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# General News

## Illegal connection may have caused fire outbreak at Circle – GNFS PRO

The Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) has indicated that an illegal electrical connection might have sparked the fire at the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange, commonly referred to as 'Circle,' in Accra.

This assertion was made by the Public Relations Officer of the GNFS, ADO Alex King Nartey, during an interview conducted just hours after the blaze was brought under control.

"Illegal connections could be the cause," he stated.

The fire, which erupted on the evening of Wednesday, June 5, engulfed approximately 100 wooden structures, reportedly being used as brothels.

Firefighters from the GNFS responded swiftly to the emergency, working tirelessly to extinguish the flames.

Despite facing logistical challenges, ADO Alex Nartey assured the public that the situation was under control and that the firemen were doing their utmost to manage the

incident effectively.

The inferno has resulted in significant property damage, though no casualties have been

reported at this time.

Residents and business owners in the vicinity are anxiously awaiting **the outcome of the investigation,**

*hoping to understand what led to this devastating event.*

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



File photo

## Cement prices climb to GHS108

Despite a directive from the Cement Manufacturing Development Committee in Ghana, cement prices continue to rise, causing chaos in the real estate market and driving rent prices in Accra to new highs.

Recent price checks show a notable increase from last week, leaving many buyers confused.

In May 2024, cement prices ranged from GH¢85 to GH¢90 depending on the brand and mixture. As of June 4, 2024, prices have surged to around GH¢110, according to dealers at Pokuase who spoke to GBC Ghana Online.

One dealer listed the current prices: Dzata cement (42R) is now

GH¢108, Cimaf (42R) is GH¢107, Cimaf (32R) is GH¢87, and Ghacem (42R) tops the market at GH¢110.

Other sources report Diamond cement at GH¢75 and GH¢85, while Dangote is priced between GH¢92 and GH¢94.

Minister of Trade and Industry, Kobina Tahir Hammond, recently called for an immediate rollback of these price increases to ease the burden on Ghanaians.

However, this directive seems to have been ignored, possibly due to unaddressed underlying causes of the price hikes.

In a statement dated May 15,

**- continued on page 3**



Bags of cement



# General News

## Cement prices climb to GHS108

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the Ministry urged the Cement Manufacturing Development Committee (CMDC) to enforce the price rollback without exception and ensure uniform cement prices across the nation.

The CMDC, established under the Ghana Standards Authority (Manufacture of Cement) Regulations, 2023 (LI 2480), is tasked with regulating cement production and overseeing its

wholesale and retail distribution.

The Committee comprises representatives from cement manufacturers, the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ghana Institution of Engineers,

the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation.

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

## Ghana to begin construction of its first manganese refinery in August

**M**inister of Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel Abu Jinapor, has announced that construction of Ghana's first manganese refinery will begin in August this year.

This crucial project is set to be undertaken by Ningxia Tianyuan Manganese Industry Group Company Limited, the parent company of Ghana Manganese Company (GMC).

Mr. Jinapor made this announcement during the official opening of the 17th edition of

the West African Mining and Power Conference and Exhibition (WAMPOC/WAMPEX) on Wednesday, June 5th, in Accra.

This development he believes will increase the value of Ghana's manganese resources, bolstering the country's position in the global manganese market.

"And to ensure that Ghanaians, who are, by our national Constitution, the owners of our mineral resources, benefit fully from these resources, we are putting in place measures to promote beneficiation

and value addition, as well as local content and local participation in the sector."

"We have, therefore, through a public-private partnership, constructed a 400kg capacity gold refinery to refine the gold we produce, and work on a US\$450 million manganese refinery will start in August," he said.

Meanwhile the event brought together industry leaders and stakeholders to discuss advancements and opportunities in the mining and power sectors

across West Africa.

According to Mr. Jinapor, the refinery project underscores the government's commitment to advancing the mining sector and leveraging natural resources for economic growth.

The establishment of this refinery marks a major milestone for Ghana, as it will be the country's first facility dedicated to refining manganese.

**Source : Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**



**Samuel Abu Jinapor, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources**



# General News

## Repairing damaged Tema-Mpakadan train will cost US\$2.1m – Prosecution tells Court

The prosecution in the Tema-Mpakadan train accident case has informed the court that repairing the train would exceed \$2 million.

As per the prosecution, the manufacturers of the train assessed the damage, which was valued at \$2,138,466.86.

Additionally, four more individuals were arraigned at the High Court in Accra and remanded for aiding in the unlawful damage related to the train accident at Tema-Mpakadan.

The four individuals—Kokuo Koudjo, a gas welder, Patrick Kwaku Sosu, Alaza Prosper, and Fiadugbe Emmanuel, a laborer—were charged with abetting the accident.

The Prosecution said that on the same day, the Ghana Railways Company management, along with the complainant and 28 engineers from Ghana and Poland, conducted a test run of the new DMU 001 train from Tema to Mpakadan.

She mentioned that the test run had been announced in advance, and when the train reached the Abotia area, it collided with a Hyundai Gold truck that was stuck

on the railway tracks.

Both the train and the truck were damaged.

“The train was sent to Tema for examination, while the scrap of the vehicle, which was damaged beyond repairs, was taken to the Juapong police station for further action,” she stated.

She informed the Court that on April 19, 2024, the driver, Dzidotor

Abel, was arrested and brought before the Circuit Court in Juapong, overseen by His Honour Proper Deu-love Gomashie. Abel pleaded guilty to three out of four charges.

He was then convicted and sentenced to six months in prison.

According to the 2023 World Drug Report, around 296 million individuals used drugs at least once in 2021, with about 39.5 million of them experiencing

substance use disorders (SUDs), and only 15 individuals with SUDs receiving any form of treatment.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that approximately 3.1 million people were detained worldwide in 2020 for drug-related offences, with 61 percent of these arrests being for drug possession for personal use.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Tema-Mpakadan train accident*

## Government set to purchase more dialysis machines - NHIA

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) has declared its intention to collaborate with the government in acquiring dialysis machines for selected public hospitals to improve kidney treatment services.

Dr. Aboagye DaCosta, the Chief Executive Officer of the NHIA, reaffirmed the authority's dedication to ensuring universal access to essential healthcare.

Commencing its support program for dialysis patients at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital on Monday,

June 3, the NHIA aims to extend aid to renal patients across the country.

Dr. DaCosta assured journalists of the government's clearly defined strategy to sustain the support initiative for renal patients, which may include the provision of dialysis machines in various healthcare facilities.

“It is a comprehensive one so this will even serve as a learning opportunity for us in improving what we are going to put in place

*- continued on page 5*



*Dr. Aboagye DaCosta, the Chief Executive Officer of the NHIA*

# General News

## Government set to purchase more dialysis machines - NHIA

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as a government.

Starting June 1, 2024, until December 2024, the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) has introduced a program offering eight free dialysis sessions monthly to individuals under 18 and over 60 years old suffering from kidney diseases under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

This initiative was announced by the NHIA as part of the scheme's 20th-anniversary celebrations. Dr. Da-Costa Aboagye, Acting CEO of NHIA, confirmed in a statement

that this program is a significant aspect of the anniversary activities.

To support financially challenged and vulnerable patients requiring dialysis treatments, a government allocation of GH¢2,000,000.00 has been approved by parliament, according to the NHIA's 2024 Allocation Formula.

Furthermore, NHIA has dedicated an additional GH¢2,400,000.00 from its Corporate Social Responsibility budget to back this health initiative.

"As part of NHIA's 20th Anniversary, the NHIA, through administrative

arrangements has allocated an additional GH¢2,400,000.00, under the Corporate Social Responsibility approved budget of the scheme to support this initiative," the statement said.

The projected monthly costs for patients in the specified age groups currently undergoing dialysis are estimated at GH¢329,952, with a total estimated expenditure by December 2024 reaching approximately GH¢2.3 million.

"The cost of dialysis for this treatment category is projected to be GH¢144,354 per month and

by the end of December 2024, the cumulative cost is estimated to be approximately GH¢1.01 million," it added.

Patients aged 18 to 59 at certain hospitals will receive a subsidy covering two dialysis sessions per month, excluding Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH), where patients will receive support for two sessions each month.

The subsidy will amount to GH¢982.00 monthly, with GH¢491 per session.

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku**

## Ato Forson's application for mistrial in ambulance case dismissed

High Court in Accra has dismissed an application filed by the Minority Leader Cassiel Ato Forson, seeking a mistrial and an inquiry into the conduct of the Attorney General (AG), Godfred Dame in the ongoing ambulance case.

This comes after the Minority leader on June 3, filed a supplementary affidavit supporting his motion for a mistrial, an injunction, and/or a stay of proceedings in the ambulance case against him and two others.

The judge cited the Minority leader's failure to demonstrate any statutory provisions that justify a mistrial or an inquiry into the Attorney General's conduct.

However, the lawyers of Dr Ato Forson made reference to a leaked tape which involves the AG and the third accused, Richard Jakpa.

They said that Dame attempted to coach Jakpa to implicate Dr. Ato Forson in the trial.

In their affidavit, Ato Forson's legal team argued that the Attorney General's actions constituted misconduct and called for the prosecution to be declared a mistrial.

"It has become necessary to file this affidavit in order to bring to

the attention of the Court and in the interest of justice, certain pertinent, material and relevant matters that have a bearing on the fair and just determination of the current application.

"That I say that I have since filing the instant application had the opportunity of listening to a recording widely circulating in

the media depicting the voices of the Attorney-General and A3 fervently discussing the evidence the Attorney-General will prefer the said A3 to adduce at the trial.

At the hearing of the instant application, my counsel will seek leave of the court to have the said audio recording played in open court."

The Minority Leader contends that failure to file a mistrial in such circumstances, where there appears to be a blatant disregard for the rule of law and ethical standards of prosecution the custodian of the laws, the AG, could severely undermine public confidence in the judicial process.

**Source : Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**



**Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, Minority Leader in Parliament**

# General News

## UDS Graduates demand action over delay in awarding certificates

Some graduates from the University for Development Studies, Tamale, are demanding the removal of the university's Director of Information Technology, Dr. Abdul Wahid Mohammed, and others due to delays in their graduation and certificate issuance.

The 'Concerned Students of the Sandwich Colleges of Education' group includes graduates from five Colleges of Education: Tumu College of Education, Gambaga College of Education, Saint Vincent College of Education, Dambai College of Education, McCoy College of Education, and Al-Faruq College of Education.

The group claims to have completed their programs between 2021 and 2022 but have not yet received their certificates from the University for Development Studies, which oversees these programs.

At a press conference in Walewale, the group expressed that the delay in receiving their certificates from UDS has greatly disrupted their lives.

"Our parents and guardians thought we've wasted their money and they feel scammed. They're disappointed in us, their wards and spouses', the group said, in a statement read by spokesperson

Christy Avuyem.

"Many women have lost peace in their marriages because their supporting husbands feel they have either failed their programme or wasted their money," she continued. "They [parents and guardians] cannot believe that we've completed paying the huge school fees, yet came home empty handed".

They continued by saying that the circumstances had also hampered their own development.

"We cannot seek admissions, neither can we seek promotions, and neither can we pursue higher education because of the absence of our certificates."

The dissatisfied students questioned why the University for Development Studies, known as a flagship institution in the northern region, was taking over two years to produce basic certificates. They pointed out that other universities typically organize graduation ceremonies and distribute certificates within just four months after students complete their programs.

"UDS as the premium university of the north has disappointed the north and proven to be inefficient, hence would hinder the quality of education delivery and patronage

of their services.

In contrast, they have given the university authorities a one-week deadline to promptly issue their certificates or face severe consequences.

The students cautioned that they would take drastic measures against the university if their request remained unaddressed.

Additionally, they called for the removal or resignation of the University's Director of Information Technology, Abdul Wahid Mohammed, citing alleged misconduct detrimental to students.

"He happens to be unconcerned about our well-being and refuses to attend to our issues even when we visit the school. Another officer,

Mr Sammy at the office of the Students Data System Unit, who has failed to authorize the printing of our certificates, we call for his removal. He doesn't deserve to be in that office."

They also criticized the Director for Distance and Continuing Education, Dr. Cecilia Alimatu Issaka, and the University's Vice Chancellor, Prof Seidu Al-Hassan, for displaying significant apathy towards their situation.

Additionally, the students urged the National Accreditation Board and the Ministry of Education to actively involve themselves in the issue to facilitate a peaceful resolution.

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



UDS Graduation

## Stop acting as NDC PC for Amenfi Central - Court orders Joana Cudjoe Gyan

The High Court in Sekondi, Western region, has issued an injunction against Joana Cudjoe Gyan, barring her from presenting herself as the elected parliamentary candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Amenfi Central constituency.

This decision follows accusations that she forged her voter's ID and NDC party card.

The court, led by Justice G. K. Gyan-

Kontoh, also ordered the NDC, the second defendant, to refrain from acknowledging or engaging with Joana Cudjoe Gyan as the legitimate NDC parliamentary candidate for Amenfi Central.

The injunction requires the applicants to agree to compensate the respondent for damages if it is later found that the injunction was not warranted.

The five applicants; Gyedu - *continued on page 7*



Joana Cudjoe Gyan



# General News

## Stop acting as NDC PC for Amenfi Central - Court orders Joana Cudjoe Gyan

- Continued from page 6

Frimpong, Akubilla Daniel, Wnock Ntiamoh, Isaac Twum, and Doris Aidoo have filed a lawsuit against Joana Cudjoe, the NDC, and the Electoral Commission (EC).

The court's order states: "It is hereby ordered that, until the final determination of the matter, the affected parties are restrained as

follows:

The first defendant/respondent is prohibited from holding herself out as the duly elected NDC parliamentary candidate for the Amenfi Central Constituency.

The second and third defendants/respondents, their agents, and

officers are prohibited from recognizing, dealing with, or granting any rights or privileges to the first defendant/respondent as the duly elected NDC Parliamentary Candidate for the Amenfi Central Constituency," the court declared.

"It is further ordered that the

applicants shall file an undertaking to pay damages by way of compensation to the respondent if it turns out that the applicants are, in fact, not entitled to the injunction as required," the court mandated.

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku**

## Govt's Green Ghana Day initiative breeds corrupt procurement practices – Suhuyini

Deputy Ranking Member of Parliament's Lands and Forestry Committee, Alhassan Suhuyini, has raised concerns about the government's Green Ghana Day initiative, criticizing it for being vulnerable to procurement irregularities.

The Tamale North legislator expressed disappointment that the initiative has not significantly increased Ghana's forest cover, despite its noble intentions.

While acknowledging the good intentions behind the initiative, Suhuyini pointed out its flawed approach, which he believes lacks transparency and fails to make a substantial environmental impact.

He highlighted the need for the initiative to be linked to the establishment of natural reserves and effective management and conservation of forest reserves to address the degradation of Ghana's forests and green spaces.

"While the intention behind the government initiative under the Green Ghana project remains noble, we believe that the approach is inadequate, not transparent and falls short of making a significant impact on the environment because the campaign is not linked to the creation of natural reserves and the overall effective management and conservation of forest reserves.

"It is worse that our forests and green spaces have been so compromised due to the government's unwillingness to defeat illegal mining and its

reckless policies; such as the self-serving declassification of Forest Reserves and sale of same lands to private developers and cronies. Eg Achimota Forests and Tamale Timber Market and the promotion of legislation on mining in Forest Reserves. Eg EPA LI2462."

Mr Suhuyini criticized the government for failing to address illegal mining and implementing policies that favor land declassification and sale to private interests, which further exacerbates deforestation.

He emphasized that simply planting seedlings once a year is insufficient to combat deforestation and climate change,

especially considering the alleged corrupt procurement practices associated with the initiative.

Suhuyini urged the government to reassess its approach to the Green Ghana Project, advocating for a more sustainable, long-term strategy for reforestation.

He emphasized the importance of continuous, transparent efforts throughout the year, coupled with robust monitoring and evaluation, to achieve meaningful results in environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

"The last couple of years have proven that planting millions of seedlings only once a year is not enough to combat deforestation

and address the challenges of climate change.

"It only creates the conditions for corrupt procurements; a scheme where seedlings supply contracts, printing paraphernalia are offered to cronies without competitive bidding, at inflated prices, thus, burdening the Forestry Commission with mounting debts.

"According to the Seedlings Contractors Association in Ashanti Region last year, 2023, the government owed them GH¢28 million for 2021 and 2022 seedling supplies."

**Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku**



**Alhassan Suhuyini, Deputy Ranking Member of Parliament's Lands and Forestry Committee**

# General News

## There is no evidence that audio recording between Jakpa and AG can endanger a fair trial – Court rules

The High Court in Accra has ruled that the secret audio recording between Attorney-General Godfred Yeboah Dame and Richard Jakpa does not endanger a fair trial in the ongoing ambulance case involving Minority Leader Cassiel Ato Forson.

The court admitted the secret recording but found no basis to conclude that the conversation would prejudice the trial's outcome. It also found that the alleged statements implicating Ato Forson did not come from the Attorney-General.

The judge focused on whether the conversation posed a real threat to the fairness of the trial and concluded it did not.

The court stated, "The most important factor in this case

is whether fair trial has been endangered or prejudiced. Is there any evidence that the conversation between the parties can reasonably endanger a fair trial? Judge says no."

Dr. Ato Forson had submitted a supplementary affidavit, citing the leaked recording as evidence of misconduct by the Attorney-General.

His legal team argued that the recording, where the Attorney-General allegedly coached Jakpa to implicate Ato Forson, warranted a mistrial.

They insisted, "It has become necessary to file this affidavit in order to bring to the attention of the Court and in the interest of justice, certain pertinent, material, and relevant matters that have

a bearing on the fair and just determination of the current application."

However, the court dismissed the application, stating that there was no statute supporting a mistrial in this context. The judge emphasized that mistrials are relevant only in jury trials, not in summary trials like this one.

"Court has no jurisdiction to undertake an enquiry into the conduct of the Attorney-General. Jurisdiction in criminal proceedings must be implied. It cannot be inferred. It must be by law. There is no such law. On the invitation of A1 for the Court to order a mistrial. Court says it does not apply in summary trials. It applies only in jury trials. Applicant did not refer the court to any

authority in Ghana or anywhere for a mistrial in summary trials. On the contrary, the Respondent rightly, as stated by the judge, referred the court to a Ghanaian case. None of the grounds for a mistrial exists in this case."

The judge also noted the long duration of the trial, questioning how a recent alleged interference could justify halting proceedings that have been ongoing for over three years.

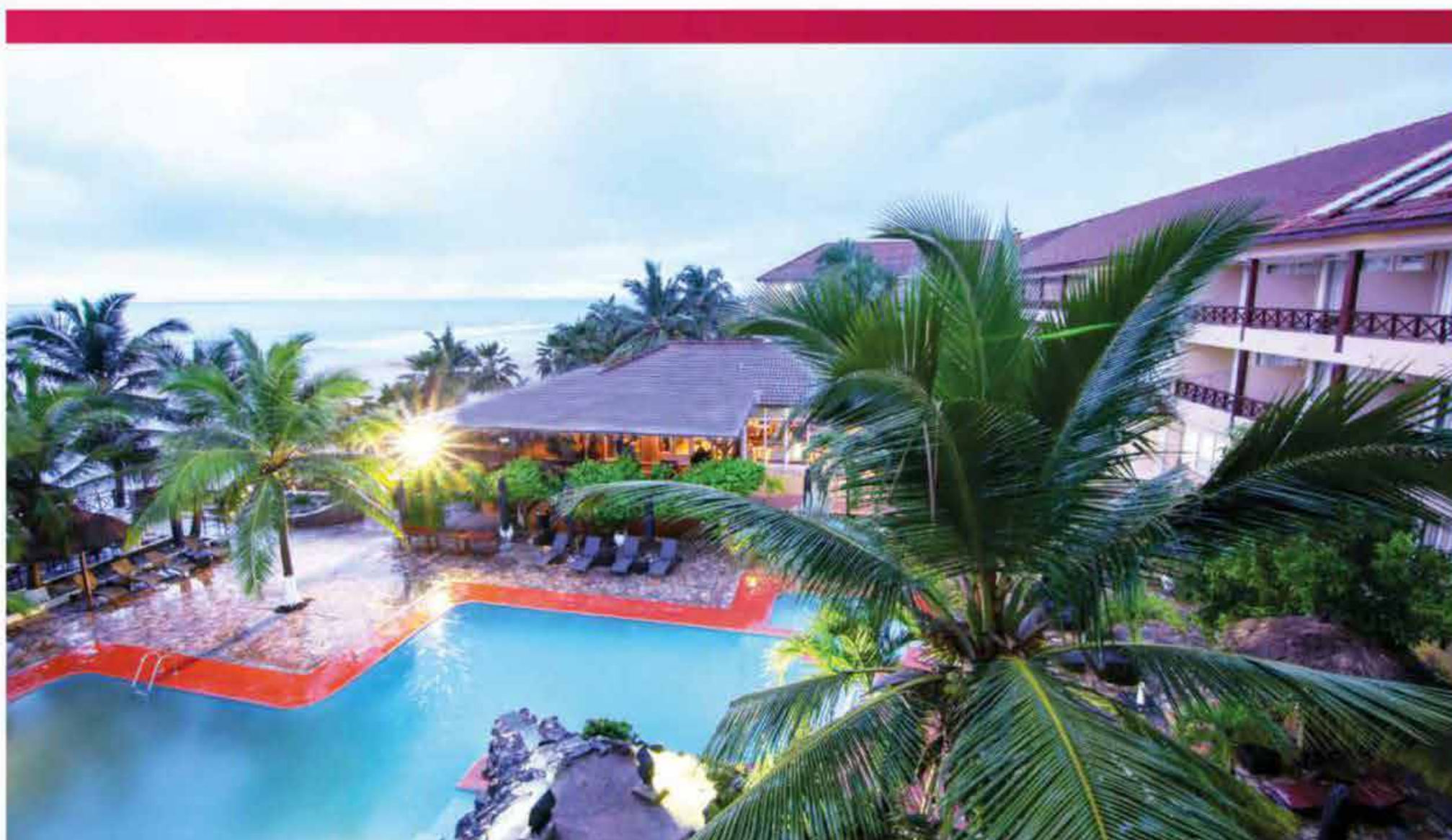
The ruling ensures that the trial will continue without interruption, maintaining that the judicial process remains fair and unprejudiced.

**Source: The Independent Ghana**



Godfred Yeboah Dame, Attorney-General (L) and Minority Leader Cassiel Ato Forson (R)





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# Business

## Gold exports in 2023 surge to \$7.60bn, crude oil, cocoa, timber exports decline – BOG

**G**old exports reached \$7.60 billion in 2023 marking a 15.0% increase compared to the previous year.

This growth is primarily attributed to a 9.2% rise in export volume and a 5.4% increase in the average realised price.

According to the 2024 Bank of Ghana Annual Report, the surge in export volume was fueled by enhanced gold production, notably from the Newmont Ahafo Mine expansion, resumed operations at AngloGold Ashanti Obuasi Mine, and higher contributions from small-scale miners, as outlined in the 2024 Bank of Ghana Annual Report.

The average realised price for gold in 2023 stood at \$1,843.13 per fine ounce.

On the other hand, crude oil exports experienced a significant decline of

39.3% in 2023, with earnings totaling \$3.84 billion, down by 29.3% from the \$5.43 billion recorded in 2022.

This drop in earnings was influenced by reduced prices and export volumes.

Export volumes decreased by 13.4% year-on-year to 46.9 million barrels, primarily due to decreased production from the Jubilee and TEN fields. The average realised price also fell by 18.4% to \$81.78 per barrel.

Cocoa exports saw an 8.4% decline, with total earnings amounting to \$2.12 billion in 2023, lower than the earnings in 2022.

Cocoa beans exports specifically reached \$1.31 billion by the end of December 2023, 1.1% lower than in 2022, mainly due to a 0.2% price drop and a 0.9% decrease in export volumes.

The average price and volume of

exports for cocoa beans settled at \$2,465.47 per tonne and 533,056.34 tonnes, respectively.

Meanwhile, cocoa products' average price increased by 7.1% to \$3,289.39 per tonne, but volume dropped by 23.8% to 240,896.35 tonnes, resulting in an 18.4% decrease in earnings to \$792.40 million.

Timber export receipts declined by

11.7% to \$142.55 million by the end of December 2023, mainly due to a 15.5% reduction in volume to 290,306.26 cubic meters.

Nonetheless, the average realised price per cubic metre of timber increased to \$491.02 in 2023 from \$469.99 in 2022.

*Source : Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay*



*File photo*



## Fuel price hikes caused by adjustment in UPPF margin - COPEC

**T**he Chamber of Petroleum Consumers Ghana (COPEC) has expressed disappointment with the National Petroleum Authority (NPA) for raising the Unified Petroleum Price Fund (UPPF) margin.

This decision has resulted in a domino effect on fuel prices at gas stations, adding to the burden on the public.

The NPA issued a circular instructing industry players to raise the UPPF margin by GH¢0.05 per litre of fuel in the Price Build Up for petroleum products starting from June 1, 2024.

As a result, petrol and diesel prices climbed to GH¢14.84 per litre at some service stations on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

Executive Secretary of COPEC, Duncan Amoah, reacted to this development, stating that consumers are already struggling with high fuel prices due to currency depreciation.

He criticised the decision to increase the margin, emphasising that it adds to the financial pressure on

consumers when prices should ideally be reduced.

“These things simply continue to add onto the pressure that fuel prices continue to face in the country. It is quite unfortunate that we continue to add on at a time that we should be thinking of reducing prices for our people. Prices simply would end up going up because we have done an increase in some of the margins just a few days ago, not good enough”, he said.

Amoah also highlighted that global crude oil prices have significantly dropped recently, suggesting that fuel prices should have decreased accordingly.

He argued against passing on costs to consumers, mentioning that the UPPF margin has doubled from around 45 pesewas per litre to 90 pesewas per litre, eroding potential consumer benefits.

“Indeed fuel prices should have declined in the last window and this window. The cedi’s performance has been largely blamed for the prices still

being where they are and very high. UPPF used to be around 45 pesewas a litre but unfortunately we’ve had to increase it and increase it. Currently we’ve also adjusted it to now 90 pesewas a litre”, he lamented.

Some oil marketing companies have already raised prices at the pumps, with Shell selling petrol and diesel at GH¢14.84 per litre.

GOIL, on the other hand, is selling petrol at GH¢14.60 (up from GH¢14.55) and diesel at GH¢14.75 (up from GH¢14.70), attributing the adjustment to the increased UPPF margin.

Without the margin increase, prices would have remained unchanged, according to industry insiders.

*Source : Independent Ghana*



*File photo*



# International

## At least 150 villagers feared dead in Sudan massacre

**A**t least 150 people are feared dead in a massacre in a village in central Sudan blamed on the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the paramilitary group fighting the army.

The rivals have been battling over control of the country for more than 13 months.

The RSF has not commented on the accusations, but on Thursday boasted of attacking two army positions.

Footage circulating on social media after Wednesday's raid showed dozens of bodies wrapped in white shrouds prepared for burial in Wad al-Nourah in Gezira state.

That video was filmed by activists from a neighbourhood resistance committee, part of a network of local groups across the country which back a return to civilian rule.

The Madani Resistance Committee said it was now "waiting for a confirmed toll of the dead and injured".

The circumstances of the killings remain unclear - it is alleged the village was attacked twice by the RSF fighters on Wednesday.

Hafiz Mohamad, from leading human rights group Justice Africa Sudan, has told the BBC that many more people are still missing but that it was "difficult to count all the dead" because "RSF elements are still around the area looting".

Sudan's military government has called for international condemnation of the Wad al-Nourah attack.

The RSF took control of Gezira state, to the south of the capital, Khartoum, in December and has been accused of carrying out numerous abuses against civilians there - which it denies.

Meanwhile, intense battles continue between the RSF and military in El Fasher, a city in Darfur in the west of the country.

Across the country, more than 15,000 people are estimated to have been killed since the conflict

started in April 2023.

Several rounds of peace talks have failed to end the war, which began when the two generals leading the army and RSF fell out.

UN agencies say the fighting has sparked the world's largest displacement crisis and that millions are facing a hunger catastrophe as a result.

Martin Griffiths, the UN's under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, said this week that up to five

million people were highly likely to be at risk of famine.

"I don't think we've ever had this kind of number at risk of famine," he said, adding that "this was an avoidable conflict."

"It is a place where two men decided that they were going to resolve their differences through fighting and take their country down," said Mr Griffiths.

**Source: BBC**



**Sudan's most iconic street market destroyed**

## Opening of new mines boosts Ivory Coast 2023 gold output

**I**vory Coast's gold output hit a record high in 2023, helped by the opening of new mines, and will continue to grow further, mines minister Mamadou Sangafowa Coulibaly said on Thursday.

Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer, is seeking to develop its long-neglected mining sector to diversify its sources of income.

Gold output has been climbing steadily for several years and is expected to reach 56 metric tons this year, Coulibaly told reporters at a press conference.

Last year, it rose to 51 tons, up over 6% from 48 tons in 2022. Mining companies operating in Ivory Coast include Barrick Gold (ABX.TO), Endeavour (EDV.AX), and Perseus mining (PRU.AX).

In September, Canada's Roxgold (FVI.

TO) opened its gold mine in the north-western region, aiming to produce about 130,000 ounces of gold per year.

Barrick Gold said in July that its Tongon mine, whose output was expected to rise above 200,000 ounces of gold in 2023, would continue operating until at least 2030 following a significant discovery of new deposits.

At the meeting with reporters, Coulibaly also said that two electricity generating units with a capacity of 488 MW were shut down, forcing the country to reduce its power exports to neighbouring countries.

Ivory Coast's total electricity capacity is currently 2,907 MW, he said, adding that by 2030 the country will become a net oil exporter, without providing any figures.

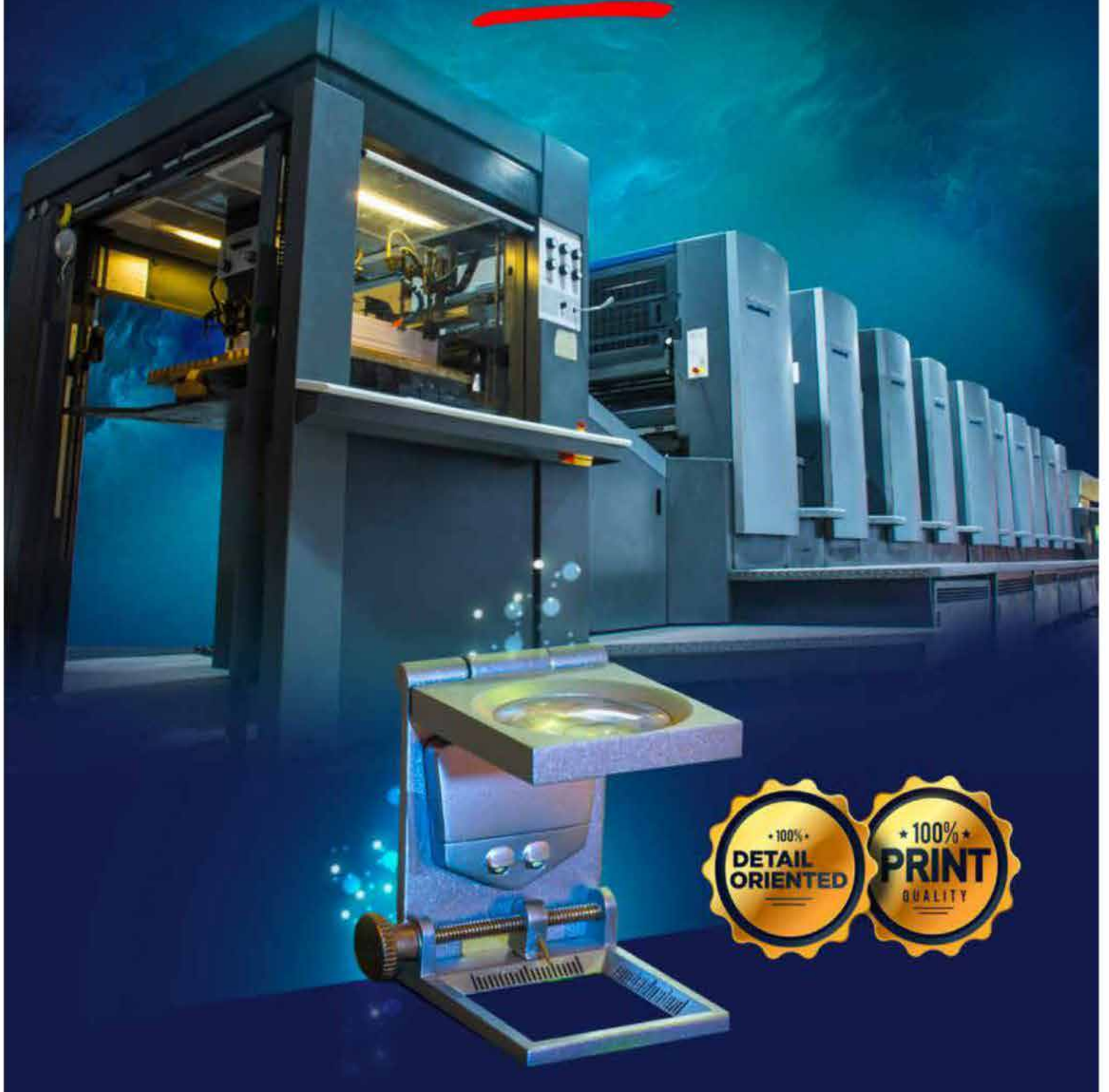
**Source: Reuters**



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