace.

"I call on you, stakeholders, to commit finance towards nature-based solutions to resonate tangible outcomes. We must scale-up nature-based solutions to protect and restore our forests to achieve a 1.5 degrees Celsius world. I will leave you with a quote by the renowned English Primatologist and anthropologist, Jane Goodall, 'Deforestation is changing our climate, harming people and the natural world. We must, and can reverse this trend.'"

**Source: Lands Ministry**



**Samuel A. Jinapor, Minister for Lands and Natural Resources**

# General News

## Ablakwa provides new temporary homes for 300 flood victims

The Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has relocated about 300 people who were affected by the spillage of the Akosombo and Kpong Dams to new temporary structures.

The structures were built by Construction Ambassadors of the First Sky Group as part of the Safe Alternative Housing Project, which aims to relocate 12,000 people in the constituency who have been displaced by flooding.

Mr Ablakwa cut the sod for the project on October 24 and announced the relocation of the first batch of beneficiaries on December 9, 2023, via a post on X.

The beneficiaries, who had been staying temporarily at St. Kizito SHS, will now enjoy fully-furnished quarters with free rent and utilities until they can return to their homes. The relocation will also enable the school to resume its normal operations.

The spillage of excess water from the Akosombo and Kpong Hydro Dams, which started on September 15 and ended on December 8, caused widespread flooding in the Lower Volta Basin, affecting nine districts.

The South, Central, and North Tongu districts of the Volta Region were among the worst hit, with communities such as Battor, Tefle, Mepe, Sogakope, Adidome, and Anlo submerged under water. According to the National Disaster Management Organisation (NaDMO), over 26,000 people were displaced and left homeless.

Various institutions and individuals, including President Akufo-Addo, Vice President Dr. Mahama Bawumia, the NDC leadership, and the Minority caucus, visited the affected areas and donated relief items to the victims.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister, Ken

Ofori-Atta, has indicated that the government has allocated GHC220 million to support the families and communities affected by the spillage. He made this known when he presented the 2024 budget statement in Parliament.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Fully-furnished quarters for 300 Akosombo dam spillage victims*

## PNC to elect its presidential candidate in March 2024

The People's National Convention (PNC) has announced plans to hold internal elections next year.

The regional executive elections are scheduled to take place from January 15th to 31st, 2024, while the presidential primary is slated for March 24th, 2024.

The nomination for regional executives will be opened from 1st to 5th January 2024, whereas the nomination for national executives' positions and that of the presidential candidate will be opened from 15th to 20th February

2024.

The decision was made during a National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on December 8th and 9th in Accra.

Pursuant to Article 46 and 45(1a) of the PNC constitution, the Standing Committee and NEC met consecutively in Accra, to address concerning matters towards organizing the party for victory come 2024 general elections.

Present at the meeting were regional chairmen, regional secretaries, national officers, - *continued on page 8*



*Janet Asana Nabla, PNC General Secretary*

# General News

## ***PNC to elect its presidential candidate in March 2024***

***- Continued from page 7***

committees' chairmen and council of elders as required by law. The Acting National Chairman, Mr. Bala Salu Maikankan chaired both meetings. The PNC, in a press statement signed by its General

Secretary, Janet Asana Nabla, urged members to address their grievances through the appropriate party structures.

"The Council of Elders have

indicated that they have not instructed any individual or group of individuals to sue any person(s) or entity on behalf of the party. All persons with any grievances should channel such grievances to

the appropriate structures of the party for resolution of same," part of the statement read.

***Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty***

## **2024 will be a shocker for the 'evil people', get ready – Anas 'warns'**

**G**hanaian investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, has hinted at a forthcoming exposé set to be unveiled in January 2024.

The investigative piece, anticipated to be both shocking and grim, has left even Anas disturbed, prompting him to abruptly leave the screening in the middle of the film and never return.

The teaser video, shared by GraphicOnline, emphasises the

severity of the revelations, with Anas stating, "People can be evil."

Anas Aremeyaw Anas revealed that the exposé is scheduled for release on BBC Africa Eye, indicating a global impact as it airs on the world service.

"Which is likely to be released on the BBC in January shocked me, and I can tell you, get ready for a shocker on the BBC Africa Eye. It will go globally; it will play on the world service. But even me, when I

saw the film and I got to the middle, I got out and went away because the scenes are gory, people can be evil," he shared.

Known for his history of unveiling high-profile exposés with significant social and political implications in Ghana and beyond, Anas Aremeyaw Anas is a renowned investigative journalist.

His dedication to uncovering corruption and promoting justice, despite the ethical questions

surrounding his anonymity, has sparked discussions on transparency and accountability.

Despite the controversy, Anas's work has consistently shed light on critical issues, and his upcoming exposé, scheduled for release on BBC Africa Eye, is expected to continue his tradition of impactful investigative journalism.

***Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey***



***Anas Aremeyaw, Investigative Journalist***



# General News

## 298 new HIV infections recorded in Ashaiman municipality in 2023 - Health Service Director

The Ashaiman Municipality has reported 298 new cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections between January and October 2023.

The Director of Health Services for the Ashaiman Municipality, Mrs. Patience Ami Mamattah, revealed that out of the 298 new infections, 116 were males, and 182 were females.

Additionally, a total of 90 pregnant women tested HIV-positive during this period, with 86 successfully put on treatment.

Mrs Mamattah emphasized the importance of HIV awareness creation and screening at public gatherings to combat stigmatization and discrimination against individuals living with HIV.

Mrs Mamattah said, "Someone living with HIV is just like you. Do

not point fingers at persons living with HIV."

The Director of Health Services for the Ashaiman Municipality emphasized the importance of knowing one's HIV status, highlighting that quality of life is assured with the availability of treatment for those testing positive for HIV.

She urged pregnant women to willingly undergo testing and adhere to medications to prevent transmitting the virus to their unborn babies.

Additionally, she encouraged the public to practice safe sex by following the 'ABC' approach- abstaining, being with one partner, or using condoms- to protect against HIV.

*Source: The Independent Ghana*



*Mrs. Patience Ami Mamattah, Director of Health Services for the Ashaiman Municipality*

## Ghanaian appointed Deputy Head of AU-UN Mission in South Sudan

On December 8, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Anita Kiki Gbeho from Ghana as the new Deputy Special Representative in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and Resident Coordinator in South Sudan.

Ms. Gbeho will also take on the role of Humanitarian Coordinator. She succeeds Sara Beysolow Nyanti of Liberia, and the Secretary-General expressed gratitude for Ms. Nyanti's dedication and service.

With over 25 years of experience in strategic planning, coordination, and management in political, development, and humanitarian affairs, Ms. Gbeho has worked in various conflict and post-conflict settings, including Angola, Cambodia, Iraq, Namibia, Somalia, and Sudan.

Since 2021, she has served as the Deputy Special Representative

of the Secretary-General-Political in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, supporting Somalia in achieving its peace and state-building goals.

From 2018 to 2020, Ms. Gbeho served as the Deputy Joint Special Representative of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur, where she

played a leading role in developing and implementing the Mission's transition strategy.

In the period between 2015 and 2018, she held the position of Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative with the United Nations Development Programme in Namibia.

Additionally, Ms. Gbeho has

served as the Chief of Section in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in New York and as the Head of Office for OCHA in Somalia and Southern Sudan. She holds a master's degree in international relations from the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*



*Sunon Asogli Power (Ghana)*

# General News

## ECG settles half of \$60m debt owed Sunon Asogli

The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) has successfully paid \$30 million of the \$60 million debt owed to Sunon Asogli Power Limited.

According to the Managing Director of ECG, Samuel Dubik Mahama, the payment was completed on Thursday, December 7, following a meeting between the two bodies.

“Sunon Asogli has received \$30 million from the government of Ghana and the conversations are far advanced for a second tranche of another \$30 million to be paid to them and as it stands now, Sunon Asogli has always been an integral part of our growth.

“They are one of the first IPPs and they have always treated Ghana fairly when it comes to how they have structured their PPAs, they are very good partners that we intend to grow with so we have even come up with a new way to renegotiate our outstanding PPA to make it much more efficient

and cheaper for the good people of Ghana,” he said.

This payment is part of the effort to address the financial obligations to power producers, with the remaining \$30 million scheduled to be paid as a second tranche.

The power producer had halted its operations on Monday, December 4, citing the government’s delay in fulfilling its financial commitments to power plants as the primary reason. However, it decided to temporarily suspend its shutdown for a week after receiving assurance from the government regarding the settlement of the outstanding debt.

The shutdown was initiated due to concerns raised by Sunon Asogli Power about the substantial impact of accumulating unpaid bills on its operational capacity, deeming it unsustainable to continue without addressing the financial challenges.

Sunon Asogli only suspended its decision following the Minister

of Finance and Minister of State’s assurance and wrote in an acknowledgement note that “Kindly confirm our understanding that we shall be paid an interim sum of \$60 million in two tranches.

The first tranche \$30 million to be paid this week and the second tranche in the week of 11th December 2023.”

*Source: The Independent Ghana*



ECG Office

## No campaign until nominations are opened on Dec. 20 - NPP tells Parliamentary aspirants

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) has announced the opening of nominations in constituencies where it currently has incumbent Members of Parliament. Nominations will commence on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, and close on Monday, December 25, 2023.

Ahead of the nomination period, the party’s leadership has emphasized that no campaigning is permitted during this time frame.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the party said it had “banned all forms of campaigning until nominations are officially opened. Prospective aspiring parliamentary candidates and their supporters are prohibited from engaging with polling station executives and from organizing all forms of activities or programs in the Constituency.”

“The Party shall impose stringent

sanctions on any member found to have violated these guidelines,” the party added.

Additionally, the NPP has rescheduled the parliamentary primaries in these constituencies to take place on Saturday, January 27, 2024.

Per the leadership, guidelines for the parliamentary primaries would be published in due course.

“Party members are reminded and encouraged to fulfil their membership dues obligations under Article 3 of the Party Constitution. The leadership of the Party reiterates its commitment to free, fair, and transparent parliamentary primaries and counts on the support of all stakeholders,” the statement further noted.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*



NPP Flag

# Business

## Cocoa farmers in Western North call for reforms in off-reserve timber resources

Cocoa farmers in the Western North Region said the Government and stakeholders must initiate steps to amend the Concession Act 1962 (Act 124) to give farmers reasonable benefits from proceeds accrued from the commercialization of off-reserve timber resources.

The planting or nurturing of trees and timber resources forms part of a major climate change mitigation strategies for most farmers, but existing tree tenure and benefits sharing arrangements for off-reserve timber resources had been a great disincentive to the farmers.

With support from TROPENBOS Ghana, they called on the Forestry Commission to take urgent steps

to address the situation to improve tree cover in off-reserve areas, and help combat climate change, while enhancing sustainability.

Mr Boakye Twumasi Ankra, the Project Manager, TROPENBOS Ghana, on behalf of the farmers, explained that the Concession Act 1962 (Act 124) gave the state authority over all naturally occurring trees, which was not motivative enough for farmers to genuinely nurture the trees on their farms.

In an interview with the Ghana News Agency after a sensitisation programme for more than 300 farmers in region, he said the Act took away tree ownership rights from farmers.

“The only right the farmer has is to give written consent to the harvesting of specified trees on their farms with no direct financial benefit from revenue accrued from such trees.”

Mr Ankra, therefore, urged stakeholders to initiate steps to amend the law to help farmers benefit directly from trees on their farms.

*Source: GNA*



*File photo*

## Ghana's expenditure on second-hand clothes imports reached \$214m in 2021 – Report

Data from the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) trade repository indicates that Ghana spent \$2.6 billion on the importation of 14 products in 2021, with \$226 million allocated to fake hair (wigs).

The other items comprise, rice - \$552m, poultry - \$410m, palm oil - \$289m, mosquito coil and insecticides - \$260m, used clothing- \$214m, sugar - \$185m, processed fish - \$128m, tea - \$128m, guts, bladders and intestines of animals - \$65.7m, soaps and detergents - \$41.2m, onions - \$33.1 m, brooms - \$26m, and margarine - \$11.7m.

This information comes at a time when the government made an unsuccessful attempt to limit the importation of 22 products, including many of the 14 items mentioned above.

It has come to light that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as part of the three-year \$3-billion extended credit facility to Ghana, has advised against implementing any import restrictions from 2023 to 2026.

As part of the conditionalities, the IMF said on page 76 of the document that there would be “no imposition or intensification of import restrictions for balance of payments reasons”.

It is one of the four prohibitions

imposed by the IMF on the government of Ghana, including “no imposition or intensification of restrictions on making payments and transfers for current international transactions”, “no introduction or modification of multiple currency

practices” and “no conclusion of bilateral payments agreements inconsistent with Article VIII of the IMF Articles of Arrangement”.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*File photo*

# International

## Discontent grows as Egyptian President seeks third term

Once hailed by many people as a saviour, Egypt's strongman leader Abdul Fattah al-Sisi is now seen in a very different light.

Egyptians who took to the streets to cheer for the general-turned-president a decade ago are not as happy as they hoped they would be.

As Mr Sisi runs for his third consecutive term as president next week, a crumbling economy is top of most people's list of complaints.

Nadia is one of those struggling to make ends meet as Mr Sisi's government continues to implement what it calls "economic reforms".

The 57-year-old widow and mother of six can barely make a living selling newspapers at a street-side kiosk.

In her small flat in one of Cairo's crowded slums, Nadia tells me that she last bought meat three years ago. To her, life is becoming more unaffordable by the day.

"I am too scared to go to sleep sometimes, because I know the next morning prices will have gone up," she says with a faint smile and eyes full of pain.

The latest official figures show that Egypt's inflation rate in October was 38.5%, a slight fall from the record 40.3% reported the previous month.

These numbers are unheard of in the Arab world's most populous country, and the real inflation rate experienced by ordinary people is often much worse than the government's figure.

But as prices have risen, Nadia's income has dropped.

More than a decade ago, she used to sell nearly 200 newspapers a day, but today it is barely 20.

Nadia says today cooking a meal costs between 300 and 500 Egyptian pounds (£7.70-£13; \$9.70-16.20), but a few years ago it was about a sixth of the price.

"Even fruit is too expensive," she tells me.

In the past nine months, the Egyptian pound has lost more than 50% of its value against the US dollar.

With the Egyptian economy heavily dependent on imports, the prices of basic commodities have skyrocketed beyond the reach of many households and a black market for foreign currency has

flourished.

Nadia does not have much hope and is obviously apprehensive. "No-one thinks of the poor. It's as if we are invisible," she says, adding with a sigh: "We are forgotten."

Since Mr Sisi became president in 2014 - a year after he led the military's overthrow of his Islamist predecessor, Mohammed Morsi - huge sums of money have been spent on huge infrastructure projects.

Roads have been expanded and flyovers built, and a new capital costing billions of dollars has been constructed near Cairo that is barely inhabited.

Critics say this "financial imprudence" has drained much of the country's economic resources and created unprecedented levels of debt that have crippled the economy.

The president's supporters believe the urban expansion has made people's lives easier and will help attract much needed foreign investment, eventually ushering in more prosperous times.

Walid Gaballah, an economist and a member of Egyptian Society for Political Economy, Statistics and Legislation, believes these projects have created jobs and succeeded in making a significant impact in addressing Egypt's unemployment problem.

He also believes part of the blame for the current economic meltdown lies with global forces.

"All the savings created by the government's reform programmes were eaten up by the coronavirus pandemic. Then came the Ukraine war that drove many foreign investors to withdraw their money from Egyptian banks," he says.

The government has repeatedly drawn attention to its investment in social welfare programmes that provide a safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable Egyptians.

But people still complain about their living conditions going from bad to worse.

Official figures show that nearly 30% of Egypt's 100 million population lives below the poverty line. Since 2016, the government has borrowed more than \$20bn from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support its budget.

At the same time, government austerity measures, deemed necessary for "an economic overhaul" of the country, have been imposed. Subsidies have been removed from many key goods, like fuel, pushing prices up.

Despite the widespread discontent, Egyptians have not got much choice in this election, seen by many as a one-horse race.

Opposition groups complain that they cannot operate effectively due to a constant crackdown on dissent.

Although three low-profile politicians are running against the president, many people believe the outcome of the vote is not in question - Mr Sisi will easily win a new six-year term in office.

Like opposition politicians, human rights campaigners are also complaining about tight security restrictions. They say it is increasingly difficult to document alleged abuses.

"Human rights is a dangerous business in Egypt," says Mina Thabet, an activist who has been living in a self-imposed exile in the UK for nearly six years, tells me via Zoom.

He still recalls the painful memories of the month he spent detained in Egypt in 2016 after he was accused of a range of charges, including belonging to a banned group and spreading false news, which are often levelled at opponents of the government.

"I have been blindfolded and handcuffed. An officer has

- continued on page 13



Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, Egypt President

# International

## Discontent grows as Egyptian President seeks third term

- Continued from page 12

physically assaulted me and threatened to strip me naked and torture me.”

Mr Thabet went to the UK to study a year after his release. He decided not to go back home as he was worried he might be sent back to jail at any moment.

“The first night I had a good sleep was after I left Egypt,” he says.

He sees the election as nothing but an extension of Mr Sisi’s heavy-

handed policies, which he says have no tolerance for opposition.

“Many of my fellow human rights defenders in Egypt are either having their assets frozen, or their names put on a travel ban list. You can’t do your job, without the fear of getting prosecuted or persecuted.”

Mr Thabet tells me he will only go back to Egypt when he feels safe to work and express his views

without any potential government retaliation.

The authorities have long dismissed such criticism as politicised. They have set up a committee that has granted presidential pardons to dozens of political detainees, and have promised to do more to improve the country’s human rights record.

But local and international human rights groups speak of tens of

thousands of political prisoners locked up behind bars - a figure the government disputes.

Banners bearing photos of Mr Sisi hang on every street corner in Cairo. His campaign is trying to convince voters that better days lie ahead. But many people here wonder if his re-election would really change anything.

**Source: BBC**

## Tennessee tornadoes leave at least 6 dead, tens of thousands without power

Severe storms and tornadoes in Tennessee left at least six people dead on Saturday and caused what local emergency services described as extensive damage with tens of thousands of residents without power.

“At this time we can confirm that three people are deceased, two adults and one child as a result of the tornado that touched down this afternoon. Additionally, 23 people have been treated at the hospital,” the Montgomery County in Tennessee said on its Facebook page.

Three more deaths were reported in the suburbs of Nashville, the Nashville Office of Emergency Management said on X, formerly called Twitter.

More than 80,000 people in Tennessee were left without power as of Saturday evening, according to outage tracking website [poweroutage.us](http://poweroutage.us).

“This is a sad day for our community. We are praying for those who are injured, lost loved ones, and lost their homes,” Montgomery County Mayor Wes Golden said.

The Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office said there was damage to several homes in the city of Clarksville.

Multiple trees, power lines and houses were also hit by storms in the rural town of Dresden, emergency services said.

Montgomery County, where Clarksville is located, has a population of over 220,000.

Officials also urged people to stay off the roads as emergency services were responding to the

situation in different areas.

“We are still in the search and rescue phase of this disaster,” the Montgomery County said in its Facebook statement. A local school and church were set-up to shelter those displaced or in need of assistance, the statement added.

The National Weather Service had issued a tornado emergency alert

earlier on Saturday afternoon for several Nashville suburbs.

“This is a day that nobody wanted or expected,” Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts said. “We know there’s extensive damage throughout the community.”

**Source: Reuters**



Damage from a tornado in Hendersonville, Tennessee, U.S

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