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General News

APC to elect its flagbearer for 2024 elections on March 8

The All People's Congress (APC) is set to host its National Delegates Congress in Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital to select the party's Presidential Candidate for the upcoming 2024 general elections.

The party would also use the opportunity to elect the party's National Executives. The National Executive elections (Congress) are scheduled for Friday, March 8.

The schedule for the event includes the picking and filing of nominations for National Executive positions, which is set to take place from February 20 to March 2, 2024.

Following the congress on March 9, party members will participate in a parade along the principal streets of Kumasi. Additionally, they will pay courtesy calls on religious and traditional leaders, as well as other stakeholders in Kumasi as part of the post-congress activities.

Already, the APC has opened picking of nominations and filing for Constituency Elections which commenced on February 1, and slated to end on February 27, 2024. According to the party, elections will also be conducted within the same period.

This decision was announced after the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) held its National Executive Committee meeting on the 27th of January, 2024. The meeting was chaired by the party's National Chairman and founder, Dr Hassan Ayariga.

The party's National Executive Committee (NEC) outlined the agenda for the party in the upcoming general elections.

The party gave out the timeline for the picking of nomination forms and filing for election of Constituency Executives, Regional Executives and National Executives.

Picking and filing of nominations for Regional Executive Elections also began on February 1, but will end on February 28, at the various regional offices. Elections will however be held on March 2, 2024.

Meanwhile, nomination forms for

the party's parliamentary elections ahead of the December polls will be opened on March 1, 2024.

All aspiring parliamentary candidates are entreated to pick their forms at the National Headquarters and pay the necessary fees to the party's bank account or party's momo account.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



File photo

Ghana receives first batch of looted regalia from UK

The initial set of seven artifacts looted during the third Anglo-Asante War of 1874 has been returned to Ghana and is set to be formally presented to Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, on Thursday, February 8, 2024.

Delivered via a United Airlines flight, the artifacts will be unveiled during the inaugural durbar commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war at Dwaberem, Manhyia Palace.

Director of the Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles, Dr. Silvia Forni, will lead the delegation for the official

presentation.

Originally acquired by the Fowler Museum in 1965 from the Wellcome Trust, discussions for the repatriation of these items have been ongoing for several years.

Permission for their departure from California was granted in December under a CITES permit, facilitating their return.

The repatriated artifacts include an ornamental chair, large beads, a strand of seed or bug-shaped beads, gold from an elephant hair, a royal stool ornament, a royal

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Ghana's Looted 'Crown Jewels'



General News

Ghana receives first batch of looted regalia from UK

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necklace, and another royal stool ornament, all dating back to the period preceding Asantehene Kofi Karkari in the 1840s.

This repatriation effort forms part of a novel cultural cooperation initiative, uniting the Fowler Museum, UCLA, the Manhyia Palace

Museum, and the College of Art and Built Environment at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, as envisioned by the

Asantehene.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku

UTAG slams UniMAC VC for “distasteful” Book and Research Allowances comment

The University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) has expressed disappointment in Prof Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), over remarks regarding the Book and Research Allowances (BRA) paid to its members.

Prof Kwansah-Aidoo suggested at a public lecture organized by the SD Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies that the allowance be abolished and replaced with an application-based research fund.

UTAG described the remarks as

‘sneering’ and disheartening, noting that they were made with a limited understanding of what the BRA is used for.

According to the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), the Book and Research Allowance (BRA) serves not only for scholarly publications, as suggested by the Vice Chancellor, but is also crucial in supporting academic pursuits, professional development, and promoting a culture of research excellence within universities.

“We find his comments as coming from a place of disdain and a depiction of a long-standing culture

of some academics climbing to the top and turning back to remove the very ladder that led them there. His statement that he does not know what academics do with the BRA is condescending, distasteful, and pretentious, to say the least,” part of a statement issued by UTAG read.

UTAG stated that their research activities contribute to enhancing teaching and making contributions to society beyond scholarly publications.

The union expressed that the Vice Chancellor’s proposal to abolish the BRA reflects a limited

understanding of research activities. UTAG called for an apology from the Vice Chancellor for his remarks.

“We call on the Vice Chancellor to apologise to the entire membership of UTAG and, in subsequent pronouncements, engage in constructive dialogue with UTAG to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives, concerns and research efforts of our members,” portions of the February 3 statement read.

Source: Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Prof Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC)



General News

We need insurance cover for putting our lives on the line - GNFS to govt

The Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) has entreated the government to provide insurance cover to cater for the immediate medical care of firefighters and rescuers who get injured in the line of duty.

Deputy National Public Relations Officer of the Ghana National Fire Service, DO III Desmond Essoun Ackah, made this plea on behalf of the Service during an appearance on UTV.

“We do well to prevent casualties during fire outbreaks and also the incident itself. Now, what government has provided is the workman compensation. Because it’s laborious, you need to receive medical care first then bring receipts before you apply for this is looked at before you can pay.

“It is cumbersome. So now, we are pleading with the government to provide us a direct insurance cover so we can immediately take care of our officers injured while on duty,” he said.

This follows the recent tragic incident at West Legon in Accra where four firefighters got seriously injured after a building on fire collapsed on them.

The fire incident occurred on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, around 2 pm, and spread quickly to

the roof of the building, which was made of wood and metal sheets. Thick smoke was seen billowing from the building, attracting the attention of passers-by and residents.

The Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) has indicated that its

officers who got trapped after the roof of a burning building they were dousing collapsed on them are currently out of danger.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Desmond Essoun Ackah, Deputy National Public Relations Officer of the Ghana National Fire Service

14 staff of Lands Commission interdicted for Stamp Duty fraud

The Lands Commission has interdicted 14 staff members for their involvement in Stamp Duty fraud.

The Stamp Duty fraud was detected in May 2022 when the Audit Unit of the Commission realised that the tax figures paid by some property owners for registration of their properties failed to reflect the tax amount expected.

The fraud is alleged to involve 100 million Ghana Cedis tax loss.

The affected staff are being taken through the court processes by the National Investigations Bureau.

Mr Benjamin Arthur, the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission, announced this during the Executive Secretary’s Annual Briefing and launching of

Staff Awards Scheme in Accra, on Friday.

However, the Commission said after further investigations it realised that the amount has been exaggerated.

The Commission had also taken internal disciplinary action against the suspects and undergoing final disciplinary processes to determine their fate with the Commission, Mr Arthur stated.

Meanwhile some Commission staff were also being taken through disciplinary procedures for fraudulent deletion and insertion of records in order to produce false search reports.

“It is important to state that while

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Lands Commission staff members



General News

14 staff of Lands Commission interdicted for Stamp Duty fraud

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management will continue to provide the required job security for staff such acts of indiscipline and fraud will not be condoned," he said.

"Therefore, management will provide the state investigation bodies the required assistance to weed out the bad nuts amongst us."

The event also saw the outdoor of a five-year Business Strategic Plan of the Commission from 2023 to 2027, which will guide its operations.

The strategic plan has five major goals including enhancing the Commission's financial sustainability, digital reforms and corporate image, as well as the competence and discipline of staff to improve service delivery.

Mr Arthur announced that this year, the Commission would

launch an outreach programme, dubbed: "You Deserve to Know" campaign, to educate the public on several aspects of its operations and activities.

The campaign, he explained, would focus on creating public awareness on the Commission's mandate, service delivery and specific processes in delivering those services, the fees chargeable for the services, and digital reform platforms, among many others.

That, he said, would enhance the corporate image of the Commission, public trust, and confidence in its operations.

"In Ghana, workers of the Lands Commission are perceived as taking the "biggest bribes" and other media reports on the performance of the Commission often focused on our shortcomings whilst little is reported on the efforts and good

works of the Commission," Mr Arthur observed.

"The very hard works of most staff are drowned by the wrongs of the few. Most people are not well informed about our operations and the role of the Commission in the land space."

The outreach campaign is, this, intended to correct these misconceptions and create a positive corporate image going forward.

However, the Acting Executive Secretary was quick to explain that its corporate image redemption drive could only succeed if it was associated with improvements in service delivery to the public.

Mr Arthur, thus, called for teamwork among the staff and management to complement one another and achieve the desired

outcomes.

Mr Benito Owusu-Bio, a Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, highlighted the Ministry's plans for this year including digital transformation of land administration activities, completion of the new Lands Commission's head office, which would be commissioned in April this year, and enhancement of the Commission's corporate image.

He expressed confidence in the Commission's leadership and believed that it was heading the right direction.

"Ghanaians will overwhelmingly vouch for the credibility and efficiency of the Commission sooner or later," he said.

Source: GNA

We are not using 'disinfectant' to treat our water – GWCL

Management of the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has refuted the claims made by the Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram, Sam George, regarding the importation of a new water treatment product called 'One Drop'.

The MP had alleged on Metro TV's Good Morning Ghana on February 1, 2024, that the government, in collaboration with GWCL, had procured the 'One Drop' water treatment product for use by the company, replacing traditional chlorine.

In response to these allegations, GWCL issued a statement on February 2, 2023, denying the claims. The company clarified that it adheres to established protocols, working in collaboration with regulatory agencies and stakeholders, before endorsing any new water treatment products.

The statement read, "Per GWCL's Standard Operating Procedures, any decision regarding the

adoption of new water treatment technologies or products is made through a comprehensive evaluation process, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and regulatory agencies like the Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Standards Authority, the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission and communicated transparently to the public."

It further indicated that "By GWCL's internal procedures, management reserves the right to act on a positive evaluation report by writing to either the Public Procurement Agency (PPA) for sole sourcing or to advertise for competitive tendering processes. No contract has been awarded by GWL for the supply of the "One Drop" disinfectant for water treatment."

Furthermore, the company noted that it presently employs chlorine-based disinfectants for water treatment. The disinfectants in use include Chlorine Gas, Calcium Hypochlorite granules, and

Chlorine Tablets.

Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) urged all stakeholders, including the Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram, to desist from spreading unfounded

rumors and misinformation about the company's water treatment practices.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Sam George, Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram



General News

Akufo-Addo sacks 24 DCEs, appoints 26 others

President Akufo-Addo has revoked the appointment of 24 District Chief Executives (DCEs) with immediate effect.

The President explained that this action is in accordance with Article 243 (3) b of the Constitution and section 20 (3) (b) of the Local Government Act, 2014, (Act 936).

In the letter signed on Friday, February 2, the President directed the affected DCEs to be notified of the revocation and instructed that replacements be nominated under separate cover.

The specific reasons for the revocation were not provided in the statement.

Among those affected by the president's directive are, Martina Appiah Nyantakyi (Ahafo Ano North), Nii Larteh Ollenu (Amansie West), Daniel Owuredu (Nkoranza South), Alhaji Abdulai Adams (Pru East), Gmasombe Jerome Kofi Gyimah, (Sene East), Joseph Aidoo (Awutu Senya West), Samuel Kwame Agyekum (Asuogyaman), Seth Asante (Atiwa West), Comfort Asante (New Juaben North), Isaac Kwadzo Buabeng (Nsawam-Adoagyiri), Daniel Alexander Nii-Noi Adumua (Adentan) and Mohammed Bashiru Kamara (Ga Central).

True to his words, President Akufo-Addo has appointed 26 individuals to the role of Municipal and District Chief Executives.

The president, in a statement dated February, 3, explained that this action is in accordance with Article 243 (1) of the Constitution.

Those recently appointed include; Prince Dormaa Amoah (Ahafo Ano North), Oscar Asare Andoh (Amansie West), Dr. Amoateng Augustine Kwasi (Nkoranza South), Mohammed Haruna (Pru East), Samson Gbolu (Sene East), Moses Arhinful Acquah (Awutu Senya West), Nana Kweku Abban (Asuogyaman).

While many continue to ponder over the rationale behind the president's decision, financial analyst and US economist, Scott

Bolshevik, has shared what he believes to be the reason behind the mass sacking of District Chief Executives by President Akufo-Addo.

According to Mr Bolshevik in a post on X, February 3, 2024, these DCEs were not dismissed due to their inefficiency or corruption-related activities, per his conversation with a Member of Parliament.

He noted that the 24 individuals were removed from post because the "preferred 24 candidates for president lost the recent elections."

Mr Bolshevik said their continuous stay may impair the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Vice President Dr Mahamudu Bawumia's quest to become President, thus their appointments had to be revoked

by the president.

"I had the privilege to talk to an MP. The bizarre part was that the DCEs were sacked, not based on corruption or inefficiency. It's because the preferred 24 candidates for president lost the recent elections. This may impair Bawumia's succession. It has never been about you!" he wrote.

Meanwhile, Member of Parliament for South Dayi, Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor, has alleged lack of due diligence on the part of the Office of the President over the dismissal of some 24 District Chief Executives.

Mr Dafeamekpor, noted that the Article being cited by the President is inapplicable as the applicable statute would be

The South Dayi MP is therefore questioning the validity of the letter in circulation said to be from the Office of the President.

He has also cautioned the president's staffers to be well educated on Ghana's laws and ensure the appropriate usage. According to him, such misinformation dents the reputation of the president.

"Is this letter authentic? If it is, then I have a big issue with the contents. The applicable statute is the LOCAL GOVERNANCE ACT, 2016, ACT 936. That is the law that ought to have been quoted. The staffers around the Prez should stop embarrassing him," he wrote.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana



General News

Regional Maritime University to build first boat in June

Managing Director of Lamar Marine Services, Mohamed Saleh Alshareef, has disclosed that the Regional Maritime University (RMU) is set to commence boat construction in June.

This development, according to him, stems from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed last year between RMU and a Dubai-based company specializing in boat building, firefighting, and oil rigs, Lamar Marine Services.

The boat, constructed from lightweight and durable fiberglass, is designed for the Ghanaian and West African markets, catering to purposes such as monitoring, security, and fishing.

The construction facility for the boat will be located on the RMU premises.

Mr Alshareef shared this information during a presentation to a delegation from the Dar Es

Salaam Maritime Institute (DMI), Tanzania, and RMU management in Accra.

He highlighted Lamar Marine's 40+ years of industry experience and expressed confidence in creating a "masterpiece" for the benefit of future generations.

The presentation also emphasized collaborative partnerships that enhance RMU's maritime training offerings.

Maurice Mends from Rig World Training Center detailed their two-year collaboration with RMU, focusing on equipping graduates with practical skills for success in the global maritime sector.

Mr Mends praised RMU for shaping the future of maritime training in Ghana and highlighted their dedication to safety.

Ing. Augustus Addy-Lampsey, representing Hafnia Shipping, stressed the significance of investing in seafarer training

to meet the high demand for personnel.

He announced a partnership with RMU to place trained seafarers on ships, contributing to the industry's growth.

Capt. Joshua Addo, representing Schulte Maritime Service, highlighted their company's long

history since 1883 and ownership of over 90 vessels.

He expressed their commitment to collaborating with RMU to train cadets and provide employment opportunities.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Regional Maritime University

You didn't give us jobs but want our GHC75 - Okada riders slam govt over Emissions levy

The leadership of the Okada Riders Association is dissatisfied with the implementation of the Emissions Levy which mandates motor riders to pay GHC75 annually to the government.

The primary goal of introducing the emissions levy in accordance with the Emissions Levy Act, 2023 (Act 1112), is to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly technology and green energy. This is expected to contribute significantly to improved environmental management, as well as the control of air and water pollution.

But according to Secretary of the Okada Riders Association, Majid Amidu, it is insensitive on the part of the government to impose such a tax and an expensive one at that.

The Association is set to petition the Ministry of Transport next Monday to consider reducing the emissions levy.

"It is too much. People are suffering. You did not give us jobs, you did not do anything for us and yet you want us to pay GH75. We will hold another meeting and write a petition to the government and

the whole of Ghana that enough is enough."

"If they do not reduce the levy, we will go out and demonstrate against this government. By Monday the petition will be ready and we will send it to the Minister," he added.

Also, motor vehicles, buses, and coaches up to 3000 cubic

centimetres are required to pay GH¢150 per annum whereas motor vehicles, buses, and coaches above 3000 cubic centimetres, cargo trucks, and articulated trucks are required to pay GH¢300 per annum.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



Okada riders



General News

Govt employees without Ghana cards will not receive salaries - Controller and Accountant General

The Controller and Accountant General, Mr. Kwasi Kwaning-Bosompem, has issued a strong warning to public sector workers, signaling a determined initiative to eradicate ghost names by removing individuals who have not linked their Ghana card to the payroll system.

Speaking at the annual conference of the Controller and Accountant-General's Department in Kumasi, Mr. Kwaning-Bosompem underscored the need for innovative measures to effectively

manage public finances, ensuring the integrity of the payroll system.

"We have communicated with our payroll members regarding the linkage of their NIA number to the payroll database, a process initiated two years ago. The implementation is now in full force. If you do not possess an NIA card, your pay will soon be disconnected," he stated.

He emphasized that in the event of a missing NIA card, the corresponding number remains on the database.

He added that the office can cross-check and, if necessary, invite the person for physical validation.

The Executive Director of the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), COP Maame Yaa Tiwaa Addo-Danquah, has also stressed the importance of collaborative efforts in combating corruption.

Expressing concerns about the stagnancy in the Corruption Perception Index over the past four years, she urged collective

responsibility to improve the perception of corruption.

Representing Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Ashanti Regional Minister Simon Osei-Mensah commended the department for significant advancements and underscored the importance of technology and innovation in the accounting and finance sector.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



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Business

Ghana importing 3,500 tonnes of cocoa beans from Nigeria, Ivory Coast amid destruction of farms by galamsey

A document shared by Member of Parliament for South Dayi, Nelson-Rockson Dafeamekpor, reveals that Ghana, known to be one of the major producers of cocoa, is now importing cocoa beans from Ivory Coast and Nigeria.

The MP shared a letter by Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to Afrotropic Cocoa Processing Plant approving the importation of 2,500 tonnes of cocoa beans from Ivory Coast and 1,000 tonnes of cocoa beans from Nigeria.

The cocoa beans are only to arrive in Ghana through the Tema port, the letter signed by Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Joseph Boahen Aidoo on January 25, 2024, communicated.

"Your letter dated 22nd January, 2024 on the above subject refers. We write to inform you that Management has approved your request to import 2,500 tonnes of

cocoa beans from Cote d'Ivoire and 1,000 tonnes from Nigeria. This should, however, be done only by sea through the Tema Port.

"You are, therefore, requested to provide detailed information on the following:

- i. Name of Vessel
- ii. Shipment schedule
- iii. Quantity of beans to be imported i.e. whether the importation would be in one bulk otherwise, state quantity per shipment
- iv. Expected date/time of arrival

"In connection with this approval, you are required to obtain all necessary authorizations from the relevant state institutions including Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority before commencing the importation," the statement indicated.

This startling information has left Mr Dafeamekpor peeved as government in previous

years indicated that Ghana had increased its cocoa production.

"Yet, we were told by this Govt in 2022 led by Dr. Afriyie Akoto, that they've doubled our cocoa production," he wrote.

Cocoa is one of the key exports for Ghana. But the exportation of cocoa now hangs in the balance due to the activities of illegal miners, which government has failed to nip in the bud.

A research by the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has revealed a widespread loss of cocoa farms to illegal small-scale mining activities, popularly known as galamsey.

80 percent of selected cocoa farms in the Western, Ashanti and Eastern Regions were found to have been devastated by illegal mining.

Per the latest statistics, over 19,000 acres out of the over 20,000

cocoa-farm acreage selected in these regions were ravaged by the galamsey menace between 2019 and 2020.

It is believed that due to the extensive damage caused by galamsey, government has now resorted to importing cocoa beans.

It is also important to note that this is not the first time that Ghana has imported cocoa beans from other African countries.

In 2016, then Finance of Minister, Seth Terkper, announced to Parliament that the country imported 15,500 tonnes of cocoa beans from Cote D'Ivoire in the 2014/2015 crop year.

In 2008, Barry Callebaut Ghana Limited imported 15,500 tonnes of light crop cocoa beans into the country from Nigeria and Togo.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



File photo



Business

Freight and Haulage business booming in Sissala East

Several articulator trucks have besieged the Tumu township in the Sissala East Municipality to cart grains to the southern part of the country for sale.

The Ghana News Agency (GNA) had spotted dozens of articulator trucks parked at the articulator station while others at the margins of the roads waited to be loaded.

The GNA, in a visit to the articulator station at Tumu, counted 31 articulator vehicles from different parts of the country arranged to load.

Mr Yusuf Seidu Ndego, the articulator station secretary disclosed that three days ago over 20 articulators were loaded and dispatched.

Mr Ndego indicated from December 2023 up to date, more

than three trucks leave Tumu to the South daily and estimated over 500 truckloads of mostly maize, Soyabean, sesame, rice have been transported to other parts of the country.

The articulator station, he said, has now helped reduce accidents in the township with the trucks now parked at designated places, which was not the case in the past, and has further decongested the main town's traffic.

Mr Ndego said from November 2023, the revenue collected for the Sissala East Assembly increased as many articulators came in knowing that they would get loaded in Tumu.

Mr Ndego told the GNA that for every truckload of one thousand bags of 100kg, an amount of One Ghana Cedis was collected amounting to One thousand per

articulator truck whilst parking at the lot attracted Twenty Ghana Cedis per truck.

The articulator business he said was booming due to the area's high maize production.

"Just now I got a call to load four Articulators with maize to Ibadan in Nigeria," he said.

Mr Ndego said the absence of electricity and other basic amenities such as water, urinary and toilet facilities posed a security threat to the station.

He therefore appealed to the Sissala East Municipal Assembly to provide those amenities for the drivers and the transporters.

Some of the drivers who spoke to the GNA complained about the bad road network from Han to Tumu and Tumu towards Chuchuliga.

The drivers called on the government to pay attention to the deplorable nature of the road to reduce the cost of maintenance and prevent needless accidents.

Mr Fuseini Batong Yakubu, the Sissala East Municipal Chief Executive said the creation of the articulator station had brought sanity to the Municipality and harmonised the collection of revenue, which had seen a marked increase.

Mr Yakubu said the concerns of the station including electricity, water, and urinary facilities had all been discussed and there were plans to ensure the culvert leading into the space and out would all be worked on.

Source: GNA



File photo



International

Speed up processes and let Senegal have its elections - ECOWAS tells President Sall

The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has expressed concerns about the decision by Senegalese authorities to indefinitely postpone the presidential elections, which were initially scheduled for February 25, 2024.

President Macky Sall cited a dispute over the candidate list (electoral roll) as the reason for the postponement.

The Constitutional Council in Senegal had excluded some opposition candidates' names

from the candidate list in January, leading to concerns about the credibility of the electoral process.

"I will initiate an open national dialogue to bring together the conditions for a free, transparent and inclusive election in a peaceful and reconciled Senegal," President Sall said.

In a communiqué issued by the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on February 3, 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria, the commission expressed concern about the circumstances that led to the

postponement of the Senegalese presidential elections.

ECOWAS urged the authorities in Senegal to expedite processes for setting a new date for the elections. Additionally, the commission called on the entire political class to prioritize dialogue and collaboration to ensure transparent, inclusive, and credible elections.

"The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States takes note of the decision that the Senegalese authorities have taken to postpone the presidential

elections scheduled to take place on 25 February 2024. The ECOWAS Commission expresses concern over the circumstances that have led to the postponement of the elections and appeals to the competent authorities to expedite the various processes in order to set a new date for the elections."

The ECOWAS Commission applauded outgoing President Macky Sall for adhering to his earlier decision not to seek re-election.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Macky Sall, President of Senegal



International

Hage Geingob: Namibia's president dies aged 82

Namibia's President Hage Geingob has died at the age of 82 while receiving medical treatment at a hospital in the capital, Windhoek.

A veteran of the country's independence struggle, Mr Geingob had been diagnosed with cancer and revealed the details to the public last month.

He died early on Sunday with his wife and children by his side, Vice-President Nangolo Mbumba announced.

Namibia "has lost... a distinguished servant of the people", he said.

He was first sworn-in as president in 2015, but had served in top political positions since independence in 1990.

According to the constitution, Mr Mbumba is first in line to become the next president as there was less than a year left of Mr Geingob's second term in office. Presidential and parliamentary elections had already been scheduled for November.

The exact cause of the president's death was not given but last month he underwent "a two-day novel treatment for cancerous cells" in the US before flying back home on 31 January, his office had said.

On Namibian radio, people have been paying tribute to someone they described as a visionary as well as a jovial man, who was able to share a joke.

Leaders from around the world have been sending condolence messages with many talking about Mr Geingob's efforts to ensure his country's freedom.

Among them has been Cyril Ramaphosa, president of neighbouring South Africa, who described him as "a towering veteran of Namibia's liberation from colonialism and apartheid".

Mr Geingob, a tall man with a deep, gravelly voice and a commanding presence was a long-

serving member of the Swapo party. It led the movement against apartheid South Africa, which had effectively annexed the country, then known as South West Africa, and introduced its system of legalised racism that excluded black people from political and economic power.

Mr Geingob lived in exile for 27 years, spending time in Botswana, the US and the UK, where he studied for a PhD in politics.

He came back to Namibia in 1989, a year before the country gained independence.

"Looking back, the journey of building a new Namibia has been worthwhile," he wrote on social media in 2020 while sharing a picture of him kissing the ground on his return.

"Even though we have made a lot of progress in developing our country, more work lies ahead to build an inclusive society."

When Mr Geingob first became president in 2015, he had already been the country's longest-serving prime minister - in the post for 12 years from 1990 and then again for a shorter stint in 2012.

But going by results at the ballot box, his popularity had declined.

In the 2014 election, he won a huge majority, taking 87% of the vote. But five years later that had fallen to 56%.

Mr Geingob's first term coincided with a stagnant economy and high levels of unemployment and poverty, according to the World Bank.

His party also faced a number of corruption scandals during his time in office. This included what became known as "fishrot", where ministers and top officials were accused of taking bribes in exchange for the awarding of lucrative fishing quotas.

By 2021, three-quarters of the population thought that the country was going in the wrong direction, a three-fold increase since 2014, according to independent polling organisation Afrobarometer.

Three decades after independence, the heroic narrative of Swapo having liberated the country was losing its appeal among a generation born after the event, long-time observer of Namibian politics Henning Melber wrote in 2021.

Swapo, in power since independence, had chosen Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as its presidential candidate for November's planned elections.

She is currently the deputy prime minister, and will become the country's first female president if she wins.

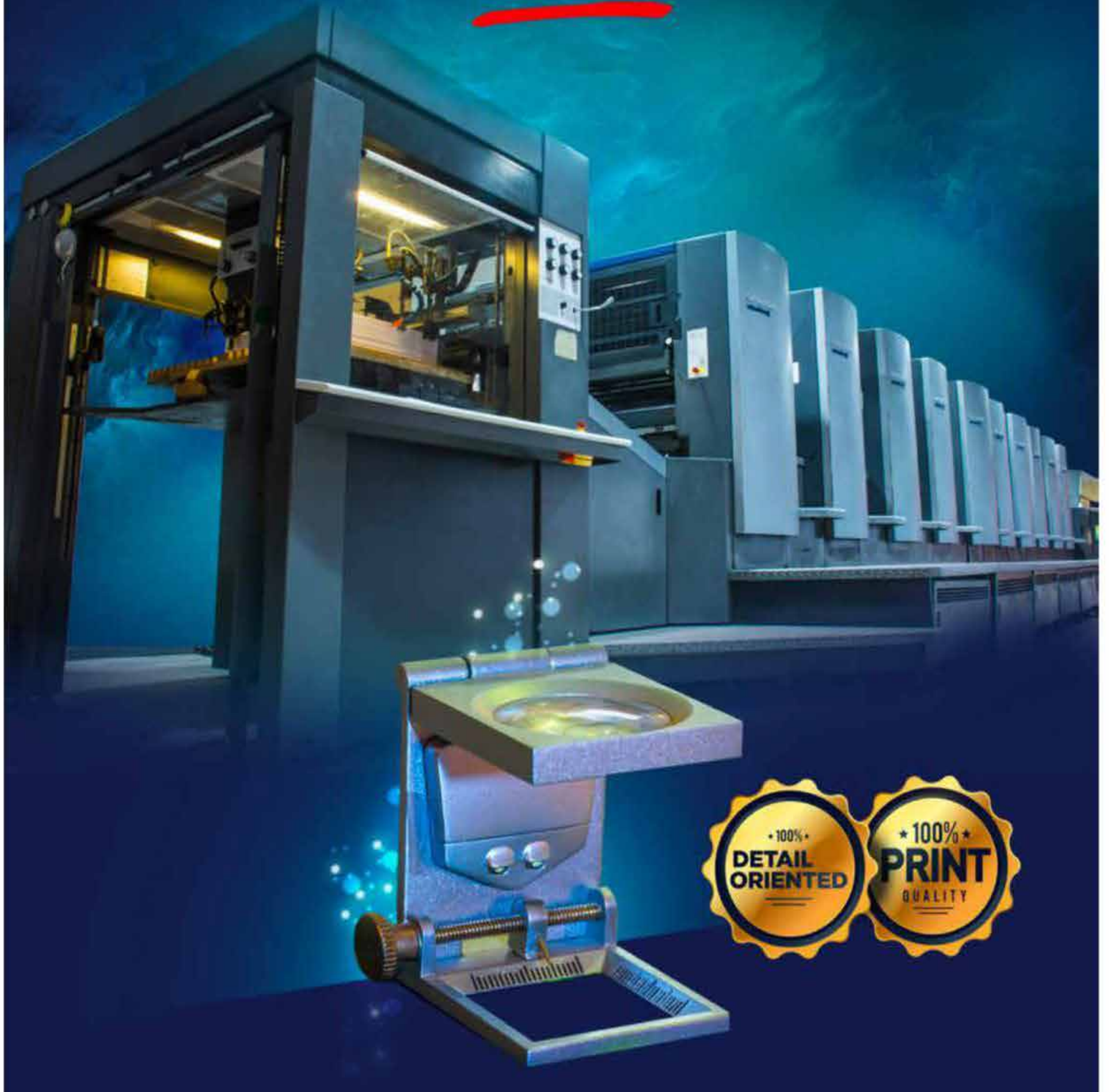
Source: BBC



Hage Geingob, Namibia's President

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