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General News

2023 teacher licensure exam results have not been altered - NTC

The National Teaching Council (NTC) has refuted claims of any alterations to the 2023 Teacher Licensure Examination results.

In an official statement, the NTC asserted that the examination results remain unchanged, and any insinuations of adjustments are deemed "false, deceptive, and should be regarded as fraudulent."

To uphold transparency and accuracy, the NTC advised candidates to verify information exclusively through its official communication channels, including the official website and authorized social media accounts.

The Council is actively investigating the source of the misleading announcement and has emphasized the intention to take appropriate legal action against those found responsible.

The 2023 Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination (GTLE) 2&3 saw a substantial number of teachers, totaling 9,556, failing the examination, representing a failure

rate exceeding 47 percent.

Out of the 20,181 teachers who participated, only 10,625 managed to pass the examination.

The Teacher Licensure Examination has been a subject of recent attention, especially with former President John Mahama's promise to cancel it if re-elected in the 2024

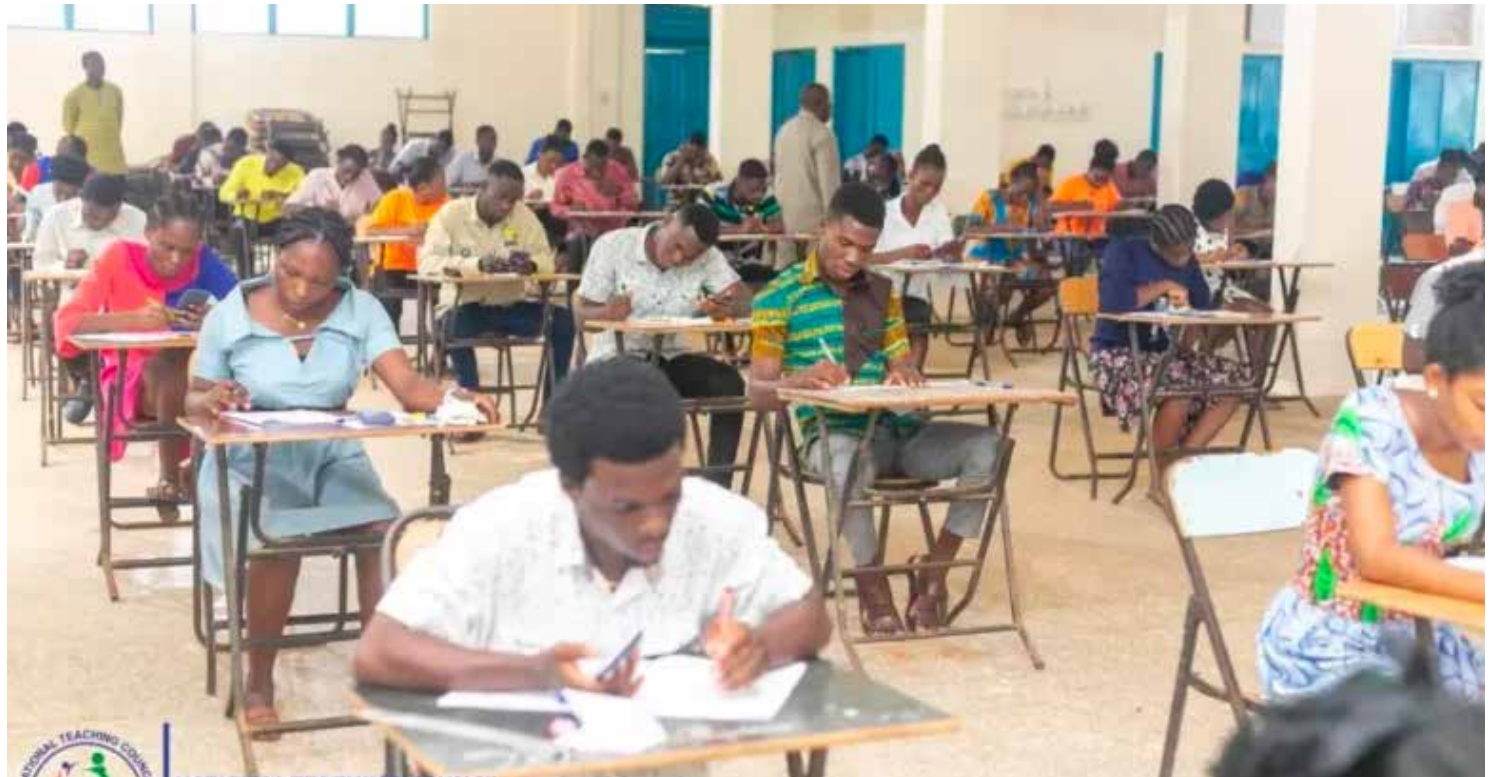
general elections.

Mr Mahama expressed concerns about subjecting Colleges of Education students to an additional test after completing their courses and exams.

While Mr Mahama and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) advocate for the abolition

of licensure exams, the Colleges of Education Teachers Association of Ghana (CETAG) opposes the proposal, arguing for the policy's beneficial nature and urging for its retention.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



File photo

Charles Bissie fails to secure Court's approval to prevent future arrests by OSP

Former Secretary to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM), Charles Bissie, has had his judicial review application, aimed at quashing an arrest warrant obtained by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) against him quashed.

This information was revealed by the OSP in a social media post on January 16, 2025, which partly read, "On Monday, 15 January 2024, Charles Bissie's lawyer was unsuccessful in seeking the court to rescind its decision to have him cross-examined."

Mr Bissie was declared wanted for failing to respond to an invitation to appear and answer questions

in an investigation into suspected corruption within the dissolved IMCIM.

Mr Bissie's lawyers sought to stop the court's directive for him to be cross-examined, arguing that the arrest warrant was obtained based on malice. Despite their efforts, the judicial review application was unsuccessful.

Charles Bissie turned himself in and was subsequently arrested after being declared wanted by the OSP. The Human Rights Court had earlier imposed a GH¢500 fine on him for what it deemed his failure to take a decision on his case seeking to stop the OSP from investigating and prosecuting him.

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Charles Bissie, Former Secretary to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM)



General News

Charles Bissie fails to secure Court's approval to prevent future arrests by OSP

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At the last adjourned date, the court granted the OSP permission to cross-examine Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah, counsel for Mr Bissie. This decision was made in response to an affidavit submitted

by Mr. Awuah, claiming that the Office had obtained a warrant for Bissie's arrest.

As per the court's directive, Bissie's lawyer was also supposed to submit his written submissions

for the case. However, he failed to do so, citing a torn ligament as the reason and requested additional time.

Meanwhile, the court has adjourned the case to February 1,

2024, allowing Mr Bissie's lawyers time to file his written submissions on the matter.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

ECG to use AI to fight illegal connections

Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia has revealed the Electricity Company of Ghana's (ECG) plan to combat power theft by implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Remote Sensors across its systems.

Speaking at the launch of the 'ECG Power' mobile application, Dr Bawumia acknowledged the challenges ECG faces in collecting payments and preventing power theft.

He opined that the use of AI would be a significant game-changer, while indicating that the pilot system is underway, with

promising results.

"The issue of solving the collection problem at ECG is a major part of solving the energy issue in Ghana. I think this app also enhances collection, but I am aware- because I have been talking to the Board Chairman and the MD- that they are thinking about applying technology, artificial intelligence and remote sensors in the collection process.

"I know that they are piloting the system now, and by the grace of God if all goes well, we will have implemented a new system, starting this year, whereby nobody

will be able to steal electricity in Ghana again. "It is a major thing that the ECG is likely to implement this year, using artificial intelligence and remote sensing. They are piloting it right now, and the results look quite good. Once we solve that problem, the issue of losses from people doing 'kuluulu' connections of electricity will be a thing of the past," Dr Bawumia said.

The 'ECG Power' app, designed in-house, aims to facilitate payments and services for ECG's customer base, expected to increase as smart meters replace old ones.

Users can download the app from

the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, while non-smartphone users can access the service by dialing *226#.

Meanwhile, ECG has received commendation from the Vice President for employing technology to address critical functions and enhance revenue mobilization.

Dr Bawumia emphasized the government's commitment to using digital technology for a comprehensive transformation of Ghana's economy.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President of Ghana



General News

Stop politicising education system - E/R NAGRAT Chairman begs to politicians

Eastern Regional Chairman of the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), Godwin Awoonor-Yevu, has urged politicians to cease politicizing the country's education system.

Pointing to the recent exchange between the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) over the 2023 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results, Mr Awoonor-Yevu asserted that politicians are utilizing the education sector as a battleground for scoring political points.

He highlighted that the discrediting of WASSCE results by the NDC and the subsequent defense by the NPP signifies a concerning trend of undermining the integrity of the education system.

Mr. Awoonor-Yevu conveyed these remarks during a media interaction following a health screening event and recreational activities organized to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the association. The event took place in Aburi, located in the Akuapem South Municipality of the region, last Wednesday.

The exchanges between the two political parties over this year's WASSCE results commenced when the current administration praised this year's results as the best since 2015.

Education Minister, Dr Yaw Osei-Adutwum, revealed that the 2023 record is the best since the introduction of the Free Senior High School policy. He attributed this achievement to the dedication of teachers who invested their time and energy to offer additional support and guidance aiding in the performance of students.

However, former President John Dramani Mahama challenged the authenticity of the results of candidates who sat for the recent West Africa Senior Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) said the recent exercise undertaken by the students was characterized with malpractices.

During his visit to the Mfantseman constituency as part of his 'Building Ghana Tour' in the Central region, the former President accused some invigilators aiding students in answering the questions.

"In many places, they let the children cheat. You go to places and the teachers are conniving with the students to cheat. The effect will be seen later," John Mahama averred.

He said the implication of the development will hit the nation sooner or later. His claim has again been challenged by the current administration.

It is against this background that Mr Awoonor-Yevu is calling for "a ceasefire" from both ends on the

matter.

This year's WASSCE results have been touted as the best in four years, with the majority of candidates obtaining grades A1-C6 in the four core subjects: English Language, Social Studies, Integrated Science and Mathematics.

In English Language, 73.11 per cent of the candidates obtained grades A1-C6 this year as against 60.39 per cent in 2022, 54.08 per cent in 2021 and 57.34 per cent in 2020.

For Mathematics, the total candidature with grades A1-C6 this year is 62.23 per cent, while 61.39 per cent and 54.11 per cent obtained those grades in 2022 and 2021 respectively.

Candidates, however, recorded a better performance of 65.71 per cent in Mathematics in 2020.

In Integrated Science, 66.82 per cent of the 2023 candidates recorded grades A1-C6 as against 62.45 per cent in 2022, 65.70 per cent in 2021 and 52.53 per cent in 2020.

A total of 76.76 per cent of the candidates this year had grades A1-C6 in Social Studies, with previous years recording 71.51 per cent in 2022, 66.03 per cent in 2021 and 64.31 per cent in 2020 for the same grades.

A total of 448,674 candidates, made up of 212,453 males and 236,221 females from 975 schools, entered for the 2023 WASSCE for School Candidates.

The figure was 5.8 per cent higher than the 2022 entry figure of 422,883.

Source: The Independent Ghana/ Jessie Ola-Morris



Godwin Awoonor-Yevu, Eastern Regional Chairman of the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT)



General News

Army Chief denies refusing CDS role amid alleged attacks

Chief of Army Staff, Major General Thomas Opong-Peprah, has denied rumors suggesting that he rejected an offer to become the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

The senior army officer dismissed the unfounded speculations, expressing frustration over the unwarranted criticism he has faced as a result.

Addressing the issue on JoyNews, he remarked, "The name Opong-Peprah is causing unease and anxiety, leading to baseless attacks on me. I fail to comprehend the reasons behind these attacks."

"Even this morning just before I got here, a publication was sent to me where it is being indicated that I have refused to accept the appointment of CDS and as a result there is a stop in the military shakeup."

His remarks come just two weeks after the presidential office issued

a statement refuting rumors suggesting a politically-driven reorganization of the military hierarchy to favor the ruling party in the upcoming 2024 general elections.

Major General Opong-Peprah clarified that following the spread of these grapevines, certain individuals resorted to seeking supernatural intervention to eliminate him. Nevertheless, he emphasized that those perceiving him as a problem were misguided.

"I have been taken to juju people and all that. We have pictures of it. In fact, it was one of the military police gentlemen who brought me pictures. But I am still standing here, I am not dead and I will not die. If you can't cope up with what I do, just sit down and zip up. That is all," he said on January 15, 2024.

Again, he added that people mistake him for an Akyem but he is Bono from Dormaa Ahenkro.

The high-profile army officer said people might look at his achievements in the security service for which reason they think he is a threat. However, he emphasised that he did not accomplish the successes on his own but it was a collective effort.

"For the past four years together, teamwork we have achieved so much and people are jealous of

us. That is all. I did not do it, we did it as an army together with my staff officers and everyone. Commanding officers team going to Bundase and adding to whatever we are doing over there. It is teamwork, it is not me, Opong-Peprah so don't attack me" he added.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Major General Thomas Opong-Peprah, Chief of Army Staff

Give me some 'honeymoon period' to fix Akufo-Addo's mess - Mahama appeals to disgruntled trade unions

Former President John Mahama has urged Ghanaians, particularly trade and labour groups, to grant him a grace period if he returns to power after the 2024 elections.

His plea, he said, is to fix the 'mess' the incumbent government has made before he is able to meet the several demands from the labour unions.

"This country is broke, and, so, we will beg you that when we come into office, give us a bit of a honeymoon. Let's put things in place so that we bring the economy back onto its feet," he appealed.

This request comes amid increasing calls for improved working conditions from numerous labour unions.

During a 'Campus Connect' event in Hohoe, the National Democratic

Congress (NDC) flagbearer highlighted the importance of prioritising economic recovery before tackling specific demands.

The former president said Ghana is "broke" due to the gross damage from mismanagement by the NPP.

Addressing specific groups, Mr Mahama said, "GNAT, NAGRAT, UTAG, and TEWU, and all of them; I know all of you are clamouring for allowances. Let me caution you that in 2025, when we take over, we will show you the books and the finances of this country."

"And when we have done that, we can accede to your demands again, and that's why I'm being very measured in the promises that I make because we all know the crisis in which this country has been plunged," he added.

Meanwhile, Mr Mahama has

become very critical of the incumbent government's actions and inactions as he campaigns his way back into the Jubilee

House ahead of the 2024 national election.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



John Dramani Mahama, Former President of Ghana



General News

15% VAT on electricity aimed at settling outstanding debts in energy sector - Agyapa Mercer

The government has defended its decision to implement a 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on electricity consumption despite the move receiving major backlash.

Deputy Energy Minister Agyapa Mercer, in an interview with Citi FM on Monday, January 15, underscored the challenging nature of this decision.

Nevertheless, he emphasized its necessity, particularly in settling outstanding debts owed to independent power producers.

“Obviously, if you look at the scope of the tax and what it is intended to do—raise revenue to meet some obligations of the government in the energy sector—it will interest you to know that, as we speak, as of July 2023, the amount of money that we owe to the IPPs alone is in the region of GH¢1.7 billion.”

The Minority and energy experts have called for the reconsideration of the Value Added Tax imposed on specific residential electricity consumers.

In a correspondence conveying the Finance Ministry’s policy to the Public Utility Regulatory Commission, Finance Minister Ken Ofori Atta explained that the value-

added levy will be applicable to electricity consumption beyond lifeline units.

The ministry clarified that this initiative is a component of the

government’s Covid-19 recovery program.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Agyapa Mercer, Deputy Energy Minister

Court adjourns Cecilia Dapaah, husband’s case to stop OSP from freezing their assets to February 1

Former Sanitation Minister Cecilia Dapaah’s plea to halt the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) from persisting in freezing her accounts and confiscating recovered cash from her Abelemkpe residence has been postponed to February 1, 2024.

The OSP froze Dapaah’s Prudential Bank and Société Générale bank accounts after a substantial amount of money was discovered during a search at her home.

On August 31, 2023, the High Court in Accra instructed the OSP to return the \$590,000 and GH¢2.73 million seized from Cecilia Dapaah’s home within seven days.

In response, the OSP disagreed

with the court’s decision and asked the Human Rights Court to allow the continued freezing of the former minister’s properties and cash.

On October 9, 2023, Cecilia Dapaah, in an application, sought an expedited resolution of the freeze and seizure case.

The OSP announced on its Facebook page that the case has been adjourned to February 1.

“The Human Rights Court sitting in Accra has adjourned to February 1, 2024, the case in which former Sanitation Minister Cecilia Abena Dapaah and her husband, Daniel Osei Kuffuor, have

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Cecilia Dapaah, Former Sanitation Minister



General News

Court adjourns Cecilia Dapaah, husband's case to stop OSP from freezing their assets to February 1

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filed an interlocutory injunction application against the OSP to restrain the Office from continuing to freeze Madam Dapaah's accounts and seize cash recovered from their residence."

Background

Madam Dapaah, the former Sanitation Minister, gained

widespread attention in July 2023 when the Chronicle Newspaper reported that her domestic helpers were taken to court for allegedly stealing \$1 million, 300,000 euros, several million cedis, and personal belongings of the former minister and her husband, valued at thousands of Ghana Cedis and dollars.

Following public outcry, Cecilia Dapaah resigned from her position and was subsequently arrested by the OSP, later being granted bail.

On Monday, July 24, 2023, officials from the Office of the Special Prosecutor conducted a search at the former Minister of Sanitation's residence.

The OSP reported discovering US\$590,000 and GHC2.730,000 in cash at her apartment. Immediate action was taken by the Office of the Special Prosecutor to seize these substantial cash sums as crucial evidence for the ongoing investigation.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

KNUST, UG jointly induct 42 veterinary medicine doctors

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the University of Ghana, under the auspices of the Ghana Veterinary Council, have inducted a group of 42 veterinary medicine doctors.

The inductees, who comprised 17 doctors from the University of Ghana and 25 doctors from the KNUST, took the veterinary oath under the guidance of Dr Jonathan Amakye-Anim, the chairman of the Ghana Veterinary Council.

Among the newly inducted veterinary medicine professionals were 28 men and 14 women, who pledged under oath, their commitment to using their expertise and scientific knowledge to advance society.

Addressing the inductees during the ceremony in Accra, Dr Amakye-Anim praised both students and the schools of veterinary medicine for the momentous partnership.

He said the achievement marked a new era in the field of veterinary medicine in Ghana, as the trained professionals were poised to make invaluable contributions to animal health and welfare.

He said the joint effort between the two prestigious institutions exemplified their commitment to excellence in education and their dedication to advancing veterinary science in Ghana and beyond.

In a keynote address, Prof. William K. Ampofo, a board member and Chief Executive Officer of the National Vaccine Institute,

highlighted the many important contributions veterinary medicine had made to human health.

He explained that veterinary medicine as a medical specialty was concerned with the prevention, control, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases affecting the health of domestic and wild animals and the prevention of animal diseases in humans.

"We hope that our new inductees will understand the very important role that they are going to play in our society here in Ghana and also in the sub-region and ensure that they broaden their knowledge," he added.

Aside from veterinary hospitals, he explained that pharmaceutical companies also employed veterinary medicine doctors in the development of drugs, safety testing of drugs, and safety testing of vaccines, as well as antibiotics.

Professor Ampofo said Ghana had rolled out a programme that continued to maintain its surveillance of animal populations, and it was done by the Ghana Armed Forces together with the Ghana Veterinary Services.

"Every year, there is active surveillance in various backyards, in the military barracks, and also in some private farms looking for the presence of avian influenza," he said.

He urged the new doctors not to use their acquired knowledge just to look after animals, stating, "You can help prevent transmission of

disease from animals to humans, and you can help us control diseases in animals by working towards more efficient vaccines."

Adding, "You can help us to make human vaccines better human vaccines, and then help in a significant contribution to public health and one health."

Speaking to the Ghana News Agency in an interview, Dr Samuel Anganmwin Doozie, a newly inducted veterinary medical doctor, applauded the joint induction event as it harmonised efforts of the two schools of veterinary medicine for the advancement of the veterinary profession and make its practice have a greater impact on the country's economy.

Referencing recent medical research, Dr Doozie stated that

about 70 to 80 per cent of diseases that affected humans were of animal origin, and that it had also been found that over 75 per cent of new or emerging infectious diseases were of animal origin.

"And so, the one health concept that has existed since its inception has been amplified and encouraged among medical professionals as the means to solving medically related problems in humans, animals, and the environment," he added.

Meanwhile, the Ghana Veterinary Council had indicated that several bills had been introduced and at various stages for passage into law towards reforming the practice of veterinary medicine in Ghana in line with global standards.

Source: GNA



42 veterinary medicine doctors inducted



General News

Technological revolution reshaping Ghana's landscape - Communications Minister

Ghana is steadily solidifying its position through the government's strategic integration of technology to achieve its goals and objectives, as stated by the Minister of Communications and Digitalization, Ursula Owusu-Ekuful.

In an interview on Peace FM, she emphasized that the government's technological advancements might not be immediately apparent or widely discussed, but they bear significant importance, despite not receiving widespread recognition.

The minister emphasized the undeniable importance of technology in our ever-connected global landscape.

"The government has successfully realized its vision through the strategic incorporation of technology. I often mention that there is a subtle revolution taking place, which unfortunately goes unnoticed due to the absence of grand announcements.

"Technology has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of human existence, becoming indispensable. Individuals now find it challenging to distance themselves from their mobile phones, a testament to their significance," she added.

She highlighted that the government acknowledges the transformative capabilities of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

According to her, the government has established ambitious objectives, aspiring to position Ghana as an inclusive and progressive digital hub in Africa.

The aim is to ensure that every citizen is part of this digital transformation, leaving no one behind.

She added that the government is committed to improving infrastructure, connectivity, and network access in rural areas for the benefit of individuals in remote villages as such has embarked on a project.

The ongoing rural telephony project, she said, is backed by allocated funds.

"The government remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing infrastructure, connectivity, and network accessibility in rural areas. Our ongoing rural telephony project is specifically designed to bring benefits to individuals in rural and remote villages. Adequate funds have been allocated for this

initiative to ensure its successful implementation," she added.

Additionally she stated that by the end of the year, approximately 2016 self-sites will be completed. She revealed that presently, 1,500 sites have already been accomplished, with around 1,000 more in progress.

"By the year's end, we anticipate

completing around 2016 self-sites. Currently, 1500 sites have already been accomplished, and an additional 1000 are in progress. This initiative is geared towards extending network connectivity to areas currently without it," the minister added.

Source: The Independent Ghana/ Phoebe Martekie Doku



Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister of Communications and Digitalization

Ofori-Atta to be in China on Jan. 23 to discuss external debt restructure

Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta, along with other government officials, is scheduled to visit China on January 23 with the aim of restructuring Ghana's \$5.4 billion bilateral debt, a significant portion of which is owed to China.

China, along with France, co-chairs Ghana's Official Creditor Committee. The agreement reached with this committee is crucial for accessing additional funds from a \$3 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout package.

Simultaneously, Ghana will resume

discussions with its international bondholders next week, building on the momentum generated by a recent deal to restructure \$5.4 billion of bilateral debt. The country seeks to continue talks after engaging with Eurobond holders in October 2023.

Restructuring negotiations last year was a "very difficult, painful process," but Ghana has "built pretty good momentum", Mr. Ofori-Atta told Reuters.

The IMF board is scheduled to convene on Friday, January 19,

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Ken Ofori-Atta, Finance Minister



General News

Ofori-Atta to be in China on Jan. 23 to discuss external debt restructure

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2024, to decide on a \$600 million disbursement as part of Ghana's bailout program. Approval from the IMF would open the door for funding from other multilateral lenders.

Additionally, the World Bank is expected to make a decision on providing \$550 million in funding on January 25, 2024, according to Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta.

Ghana is actively engaged in

restructuring its debts under the Common Framework, a G20-established process designed during the COVID-19 pandemic to address debt challenges.

The country, facing a default in December 2022, is working to

restructure around \$20 billion of its external debt, which stood at approximately \$30 billion at the end of 2022.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Change the date for elections; it's a Sabbath Day – SDA Church petitions

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is advocating for a reconsideration of the date of December 7 designated for the national elections.

In distinct appeals initially directed to the Electoral Commission, the church proposes shifting the elections from the traditional December 7 due to a clash with the Sabbath, a sacred day dedicated to the worship of God, as the date coincides with a Saturday.

The church believes a retention of the traditional day will see many Adventists disenfranchised.

In a petition dated January 9, 2024, the church noted that it is "proposing an amendment of non-entrenched Article 1128) for Parliamentary elections to meet the period guaranteed in Article 632 for Presidential elections to be christened "Ghana Elections' Date Amendment Bill."

Hopeful of a change, SDA church suggested the first two weeks as the appropriate dates for the elections to be conducted.

"In anticipation of changing the date for general elections from December 7 to the first (1st)

or second (2nd) Tuesday of November, the Leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church met with the Electoral Commission (EC) on Wednesday, June 7.

"The Church proposed to the EC a change from the December 7 date to the 1st or 2nd Tuesday of November in a general elections' year."

In a media engagement, the Director for Public Affairs and Religious Liberty at the Southern Ghana Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dr. Solace Asafo, expressed the

church's desire for elections not to coincide with any religious day in Ghana.

Also, the church is intensifying its efforts by submitting another petition to the Attorney General, advocating for a revision of the constitutional provisions that limit the timeframe for organising parliamentary and presidential elections in Ghana.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Polling station



General News

Walewale Orthopedic Training Centre remains closed to public despite being inaugurated

The newly constructed and inaugurated Catholic Orthopedic Training Centre (OTC) at Walewale remains closed to the public.

This is because the machines, tools and materials that will be used to treat patients at the facility remain locked up at the port.

The machines, tools and materials for the OTC at Walewale, which is a branch of the OTC at Nsawam near Accra, were a donation from a Swiss Family Foundation, and the container arrived at the Tema Port on December 31, last year.

The OTC at Walewale is to treat people with physical disabilities including children with club feet and bowlegs, amongst others in the north to walk, as well as manufacture prosthetic legs and arms, shoes, leg braces, splints, clutches and others that a physically disabled person needs to walk.

Managing Director, OTC Nsawam, Sister Elizabeth Newman, speaking during the inauguration of the OTC at Walewale in the West Mamprusi Municipality of the North East Region, said her outfit had applied for exemption from taxes for the items in the container prior to its

arrival at the port.

Sister Newman expressed disappointment at the situation and appealed to leaders and politicians from the north to help facilitate the clearance of the container on time to help the facility to start work to bring relief to persons with physical disabilities in the north.

The OTC at Nsawam serves people with physical disabilities across the country but financial challenges to embark on the trip to Nsawam prevent some people from accessing treatment hence the establishment of the OTC at Walewale to cater for patients from the northern parts of the country.

Provincial Superior of Divine Word Ministries, Ghana - Liberia Province, Father Cyprian Kuupol, said the establishment of the OTC at Walewale was an answered prayer for patients from Tamale, Wa, Bolgatanga, Nakpanduri, Nalerigu, Bunkpurugu and beyond, who previously would have had to commute to Nsawam or meet OTC mobile units at established stations in the quest to access health care.

He said, "The extra financial burden

incurred in terms of transportation and accommodation to access OTC services has been lifted off the shoulders of the people."

West Mamprusi Municipal Chief Executive, Mr Arimiyaw Somo Lucky Basintale, who spoke on behalf of the North East Regional Minister during the inauguration of the facility, promised to send a message to the Vice President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, and the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, who is also Member of Parliament for Walewale, about the situation to intervene.

He commended partners for establishing the facility in the area, saying, it would transform and support

health care delivery in the Municipality, and the region.

The traditional authorities of the area praised partners for siting the facility in the area to address the health needs of their people as well as create other opportunities for them.

Meanwhile, the ceremony was also used to mark the Feast Day of Saint Arnold Janssen, who is Founder of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit as well as the 10th anniversary of the demise of Brother Tarcisius Cristophorus de Ruyter, SVD, Founder of OTC at Nsawam. **Source:**

GNA



Walewale Orthopedic Training Centre

Christmas and New celebrations: 37 persons killed in road crashes - Report

A total of 37 persons lost their lives in road crashes during the festive period, a National Road Traffic Crashes and Casualties report for the festive period, has said.

The crashes occurred between December 24 to December 26, 2023, and December 31, 2023, and January 1, 2024.

The death represents a decrease of 21.28 per cent as compared to 47 deaths recorded during the same period in 2022.

The report said 29 out of the 37 deaths occurred between December 24 to December 26, 2023, whilst December 31, 2023, and January 1, 2024, had eight deaths.

The distribution of road traffic fatalities by sex indicated that 30 males (81 per

cent) and seven females (19 per cent) were killed.

Also, seven persons killed (representing 19 per cent) were below 18 years whilst 30 persons (81 per cent) were adults (above 18 years).

Some 236 cases were reported during the period. They involved 417 vehicles and 50 pedestrian knockdowns.

Comparing the reported cases for the 2023 Christmas festivities to that of 2022 in the same period, there has been a 16.26 per cent increase. The 2022 Christmas festivities recorded 203 reported cases.

Private vehicles-190, constituted the largest proportion of vehicles involved in crashes representing 46 per cent, followed by commercial vehicles-131, with 31 per cent and motorcycles-96,

with the least proportion of 23 per cent.

The Greater Accra Region contributed the most with 83 crashes and nine deaths whilst Ashanti Region came second in the number of crashes with 66 cases and 15 deaths.

Specifically, in the Greater Accra Region, persons were killed at Kaneshie, Kpeshie, Madina, Odorkor, Weija, Baatsona, Ayimensah and Amanfrom.

Source: GNA



File photo



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Business

Ghana, Zambia likely to emerge from default on foreign-currency debt in 2024 - Fitch

Two African countries, Ghana and Zambia, are to emerge from default on their foreign-currency debt this year, according to the rating agency Fitch.

In its Regional Sub-Saharan African Sovereigns Outlook for 2024, Fitch stated that both countries are anticipated to successfully restructure their debts during the year.

“We forecast gradual fiscal consolidation due to financing constraints and fiscal reform efforts, which, in many cases, are linked to IMF [International Monetary Fund] programmes. This consolidation will help government debt/GDP to broadly stabilise”.

“We expect Ghana and Zambia to emerge from default on their foreign-currency debt in 2024, although, in both cases, the debt

restructuring process under the Common Framework is vulnerable to further delays”, it added.

The UK-based firm continued to highlight that the macroeconomic outlook for sub-Saharan Africa in 2024, including Ghana, suggests stable median real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and lower average inflation. However, it noted that inflation remains high across several sovereigns in the region.

“The macro outlook for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in 2024 points to stable median real GDP growth and lower average inflation, which nonetheless remains high across a number of sovereigns”.

Ghana’s inflation rate stood at 23.2% at the end of 2023. Despite the positive outlook on economic indicators, Fitch anticipates that financing challenges will persist

for many Sub-Saharan African sovereigns.

The report notes that most of these countries lack affordable access to international capital markets without credit enhancements.

Fitch emphasized that multilateral

funding will continue to be a crucial support mechanism across the region. However, the report also highlighted that risks remain tilted to the downside.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Fitch Ratings

COPEC predicts fall in fuel prices by over 2.5% effective Jan. 17

Fuel consumers can anticipate relief at the pumps with a decrease in diesel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) prices, marking the second consecutive drop in January.

The decline expected to take effect today, Wednesday, January 17, is a projection made by the Chamber of Petroleum Consumers (COPEC). While the exact adjustments are pending, COPEC anticipates a reduction in diesel and LPG prices due to a global decline in finished product prices, despite a slight depreciation of the Ghanaian cedi against the dollar.

Petrol prices are expected to remain relatively stable, with a possible minor upward adjustment of around 1%, reflecting current international market trends.

COPEC Executive Secretary Duncan Amoah pointed to current

international market trends as the reason for the decline.

“Diesel prices dipped by roughly 2.8% per metric ton on the global market, while petrol experienced a slight increase of 3.6%. The cedi has remained relatively stable overall, although we’ve seen a 0.47-point dip in exchange rates,” Amoah said.

He added, “Overall, what our expectation is that prices of petrol are likely to remain stable with a 1 percent upward adjustment.

“Diesel is likely to see some reduction while LPG is also likely to see some reduction effective Wednesday which is the second window for January.”

Source: The Independent Ghana / Jessie Ola-Morris



File photo



International

Suicide bombing kills three people, injures two in Somali capital: Police

A suicide bombing in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, has killed three people and injured two others, according to the authorities.

Al-Qaeda-affiliated armed group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack.

The suicide bomber, who was being pursued by police, blew himself up outside an Indian restaurant in Mogadishu's Hamar Weyne district, police spokesperson Sadik Ali said on Tuesday.

Al-Shabab said in a statement that the blast targeted local security officials. It said there were casualties, without providing a number.

Somalia has been plagued by insecurity for years, with the main threats emanating from al-Shabab and the ISIL (ISIS) terror groups.

Ramped-up attacks

Al-Shabab frequently attacks military outposts and civilian and government targets as part of a campaign to topple Somalia's government and establish its own rule based on its interpretation of Islamic law.

It has carried out a bloody 16-year war against the fragile central government in Mogadishu, which has struggled to blunt its violence despite considerable foreign military support.

The group has ramped up its activity since Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who

was elected for a second term last year, declared war on the group.

Somali army officials said last week al-Shabab fighters captured a United Nations helicopter carrying two Somali men and several foreigners after it made an emergency landing in the Galgaduud region, an area

controlled by the group.

The government said it was working to rescue the passengers, but military officers noted it would be difficult to access the area where they were taken.

Source: News Agencies via Al Jazeera



Wreckage of a vehicle destroyed at the scene of a suicide bomb blast in the Hamar Weyne district of Mogadishu

Eight dead, several missing after Nigerian ferry capsizes

At least eight people were confirmed dead and many were missing after a wooden ferry carrying 100 people capsized in northwest Nigeria, local emergency services said on Tuesday.

The accident happened on Monday in Niger state as residents of Dugga village were travelling to a market in neighbouring Kebbi State to sell grain and sugar cane.

Boat accidents are common on Nigerian waterways, and are often

blamed on overcrowding and poor maintenance.

Ibrahim Hussaini, spokesperson for Niger State Emergency Management Agency, said a sudden change in wind direction sank the overcrowded boat.

Eight bodies were recovered and five people were rescued but many others were missing, added Hussaini.

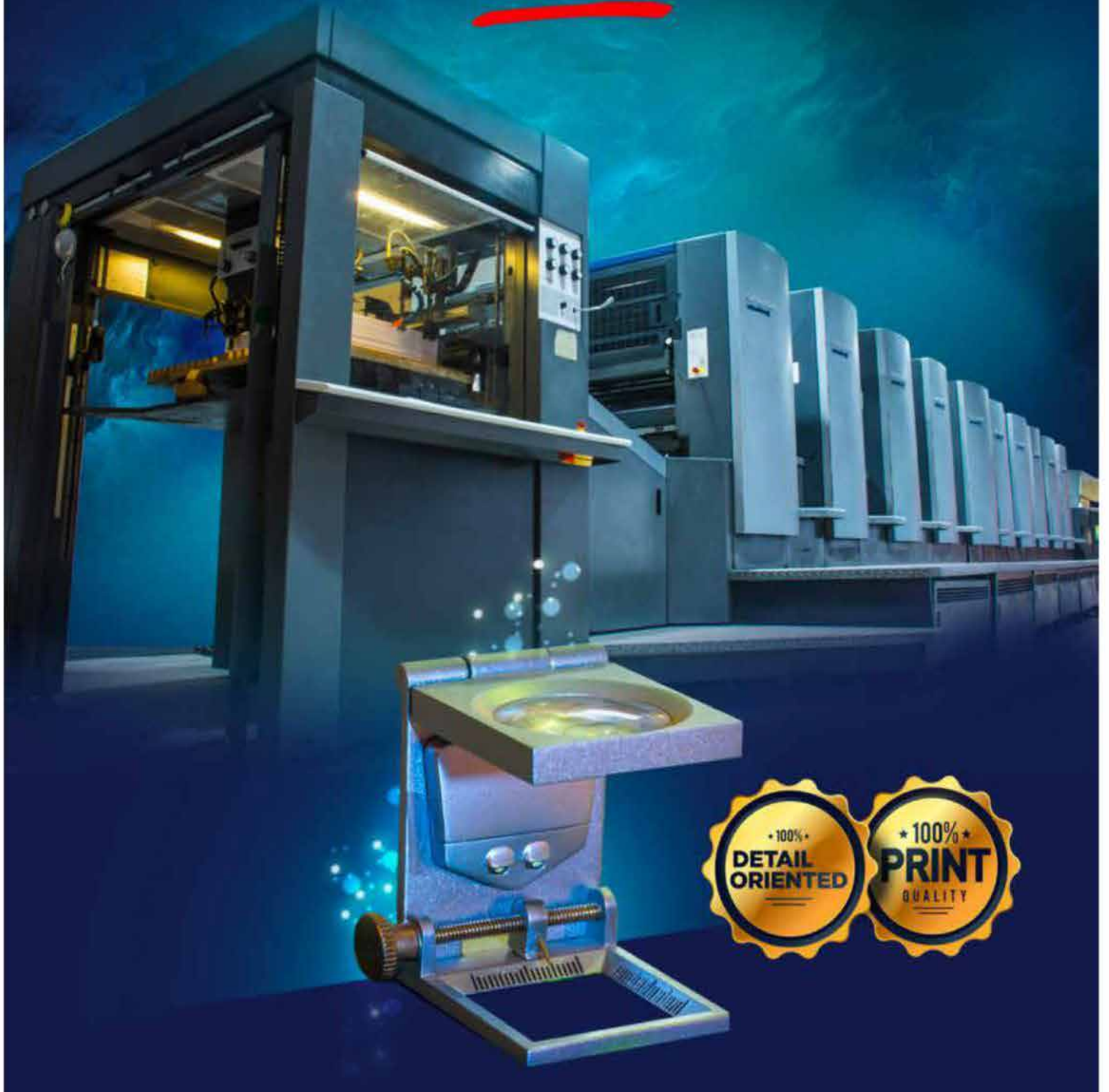
Source: Reuters



Boat accidents are common on Nigerian waterways and are often blamed on overcrowding

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