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General News

Nearly 900,000 children aged 5-17 are employed - GSS

The 2023 Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey reveals that more than 1.1 million children aged five to 17 years engaged in various forms of work in the fourth quarter of 2023, representing approximately 10.3% of children in this age group.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service's statement issued on June 3 to commemorate the World Day Against Child Labour, around 893,000 of these children are employed, predominantly in paid positions.

The annual observance, held on June 12th, focuses this year on the theme "Let's Act on Our Commitments: End Child Labour," urging concerted global efforts to eliminate child labour and uphold children's rights.

The statement highlights that a majority of the working children are male (56%), with nearly half a million (458,443) not currently attending school.

This group includes 68,500 who have never attended school and 389,943 who have dropped out.

"More of the children who are involved in different forms of work are males (56%). Almost half a million (458,443) of these working children are not attending school comprising 68,500 who have never attended school and 389,943 who attended school in the past."

Urban areas account for 28%

(309,199) of working children, while rural areas host a larger share at 72% (795,175). Regionally, Ashanti leads with 13.6% of children involved in work, followed by Bono East (12.1%) and Northern (11.8%).

"Urban areas account for over a quarter (309,199:28%) of working children, while rural areas have a significantly higher proportion, with almost three-quarters (795,175;72%).

"The Ahafo Region (0.8%), Greater Accra (1.6%) and Western North (1.8) have the lowest percentages of working children. A breakdown of the forms of work reveals that 35.4 percent of children worked as family help, followed by farm work (31.2%), unpaid trainees (11.7%), and own use production (7.3%).

"Also, 6.2 percent of children were engaged in non-farm work, 5.3 percent in wage work and 2.9 percent involved in domestic, non-productive agriculture, voluntary work or apprentice work," it stated.

Additionally, 6.2% of children are engaged in non-farm work, 5.3% in wage work, and 2.9% in domestic, non-productive agriculture, voluntary work, or apprentice work.

Regarding types of work, family assistance is the most common at 35.4%, followed by farm work (31.2%), unpaid apprenticeships (11.7%), and own-use production (7.3%).

"Service and sales workers (1.7%), Plant and machine operators, and assemblers (0.2%) and Manager (0.1%) account for the least working children. The services sector employs nine in 10 (91.7%) of the working children, while agriculture and industry engage 4.8 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively," it added.

In terms of occupations, elementary roles dominate at 60.4%, followed by craft and trade-related work (19.8%) and skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishing activities (17.7%).

The services sector employs the majority (91.7%) of working children, with agriculture and industry accounting for 4.8% and 3.6%, respectively.

Furthermore, 80.4% of working

children contribute to family work, spanning agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

Unpaid apprenticeship is the next most common employment status at 11.7%, while 1.9% are self-employed, 0.5% are paid employees, and 4.9% fall under other employment categories.

"The second most common employment status for children is unpaid apprenticeship, which constitutes 11.7 percent. Additionally, 1.9 percent of working children are self-employed, 0.5 percent are paid employees and 4.9 percent of working children fall under other employment categories," it added.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Children working at a galamsey site

Results of gov't efforts in fighting galamsey not satisfactory - Nana Akomea

Managing Director of the State Transport Corporation (STC), Nana Akomea, has stated that the government is not satisfied with the outcomes of the battle against illegal mining, also known as galamsey.

He attributed this dissatisfaction to the significant efforts and commitments made, which have yielded limited results.

Speaking to the media, Mr. Akomea highlighted the persistent challenges in combating illegal mining, noting that despite the efforts of every President to stop illegal mining

in the country, the results remain unsatisfactory.

"Every President has made efforts to stop illegal mining in the country, but despite their commitment and efforts, the results remain unsatisfactory," he noted.

Mr. Akomea commended the investigative work of Joy FM and its Ashanti Regional Correspondent, Erastus Asare Donkor, stating that their work has made it clear that the fight against illegal mining is far from being won, and that new approaches are needed.

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Nana Akomea, Managing Director of the State Transport Corporation (STC)



General News

Results of gov't efforts in fighting galamsey not satisfactory - Nana Akomea

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"Based on the good work by Joy FM and Erastus, it is so clear that the fight is far from being won, and we have to look at new ways of fighting it. The commitment is there, the effort has been made, but the results are not

satisfactory," he stressed.

Despite efforts such as the launch of Operation Vanguard and Operation Halt by President Akufo-Addo and various policies to combat the

menace, many Ghanaians have expressed dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of progress.

There is also a widespread belief that the involvement of government

appointees and other prominent personalities in society will continue to undermine the fight against illegal mining.

Source: The Independent Ghana

Calamity will befall Ghana - Bagbin fears looming danger of youth unemployment

The Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, has expressed deep concern about the escalating issue of youth unemployment in Ghana, cautioning that this could have significant implications for the upcoming elections.

Speaking before Parliament, Speaker Bagbin emphasized the pressing need for swift and decisive action from political leaders to tackle this critical challenge.

He called for a united front to address the situation urgently, warning of severe consequences for the country if effective measures are not promptly

implemented.

"The joblessness, the homelessness and the hopelessness of the youth cannot be taken lightly. We must act together and now to prevent a journey to calamity or a journey of no return," he stated.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has reported that Ghana's youth unemployment rate was 7.16% in 2023, with a particularly acute issue among individuals aged 15 to 24.

In its updated 2024 Africa Economic Outlook, the bank highlighted that

unemployment was notably higher among women in this age group compared to men.

The report also indicated a slight increase in multidimensional poverty, rising from 46% in 2017 to 46.7% in 2022, largely attributed to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data revealed that female youth unemployment reached 36.7%, while the rate for males was 29.3%.

The rising youth unemployment in Ghana has become a growing concern, leading to calls for intensified

structural transformation.

Speaker Bagbin also urged the government to restrict the military's role in overseeing the upcoming election, emphasizing that their involvement should be limited to assisting the police only when necessary.

"We don't want to see the military during elections. When there is the need to call them, they will be called. But they should not be at polling or voting centres," he added.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Alban Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

General News

Gas shortage looms as WAPCo begins 3-week maintenance work

The West African Gas Pipeline Company Limited (WAPCo) has announced a reduction in gas volumes available for transportation to customers in Togo, Benin, and Ghana.

The company has cited ongoing maintenance works by one of its gas producers in Nigeria.

In a press release dated June 12, signed by its Director of Corporate Affairs, Isaac Adjei Doku, WAPCo revealed that one of the “producers of the natural gas WAPCo transports from Nigeria has shut down its facility for a three-week maintenance.”

The company, despite emphasizing that the current situation is beyond its control, has assured stakeholders that it will continue to transport gas from the Western Region of Ghana to Tema.

It expects normalcy to return after the maintenance activities are completed.

The announcement comes amidst concerns about the impact of the gas shortage on the affected countries’ energy supply.

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay*



WAPCo gas station

NPP Women’s Organiser exits party over discrimination

The Women’s Organiser for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Mfantseman constituency of the Central Region, Naomi Efua Acquah, has officially resigned from her position.

In a statement dated Wednesday, June 12, 2024, Madam Acquah explained that her decision

stemmed from various challenges, including intimidation, insults, segregation, discrimination, and personal reasons.

She emphasized that these issues have severely affected her health and well-being, making it impossible for her to continue in her role.

She highlighted the importance of prioritizing her health and safety, noting that the negative energy associated with her position had taken a significant toll on her.

“I appreciate the opportunities I have had to serve and empower women in our community. I am proud of the work we have done

together, and I will also hold onto the memories as samples of partisan politics,” Madam Acquah stated.

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku*



Naomi Efua Acquah, Women’s Organiser for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Mfantseman constituency of the Central Region



General News

Demolish all cattle ranches on the streets, seize animals – Local Gov't Minister orders MMDCEs

Minister for Local Government, Martin Adjei Mensah-Korsah, has issued a directive to all Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) to demolish cattle ranches found on streets and confiscate the animals.

This move addresses increasing concerns about cattle and other animals sharing road space with vehicles on major streets.

Mr. Adjei Mensah-Korsah emphasized that both the chief executives and animal owners would be held accountable if the directive is ignored.

In an interview with the media on Wednesday, June 12, the Minister stated, "When parks and gardens invest resources to enhance our medians and plant flowers to beautify the city, it's unacceptable for people to let their animals roam and destroy them for food. We cannot tolerate this behavior.

"MMDCEs, led by their CEOs, will bear the responsibility if this issue

persists. It is unacceptable to ignore the problem of people turning our ceremonial streets into grazing grounds.



Martin Adjei Mensah-Korsah, Minister for Local Government

"We urge the assemblies to take necessary actions to improve our society. They must act responsibly to make our communities better places

to live."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay

Mosquito nets are the only items awaiting clearance at Tema Port - Health Ministry

The Ministry of Health has refuted claims that the locked containers from the Global Fund at the Tema port contain essential drugs for tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS treatment.

This denial comes in response to concerns raised by health-focused Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), who warned of potential repercussions from the Global Fund if the containers are not promptly cleared.

The Ministry's Public Relations Officer, Isaac Offei Baah, clarified that the containers primarily hold mosquito nets and not medications for TB or HIV/AIDS.

"I want to put it on record that we have mosquito nets, and we don't have anything like HIV drugs or TB drugs [locked up at the port]."

"Once it is something that has been given to the people of Ghana, we are working towards getting them out and putting them to good use."

The Ministry underscored the importance of accurate information in such matters to avoid unnecessary panic and confusion.

"So for clarity sake, we don't have any HIV drugs locked up at the port that we have not cleared. All those ones were cleared somewhere last April," he said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has announced that it has received funds from the Ministry of Finance to clear about 64 Global Fund outstanding containers at the Tema Port.

In a press release issued on June 13, the Ministry stated that it had received an amount of GH¢7,429,694.39, which would enable it to handle the payment of demurrage and third-party charges for the containers.

The release indicated that the remaining containers include one containing TB medication and the rest containing mosquito nets.

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Tema port

General News

Mosquito nets are the only items awaiting clearance at Tema Port - Health Ministry

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The Ministry urged the public to exercise patience as it works to ensure the clearance and delivery of these essential commodities for the

good of public health.

This update comes in the wake of concerns raised by the Ghana Medical

Association (GMA) about a possible shortage of essential drugs by the end of June. According to the GMA, some facilities are already relying on others

for important medications.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Phoebe Martekie Doku

We will not include new taxes in 2024 mid-year budget – Finance Ministry

The Ministry of Finance has reassured the public that there are no plans to implement additional taxes on Ghanaians in the upcoming mid-year budget.

This affirmation comes in response to rumours circulating about the possibility of new taxes and concerns raised by various stakeholders regarding the substantial tax burden faced by both businesses and households.

These concerned parties are urging the government to consider reducing or eliminating some taxes to ease financial strains on businesses.

Representing the Finance Ministry, Deputy Finance Minister Dr. Alex Ampaabeng affirmed the government's stance against introducing a supplementary budget, echoing statements made by Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam.

"There are a lot of conversations

ongoing, but one thing I can say on behalf of my Minister [Dr Mohammed Amin Adam] is that there won't be new taxes in this mid-year budget. But, going forward, we are looking for all avenues to make sure that we enhance revenue.

"I believe there are a lot of opportunities within the tax system for us to rake in revenue. It's about improving efficiency. It's about dealing with leakages in the tax system, it's about engaging the

taxpayers to accept responsibilities. There are leakages, but I don't want to pre-empt anything," he said in a report on myjoyonline.com.

Dr Ampaabeng stated that while the government is not planning to introduce new taxes, the finance ministry is actively exploring alternative methods and avenues for generating revenue.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Amanda Cartey



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

General News

Only 2% of Accra's flooding issues have been resolved - Dep. Roads Minister

Despite significant investments to combat perennial flooding in Accra, only two per cent of the problem has been resolved, according to the Deputy Minister of Roads and Highways, Dr. Prince Hamid Armah,

This revelation came during a media engagement where Dr. Armah discussed the ongoing challenges and efforts to address Accra's flooding issues.

"Ghana ranks highly among African countries that are most exposed to risks from multiple weather-related hazards, especially perennial flooding," Dr. Armah noted. Accra, among other areas, has faced severe flooding during the rainy seasons over the past years, prompting both past and present governments to seek solutions with aid from the World Bank and other donors.

"If you take Greater Accra, the

intervention of the Greater Accra Resilience and Integrated Development Project (GARID) that we put in a lot of resources to be able to address the problem, we are solving only two per cent of the flooding situation in Greater Accra," Dr. Armah stated.

He emphasized the need for proper demarcation and mapping of the regional landscape, including all drainage systems, to accurately estimate the necessary budget for a comprehensive solution.

Dr. Armah also highlighted the need for additional investment, noting that the government alone cannot finance the required measures.

When asked about the allocation of the recently approved tranche of the GARID project, Dr. Armah explained that the additional \$150 million will be partially used for re-scoping the

project and settling compensations.

In May 2019, the World Bank approved a \$200 million investment for the GARID project, focusing on improving flood risk management and solid waste management in the Odaw River Basin of Greater Accra.

This initiative followed a devastating flood and fire disaster in the Odaw catchment on June 3, 2015, which tragically claimed about 150 lives.

Source: Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Flooded area

Leaked tape involving AG, Richard Jakpa admitted into evidence by court

Justice Afia Serwah Asare-Botwe, the trial judge in the ongoing ambulance case, has admitted an audio recording involving the Attorney-General and businessman Richard Jakpa as evidence.

The decision was made today, Thursday, June 13, following the mistrial application on June 6, 2024, where the recording was first introduced.

Justice Asare-Botwe noted that the reasons for admitting the recording during the mistrial application still apply, emphasizing fairness in the trial process. She stated that the pendrive containing the recording has been admitted, as it would have been if presented by the prosecution.

The controversy surrounding the recording began when lawyers representing Minority Leader Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson attempted to introduce it into evidence. The Attorney General objected, questioning its foundation and relevance.

The audio recording, pivotal in the mistrial decision, is now being tendered again by defense lawyers, who argue that it is crucial to the

charges of causing financial loss to the state against the Attorney General.

Lead counsel for Dr. Forson, Dr. Aziz Bamba, emphasized that the recording pertains to the agreement between the Ghanaian government and a subsequent Letter of Credit. He argued that the Attorney General's conduct in the recording amounts to oppression of the accused, undermining the trial process's integrity.

Dr. Bamba contended that the

recording is relevant as it suggests the case was not pursued in good faith, pointing to procedural irregularities in the Attorney General's handling of the matter.

In response, the Attorney General argued against the recording's admission, asserting that its relevance was not sufficiently supported. The AG referenced the trial judge's previous dismissal of the mistrial application, which relied on the recording, as evidence of its limited relevance to

the case.

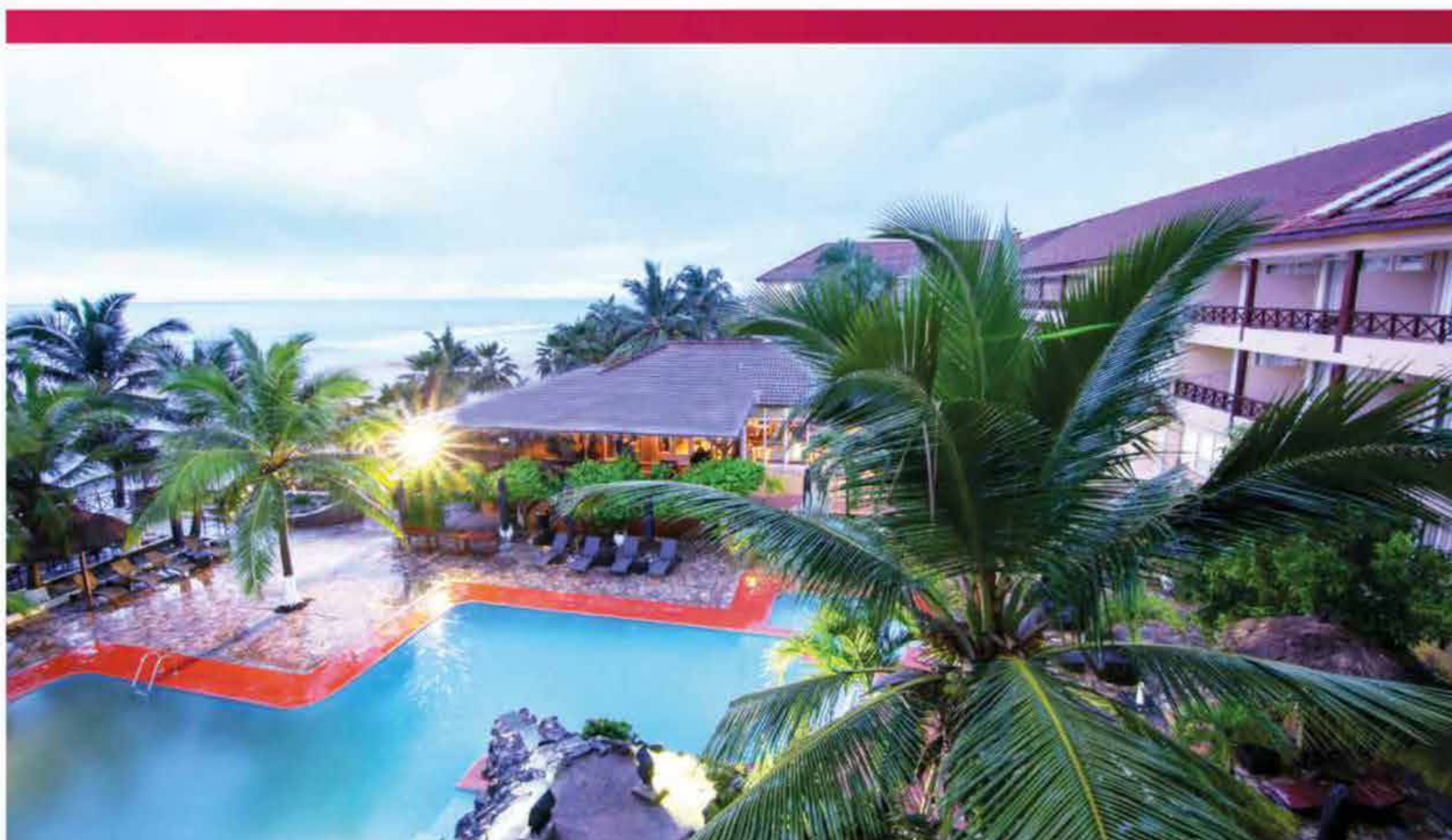
The AG further questioned whether the recording addresses the essential elements of the alleged financial loss to the state, arguing that it does not substantiate the charges against the accused.

Despite these arguments, Justice Asare-Botwe disagreed with the Attorney General and admitted the recording into evidence.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Godfred Yeboah Dame (L) and Richard Kakpa (R)



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Business

You can mine in my jurisdiction if gov't receives 50% share in profit - Dormaahene tells mining companies

Dormaahene Osagyefo Oseadeeyo Dr. Agyemang Badu II has announced plans to welcome mining companies into his traditional areas to increase employment opportunities for his people.

However, he has stipulated that he will only accept a 50% share of the profits for the government of Ghana to contribute to development.

The state's current 10% carried interest in mining operations, according to the Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GHEITI), has yielded insignificant returns over the years. GHEITI has proposed that this share be converted into mineral resources rather than dividends.

Under the current mining arrangements, private parties are

granted mineral rights, giving them the right to mine minerals in the ground, with the government entitled to a 10% equity interest in the mineral operations, even if it does not make a financial contribution.

This share is usually received as dividends, which can be limited if companies decide to channel funds into other projects.

To address this issue, GHEITI suggests converting the government's share or interest in mining contracts into minerals. This move aims to support initiatives such as the Bank of Ghana gold reserve drive and the Gold for Oil barter scheme.

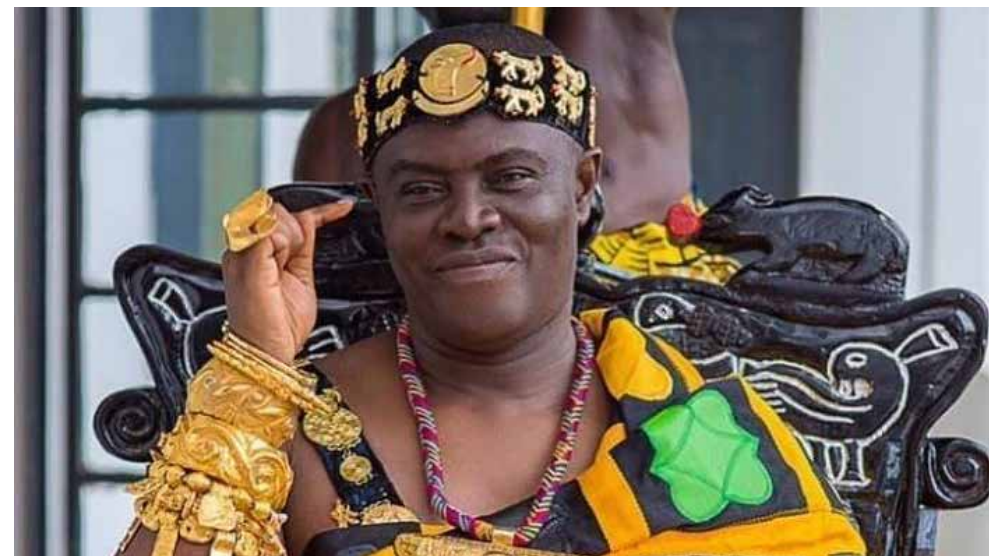
The mining and quarrying sector's share in Ghana's GDP reduced marginally from 7.8% in 2019 to 7.6% in 2020. However, it remains a significant economic activity, ranking

as the country's second-largest economic activity after retail trade at the end of 2022. Its share of GDP increased from 4.5% in 2021 to 7.6% in 2022.

Dormaahene's proposal aims to ensure that mining activities in

his areas benefit both the local communities and the government, contributing to overall development and improvement in the quality of life for his people.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Dormaahene Osagyefo Oseadeeyo Dr. Agyemang Badu II

Ghana to delay more cocoa deliveries as supply crisis worsens

The world's second-largest cocoa producer Ghana is looking to delay delivery of up to 350,000 tons of beans to next season due to poor crops, five sources told Reuters in a further worsening of the outlook for the global chocolate industry.

Chocolate makers around the world are raising prices for consumers after cocoa more than doubled in value this year alone following a third year of poor harvests in Ghana and Ivory Coast, responsible for 60% of global production.

The market had previously estimated Ghana would roll forward some 250,000 metric tons of cocoa, equivalent to about half its current crop. Cocobod, Ghana's cocoa regulator, said the country was looking to roll over "some volumes, but not in those (350,000 ton) quantities".

The country's cocoa crop has been ravaged by adverse weather, bean disease and illegal gold mining, which often displaces cocoa farms.

Ghanaian farmers are also smuggling more beans to neighbouring countries to sell them at higher prices than the state purchasing price, further eroding what little crop is available

for delivery in Ghana.

Five sources with knowledge of the matter said Ghana pre-sold some 785,000 tons worth of beans for the current 2023/24 (October-September) season, but will likely only be able to deliver some 435,000 tons.

Ghana regularly sells one year forward about 80% of its crop - which usually totals 750,000-850,000 tons.

However, its crop fell to around 670,000 tons last season and is not expected to exceed 500,000 tons this season. Traders and the industry fear it might not rebound significantly next season either.

The International Cocoa Organisation expects global cocoa production will fall 10.9% to 4.45 million tons this season.

This means processors and chocolate firms will have to draw on cocoa stocks to fully cover their needs.

Forward sales

The price rally is derailing a long-established mechanism for cocoa trade.

Authorities in Ghana use the average

of their forward sales to set the minimum price at which traders can purchase cocoa from farmers the following season.

With some 350,000 tons of forward-sold beans missing from this season's crop, Ghana is struggling with forward sales for next season, traders said. Two sources said the country has sold forward just 100,000 tons.

Sources said the 100,000 tons, like the 350,000 tons being rolled into next season, were sold at less than half of current world cocoa prices, meaning

Cocobod will struggle to increase farmer prices next season based on these sales.

Cocobod said forward sales were progressing as usual but declined to disclose volumes or prices.

Failure to raise prices will likely tempt farmers to further ramp up bean smuggling, grow other crops or sell more of their farms to gold miners, said the sources.

Source: Reuters



File photo

International

Second person dies from mpox in South Africa

A second person has died from mpox in South Africa, the health minister has announced, less than 24 hours after the country's first death from the virus was reported.

The two men, aged 37 and 38, were tested and shown to have died as a result of the virus, said minister Joe Phaahla.

Mr Phaahla said that six cases had now been recorded in the country this year - two in Gauteng, and four in KwaZulu-Natal.

They were all classed as severe and required hospitalisation.

All diagnosed men were aged between 30 and 39, who had not been to other countries experiencing an outbreak - suggesting that the disease was being transmitted locally.

Mpox, formerly called monkeypox, is a viral infection transmitted through close contact.

Initial symptoms include fever, headaches, swellings, back pain, aching muscles, which can develop into a rash.

The World Health Organization

(WHO) declared a public health emergency over an outbreak of mpox in 2022. Although this was ended last year, low levels of cases are still being reported in some countries.

"One death is too many, especially from a preventable and manageable disease," Mr Phaahla said on Wednesday, urging those with suspected symptoms to seek medical

attention and help trace contacts.

Mr Phaahla said the six diagnosed patients had pre-existing immunodeficiencies, and had contracted the disease since the start of May.

He noted that the virus has been reported in over 100 countries since 2022.

Two of those infected have been

allowed to go home, while two remain in hospital.

Anyone who came into contact with a fatality will be monitored for 21 days.

The first human case was reported in Democratic Republic of Congo in 1970, and the disease remains endemic there, according to the WHO.

Source: BBC



Joe Phaahla, Health Minister

At least 42 killed by suspected Islamists in eastern Congo

At least 42 people were killed by suspected Islamist rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu province, two officials from the local administration said on Thursday.

The attack took place on Wednesday in the village of Mayikengo in Lubero territory, the officials said.

A spokesman for Congo's army in the region confirmed the attack and said a statement would be issued later.

The attack mirrors a similar incursion earlier this week on villages in the same province attributed to the insurgents that killed at least 80 people.

Lubero administrator Alain Kiwewa said a toll of between 20 and 30 had been reported on Thursday morning, adding that

the number was provisional and expected to increase.

He blamed the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group affiliated to the Islamic State that started as a Ugandan insurgency but has operated from the jungles of eastern Congo for almost three decades.

Another local official, sector chief Macaire Sivikunula, told Reuters earlier on Thursday that 25 people were killed including six women. He also blamed the ADF.

He later added that 17 other bodies were found on a road that led to a village market.

The assailants asked residents to gather in a market for a meeting and then attacked the crowd with firearms and machetes, Sivikunula said.

Source: Reuters



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