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General News

Arrest warrant issued for 'missing' former MASLOC boss found guilty of money laundering, others

An Accra High Court has issued an arrest warrant for Sedina Christine Attionu Tamakloe, the convicted former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC).

This decision follows an ex parte motion filed by State Prosecutors. Assistant State Attorney Yvonne Yaache-Adomako, addressing the court on Monday, April 22, moved the motion (ex parte) for an arrest warrant, stating that the fugitive was convicted on all 78 counts.

"I have before you a motion ex parte for an arrest warrant to be issued for the arrest of the 2nd respondent convict (Sedina Tamakloe)," Ms Yaache-Adomako prayed.

She further stressed that "based on the facts and the attached exhibits, we have demonstrated sufficient grounds for the issuance of the said warrant to arrest the convict."

"We humbly pray that this court grants our application," she added.

Subsequently, the sitting judge, Justice Lydia Osei Marfo granted

the motion as prayed.

Madam Tamakloe is to serve a 10-year jail term sentence and Daniel Axim, the former Chief Operating Officer of MASLOC, a 5-year jail term.

Both individuals were found guilty on 78 counts related to causing financial loss to the state, theft, conspiracy to steal, money laundering, and contravening public procurement laws.

The convictions stem from misappropriation of funds allocated for MASLOC activities between 2013 and 2016. In one instance, the convicts withdrew GH¢500,000 as a loan from Obaatampa Savings and Loans company, demanding a refund when the institution refused to provide a 24% interest rate. Although evidence of the refund was presented, it was not reflected in MASLOC's accounts.

The duo was also found guilty of misappropriating over GH¢1.7 million allocated for a sensitisation exercise, with only a fraction of the funds used for the intended purpose. Similarly, funds disbursed for victims of a fire incident

at Kantamanso were not fully distributed, with a significant portion misappropriated by the accused.

The case also involved the purchase of vehicles and Samsung phones for MASLOC, with funds exceeding market prices at the time.

Madam Sedina Tamakloe-Attionu was tried in absentia as she absconded after obtaining court

permission for a medical check-up abroad. Daniel Axim testified in person but did not present any witnesses.

Meanwhile, Deputy Attorney General Alfred Tuah-Yeboah has emphasized the government's commitment to extraditing Sedina Tamakloe Attionu to Ghana to serve her 10-year prison sentence.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Sedina Christine Attionu Tamakloe, Former CEO of MASLOC

IMANI Africa to hit Akufo-Addo govt with 'dumsor' demo

President of IMANI Africa, Franklin Cudjoe, has declared the organization's intention to stage a protest against the government due to the persistent power outages, colloquially termed "dumsor."

He emphasized that IMANI will conduct their protest at their own pace, and individuals who share their grievances are welcome to organize their demonstrations.

This announcement comes after actress Yvonne Nelson called for IMANI to join her in organizing another demonstration, reminiscent of the one held in 2015.

"We have heard the call by the redoubtable Ms Yvonne Nelson for round two of #dumsormuststop. Fair call even as we (IMANI) have maintained our criticism of the government's bad decisions for what often seems like a rudderless leadership, the latest dumsor episodes being the zenith. So as you can see (T-shirts), we are preparing and we will make the call and choose how we demonstrate and who we want to partner at the right time."

"Meanwhile, others can also organise their own unique protests in churches, mosques, bars, schools and homes," Mr Cudjoe wrote on

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Franklin Cudjoe, President of IMANI Africa



General News

IMANI Africa to hit Akufo-Addo govt with 'dumsor' demo

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his Facebook platform.

Yvonne Nelson's call comes amidst recent intermittent power outages, with many Ghanaians clamoring for a load-shedding timetable from the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG).

In her post on X on Monday, April 22, Ms. Nelson expressed her readiness for IMANI's outreach for the vigil, citing the organization's involvement in a similar event in 2015.

She criticized President Akufo-

Addo and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), accusing them of taking the country for granted and emphasizing that such neglect should no longer be tolerated.

However, Mr. Cudjoe, in a Facebook post on Tuesday, April 23,

responded sharply, stating that IMANI will choose partners for their protest, and Yvonne Nelson is free to organize her demonstration.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Bawumia in Italy to meet Pope Francis for bilateral talks

Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia has embarked on a significant working visit to the Republic of Italy and the Vatican State, where he is set to meet with His Holiness Pope Francis.

According to a press release from his spokesperson, Dr. Gideon Boako, dated April 23, 2024, the purpose of the visit is to bolster the enduring ties among Ghana, Italy, and the Vatican State.

Dr. Bawumia's agenda includes

bilateral talks and meetings with Pope Francis.

The press release emphasized the Pope's message of love, mercy, and inclusivity, which has garnered global attention for its promotion of unity and mutual understanding.

Dr. Boako stated, "Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia is scheduled to hold bilateral talks, including with His Holiness Pope Francis. The Pope's message of love, mercy, and inclusion, which he has devoted

himself to promoting unity and mutual understanding between all peoples, has been embraced around the world. The meeting will highlight our common principles of peace, justice, and solidarity to guide us into a better future."

The meeting aims to underscore common principles of peace, justice, and solidarity for a better future.

These diplomatic engagements align with Dr. Bawumia's

commitment to strengthening ties with the global community.

Accompanied by government officials, the Vice President's visit is part of his efforts to enhance connections with the international community. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia is expected to return to Ghana on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Pope Francis (L) and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia



General News

GRA provides clarification on taxing incomes of Ghanaian residents

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has provided essential clarification on its recent policy to tax the foreign incomes of Ghanaians residing in the country.

This update seeks to address the public's concerns and confusion following the initial announcement, especially considering the current economic challenges faced by citizens.

On April 15, the government disclosed its decision to implement this tax as a substitute for the suspended Value-Added Tax (VAT) on electricity, which reportedly

led to a revenue shortfall of approximately GH¢1.8 billion.

As such, one of the main aims is to compensate for the suspended VAT on electricity, which created a significant revenue gap.

For greater transparency, the GRA issued a statement on April 22, detailing the criteria for individuals subject to this tax.

It encompasses citizens who have a permanent home in Ghana and reside there year-round, those present in the country for at least 183 days within any 12-month

period, and government employees or officials stationed overseas.

The statement also encouraged affected individuals to voluntarily disclose their foreign income starting May 1, offering an incentive of waived interest on their accounts.

"To facilitate easier declaration and payment of taxes for resident individuals to report undisclosed incomes, the GRA has opened a special window for taxpayers to rectify their records. All eligible individuals are strongly encouraged to utilise this opportunity to

regularise their tax affairs," the GRA emphasized.

In defence of this decision, the GRA referenced the Tax Act 2015 (Act 896), which outlines the comprehensive framework for taxation in Ghana, including income tax, VAT, customs duties, and other charges. The Act delineates the duties of taxpayers, the authority of tax institutions like the GRA, and the repercussions for non-adherence.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



GRA Office



General News

NIA to charge GHC310 for Premium Ghana Card application, GHC420 for replacement

The National Identification Authority (NIA) has announced new rates for some services it renders, effective May 1, 2024.

The adjustments are in accordance with the Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations, 2023 (L.I. 2481) passed by Parliament in February 2024.

The new rates apply to three main areas of Ghana Card services: First Time Registration, Replacement of Cards, and Personal Information Update Service.

First-time registration at NIA

District Offices remains free, while registration at NIA Premium Centres will cost GH¢310.

For those in the ECOWAS sub-region, first-time registration will be US\$55, and for the rest of Africa, US\$75. Countries outside Africa will pay US\$115 for first-time registration.

Card replacement at NIA District Offices will cost GH¢125, and at NIA Premium Centres, it will cost GH¢420. Replacement in the ECOWAS sub-region will be US\$55, in the rest of Africa US\$75, and for countries outside Africa US\$115.

For personal information updates,

record updates only at NIA Regional/District Offices are free, while updates at NIA Premium Centres will cost GH¢310. Record updates with card replacement at NIA Regional/District Offices will cost GH¢60, and at NIA Premium Centres, GH¢355.

Nationality updates at NIA Regional/District Offices will be GH¢70, and at NIA Premium Centres, GH¢365. For updates in the ECOWAS sub-region, the cost is US\$27.50, in the rest of Africa US\$37.50, and for countries outside Africa US\$57.50.

The Ghana Card is a secure and

multi-purpose card used for verifying and authenticating electronic and physical transactions in both public and private services. It establishes the biometric identity of the holder.

The registration is open to three categories of people: all Ghanaian citizens by birth (descent), registration, or naturalization aged zero years and above currently residing in Ghana; all Ghanaian citizens living abroad; and foreign nationals legally or permanently resident in Ghana.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Ghana Card



General News

Tema-Mpakadan railway line was inspected before test run on train was conducted - Peter Amewu

Minister for Railways Development, John Peter Amewu, has made a public statement confirming that a thorough inspection was conducted on the Tema-Mpakadan railway line before the Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train's test run, which unfortunately resulted in a collision with a stationary truck.

Amewu's announcement came as a rebuttal to former President John Dramani Mahama's criticism of the incident.

Mahama questioned the absence of a track inspection, stating on social media, "How can you conduct a test run on a new railway line without a track inspection? How long had the vehicle been on the track before the test run? If I were President, I'll be asking some serious questions."

Responding to Mr Mahama's comment on Monday, April 22, the Railways Development Minister said "As I clearly explained, they put in a system for inspection. Earlier on in the morning, they went around the whole line to see that there was no obstacle. 30 minutes before the takeoff of this DMU, the rail track, and the maintenance track were put ahead. So what is he [John Mahama] saying? I don't think he understood the question he was asking."

Mr Amewu added, "I totally disagree with his excellency John Dramani Mahama. I don't blame him, this is not his field. These guys who did this test run are experts. These are 16 engineers who were brought from Poland. This is the 304th test they've conducted worldwide this year, I was told. And so I don't know where his excellency John Mahama is coming from with this understanding that no inspection had been done."

The Member of Parliament for Hohoe further explained that the inspection and test run was conducted by the Polish because it was part of the contract.

He added that there is no radar system to monitor the track, except

for the manual system of checking to see if the line was safe before the train moved – something that was done.

"So, this manual system that his excellency is talking about was conducted, so I don't know what he's talking about. The inspection was conducted on the same day. The engineers informed us that the rail track was 30 minutes ahead of the train. So when the incident happened, where did the rail track come from? It came from kilometre 97 back to the scene, kilometre 76 or so to do the recovery because they were ahead about the 30-minute difference. It is just a coincidence or an accident that I cannot explain," he noted.

He stated that Mr Mahama could have sought clarity about his standing in Ghanaian politics before joining the bandwagon of uninformed commentary on the incident.

"Did he [John Mahama] try to find out whether the inspection was

done as a former president? He knows me well, he could just find out from me, and they will tell him the truth. He has not established that fact, and then he comes out with this kind of statement. His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, this is below the belt. I am sorry, I give you all the respect, but I expect you to find out first. You're not even an engineer. These are 16 qualified engineers brought from Poland."

Peter Amewu explained that, according to the contract, Ghana had not assumed full ownership of the train at the time of the test run, even though the country had full ownership and responsibility for the state of the tracks.

He therefore said that the cost of repairs would not be borne by the Government of Ghana.

"There was no transfer of ownership. Which means the supplier was still responsible for the train. We'll get ownership when the government has made the full payment which we haven't

done yet. So Ghana is not going to bear the cost of repairing the train involved in the accident during the test ride."

"The inspection and test run were not conducted by the Ghana government."

On how long the vehicle had been on the track before the test run as Mr Mahama had questioned, Mr Amewu said that was extremely difficult to determine under the circumstances.

The truck driver, Abel Dzidotor, has been sentenced to six months in jail after pleading guilty to three of the four charges against him, including inconsiderate driving and causing unlawful damage.

Additionally, the police have arrested four more individuals for their alleged involvement in the accident.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



John Peter Amewu, Minister for Railways Development



General News

Stop trying to use money to buy our members - Movement for Change supporters tell NPP

The Nationwide Supporters of Alan Cash (NAWSAC) have issued a warning to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to cease luring young individuals away from the Movement for Change through financial incentives.

In a statement released on Monday, April 22, 2024, NAWSAC expressed grave concern over what they perceive as the NPP's unethical tactics and urged the youth not to yield to monetary inducements.

The group's convener, Luther-King Junior, highlighted the disillusionment of young people with both the NPP and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) due to what they deem as manipulative behavior. He reiterated their steadfast support for Alan Kyerematen's leadership.

The group also censured the NPP's apparent belief that monetary incentives could sway young people, deeming it a misguided strategy and a cause for derision. NAWSAC stressed that young people will no longer tolerate

being taken for granted by the NPP and NDC.

They urged those who resort to financial inducements in politics to acknowledge their short-sightedness and realize that their endeavours, such as poster campaigns and vociferous demonstrations, are inadequate to undermine the youth's determination for change.

"We are aware of the clandestine operations of the New Patriotic Party to undermine the candidature of Alan Kyerematen. This time in a full display of 'monocracy', there have been blatant attempts to use money as a tool to pull young people from the Movement for Change. This is the defining feature of the awful state of the New Patriotic Party who are forced in their panic mode to stoop so low.

"Let us emphasize that the true young people of this Revolution cannot be bought. We the youth are convinced in the leadership of Alan Kyerematen and will not trade our integrity and convictions

on the altar of incompetence and corruption. The duopoly of NPP and NDC will no longer be allowed to take young people for granted through disgraceful acts of financial inducement rather than providing

solutions for Job creation and opportunities for young people," parts of the statement read.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Nationwide Supporters of Alan Cash (NAWSAC)

Current power outages less severe than Mahama's 'dumsor' - Prof Adei

Former Rector of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Professor Stephen Adei, has stated that the current power outages also known as dumsor are not as extreme as the inconsistent power supply witnessed during the Mahama administration.

While Prof. Adei acknowledged that the current situation is not as severe as dumsor, he cautioned that without proper attention, it could worsen.

Speaking to the media, Prof Adei proposed addressing bottlenecks that hinder the utilization of existing capacity and emphasized the importance of a national strategic agenda, including duty-free importation of solar panels.

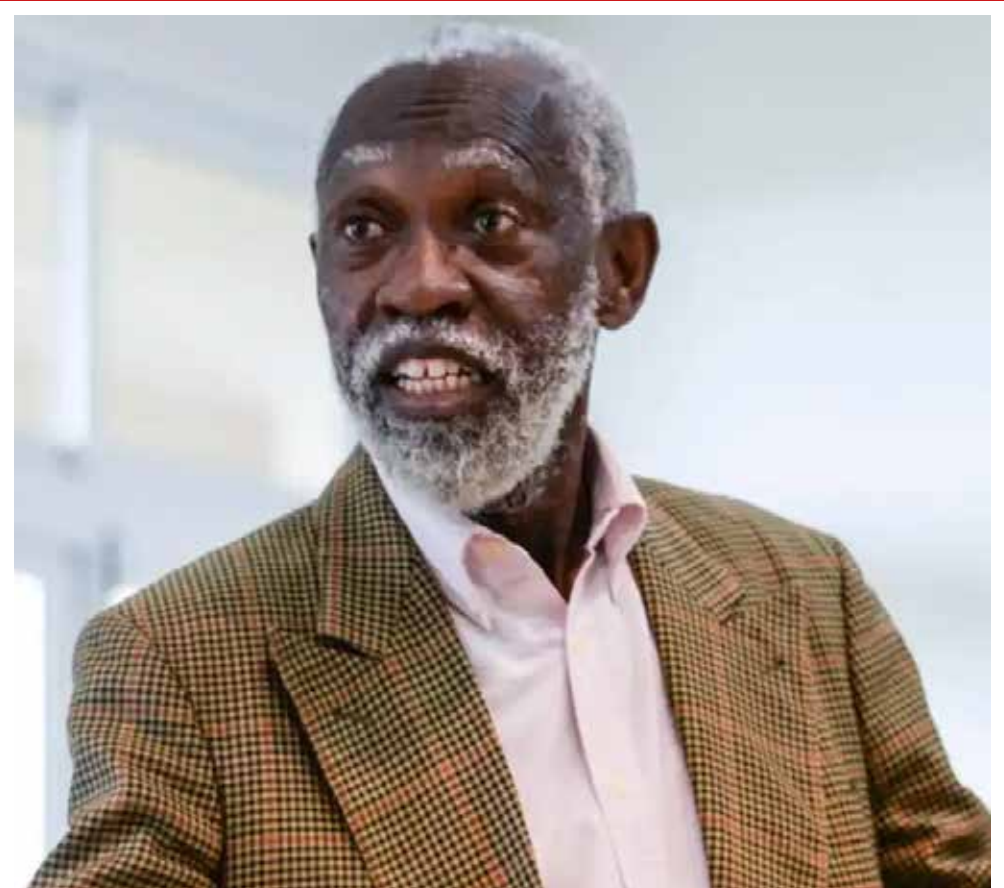
"The power crisis is not as bad as

the Dumsor days, but if we don't take care it will only get worse," he told TV3's Beatrice Adu in an interview on Monday, April 22.

He said, "so the first thing is that if there are bottlenecks which are not allowing us to use the existing capacity to the fullest, they must be addressed. But in the long run, we must have a national strategic agenda. You can go solar, immediately the government should allow all solar panels and anything to do with it to import duty-free because in the end the country and the government will win. We must have a strategy to make sure that we have a long-term solution, and the efficiency of the ECG must also improve."

He also stressed the need to

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Professor Stephen Adei, Former Rector of GIMPA



General News

Current power outages less severe than Mahama's 'dumsor' - Prof Adei

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improve the efficiency of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) for a sustainable solution.

Meanwhile, the Director of Communications for the New

Patriotic Party (NPP), Richard Ahiagbah, has acknowledged the frustration caused by the power outages but assured the public that maintenance work by the ECG would soon restore uninterrupted

power supply.

Mr Ahiagbah dismissed criticism from the National Democratic Congress (NDC), asserting that the NDC's tenure was marked

by severe Dumsor, making them unfit to criticize the current administration's efforts.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku

Two pedestrians knocked down at Lapaz as 'dumsor' renders traffic lights inoperative

At 8:40 pm on Monday, April 22, 2024, a traffic accident disrupted the busy intersection of Lapaz in the Greater Accra Region.

A commercial bus, locally known as a "trotro," struck two pedestrians, a woman in her late 30s and a man in his late 20s, as they crossed the

bustling street.

The malfunctioning traffic lights, caused by a power outage in the area, were identified as the reason for the accident.

Eyewitnesses, including a reporter from an Accra-based online news portal, acted promptly, moving the unconscious individuals to

safety and ensuring they received immediate medical care at the nearest hospital.

The incident has brought to light the significant challenges that the ongoing power outages, known as 'dumsor', pose to the nation.

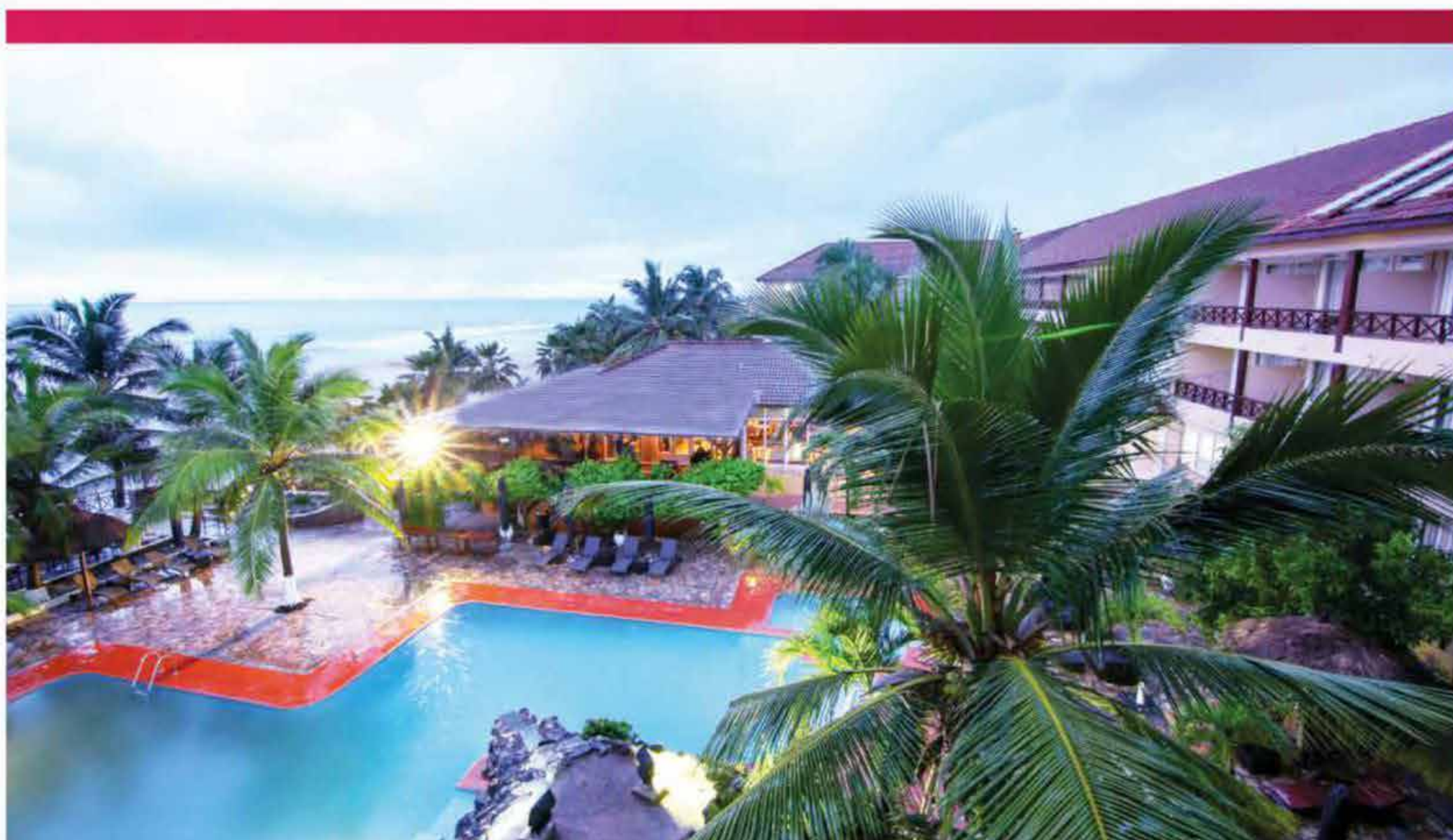
The Ghanaian public has expressed deep concerns over the

detrimental effects of 'dumsor' on their everyday life and safety. The issue is particularly acute on the roads, where failed street lights and traffic signals during power cuts increase the risk of accidents.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Pedestrian crossing at Lapaz



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Business

Ghana on course to establish MoU with bilateral creditors on debt restructuring programme – IMF

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief for Ghana, Stéphane Roudet has expressed confidence in Ghana's upcoming formalization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with bilateral creditors regarding the country's debt restructuring program.

He noted significant progress in drafting an agreement with official creditors.

"We are confident that formalization will occur in the next few weeks, building upon January's developments, allowing us to present it to the board in June. We are increasingly optimistic about Ghana's program at the IMF board," he assured during discussions with journalists at the Annual IMF/World Bank spring meetings in Washington DC, USA.

Emphasizing the June timeline, Roudet highlighted the dedicated efforts of the team to meet deadlines.

"The report preparation and board circulation take time, but we are optimistic about progress by June," he reiterated.

On concerns about the current negotiations with commercial creditors delaying, Mr. Roudet noted that even though it is not a major requirement, it is however important to make progress on the debt relief which must be consistent with the IMF programme.

"We also need good faith in place when it comes to the negotiations with the commercial creditors, and we are already seeing that. From that standpoint, there is good faith when it comes to negotiations with the creditors", he announced.

On containing election spending before the elections, Mr. Roudet said the team is convinced by the government's commitment to be fiscally disciplined.

"If you look at past elections, there have been fiscal slippages and therefore everyone should be concerned", he added.

He pointed out that the IMF has observed some changes in the government's fiscal commitment.

On high-interest rates, Mr. Roudet was hopeful the cost of credit

would come down if inflation declines in line with the IMF programme.

"We believe that as inflation continues to go down, that could force the Bank of Ghana to also reduce interest rates".

He added that the government

is also reducing the amount of money needed from the domestic market.

This he alluded to may be contributing to reducing the interest rates.

Source: Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Stéphane Roudet, IMF Mission Chief for Ghana

Gov't fails to secure GHC 3.372 billion treasury bill target as interest rates drop

Interest rates saw a decrease across the yield curve in the recent treasury bill auction, signalling a shift in investor sentiment.

The government experienced a marginal under-subscription, garnering GH¢3.341 billion instead of the targeted GH¢3.372 billion.

A breakdown of the key changes shows that "91-day bill's yield dropped by 20 basis points to 25.64%, 364-day bill's yield decreased to 28.49%, conversely, the 182-day bill's yield rose by 25 basis points to 28.14%."

Analysts anticipate further drops in yields following the expected receipt of the third tranche of the \$360 million bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

The auction saw significant interest in the 91-day bill, with GH¢2.356 billion tendered and fully accepted.

Similarly, GH¢818.32 million was received for the 182-day bill, meeting demand. The 364-day bill garnered GH¢166.24 million in sales.

Source: Independent Ghana



File photo



International

5 migrants die while crossing English Channel hours after UK approved deportation bill

Five people, including a child, died while trying to cross the English Channel from France to the U.K., French authorities said Tuesday, just hours after the British government approved a migrant bill to deport some of those who entered the country illegally to Rwanda.

The prefecture responsible for the north of France said in a statement authorities spotted several boats packed with migrants off the coast of Pas-de-Calais, attempting to depart in the early morning.

Several French navy ships, including assistance and rescue tug Abeille Normandie, intervened to rescue "a very overcrowded boat carrying more than one hundred people on board," the statement emailed to The Associated Press said.

"They rescued several people, but unfortunately, five people have died," it said.

The regional prefect Jacques Billant said a woman, three men and a 7-year-old girl died. He said the boat carrying 112 people attempted to sail off the beach in Wimereux.

The Voix du Nord, a regional newspaper, said the bodies were discovered at the beach on Tuesday morning. About 100 migrants were rescued and placed aboard a French navy ship. They will be taken to the port of Boulogne, the paper said.

It came hours after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's latest effort to send some migrants to Rwanda finally won approval from Parliament. The U.K. government

plans to deport some of those who enter the country illegally as a deterrent to migrants who risk their lives in leaky, inflatable boats in hopes that they will be able to claim asylum once they reach Britain.

Human rights groups have described the legislation as inhumane and cruel. Both the United Nations refugee agency and the Council of Europe called on the U.K. Tuesday to rethink its

plans for fears they could damage international cooperation on tackling the global migrant crisis.

Migrants trying to cross the busy English Channel face drownings and sinking among other deadly incidents, often aboard crowded boats.

An estimated 30,000 people made the crossing in 2023, according to U.K. government figures.

Source: AP News



Migrants are brought into Dover Port by a RNLi lifeboat

Nigeria seeking up to \$2.25 bln in World Bank loans

Nigeria is seeking up to \$2.25 billion in World Bank loans and expects the bank's board to approve the request in June, the government said in a statement following the IMF/World Bank spring meetings in Washington, D.C.

Nigeria also aims to issue diaspora bonds later this year to attract much-needed foreign exchange into the country, Finance Minister Wale Edun said in the statement.

The World Bank loans would comprise \$1.5 billion in development policy financing and \$750 million in programme-for-results financing, the statement said, adding the bank would meet in June to consider final approval of

the package.

The World Bank did not immediately comment on the statement. Nigeria, typically Africa's largest oil exporter, has faced a shortage of foreign exchange that pushed its naira currency to record lows versus the U.S. dollar this year, though it has since rebounded.

President Bola Tinubu also inherited an economy saddled with record debt, high unemployment and large central bank financing, though Edun, in an interview with Reuters last week, said the government had halved federal borrowing, opens new tab from the central bank.

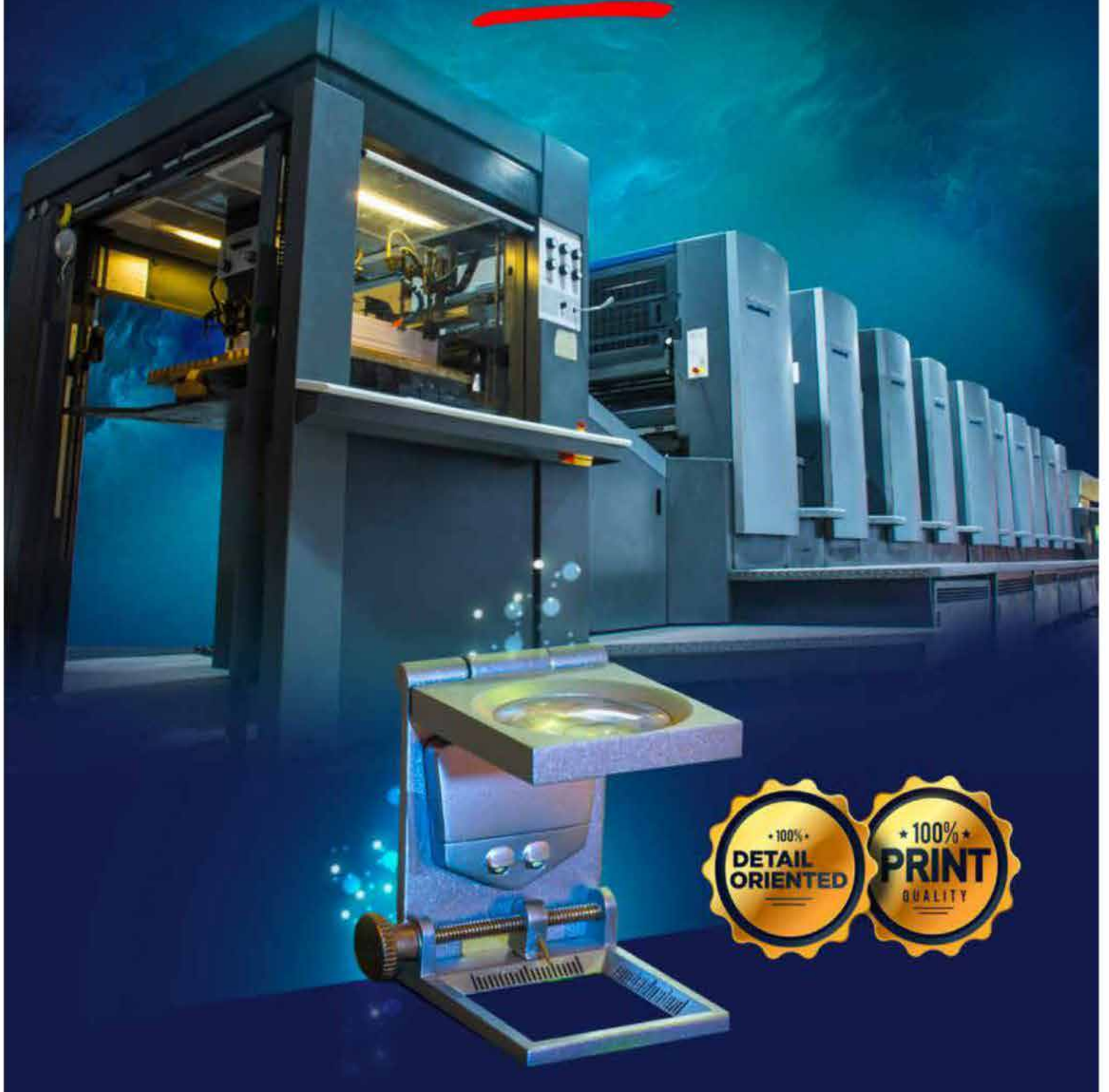
Source: Reuters



Wale Edun, Finance Minister

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