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General News

More infants contracting HIV despite PMTCT initiative - NACP

The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) has noted an increase in mother-to-child HIV infections despite efforts under the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) initiative.

NACP Programme Manager, Dr. Stephen Ayisi-Addo, attributed this rise to insufficient testing and poor medication adherence among pregnant women, leading to continued transmission from mothers to their babies.

During the 2023 dissemination of National HIV estimates, Dr. Ayisi-Addo expressed concern over persistent cases of newborns contracting HIV from their mothers.

The PMTCT initiative, spearheaded by NACP, the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC), and other partners, aims to halt HIV transmission from mothers to babies. As part of this initiative, pregnant women undergo HIV testing during antenatal care visits, and those testing positive receive medication to protect their infants.

National HIV estimates reveal that 12,108 mothers aged 15 to 49 are receiving PMTCT treatment, while 13,445 mothers in the same age group require it.

Dr. Ayisi-Addo highlighted that many newborns acquiring HIV are born to mothers who missed HIV testing during antenatal care visits. He stressed the need to expand testing coverage, stating, "We are

talking covering about 90 per cent of all ANC attendance for HIV testing, so those who come in late do not get the treatment to prevent the mother from transmission to the baby.

"We need to be able to improve the ANC testing coverage. We need to improve so that people will have supervised delivery on their routine services offered when pregnant women come to the facility," he added.

He also underscored poor medication adherence among HIV-positive mothers as a contributor to mother-to-child transmission. Despite testing and diagnosis, not all mothers receive essential antiretroviral therapy.

Moreover, only 730 out of approximately 6,000 PMTCT facilities provide antiretroviral drugs. Pregnant women in facilities without PMTCT services often face referral challenges due to transportation issues, leading many to decline referrals. To address this, NACP plans to decentralize antiretroviral therapy.

Concerns persist over postnatal transmission via breastfeeding. The national response has established stringent infant feeding guidelines for HIV-positive mothers to prevent transmission, yet compliance remains low due to inadequate training of healthcare providers.

Dr. Ayisi-Addo reaffirmed the

program's commitment to reducing mother-to-child transmission to the elimination target of 2%.

Dr. Stephen Atuahene, Director General of the GAC, emphasized the critical role of strict treatment adherence in viral suppression to prevent perinatal transmission.

He urged HIV-positive women to achieve and maintain viral suppression before and during pregnancy, stating, "It is also the responsibility of the mother to adhere to treatment, maintain viral suppression status and avoid

transmission.

"As long as you can do that, you have a better chance of averting transmission to your baby, and so adherence is very crucial to all persons living with HIV and taking the medication. This is so important for mothers because every woman will want to have a healthy baby, and therefore you have to avoid any risk that will expose your child to infection."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe.M.Doku



File photo

2024 election victory will not come from the court - NDC

General-Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Fiiifi Fiavi Kwetey, has affirmed the party's determination to secure victory in the upcoming 2024 general election through grassroots mobilisation rather than relying on legal challenges.

In an interview with the Daily Graphic, Mr Kwetey emphasised the NDC's strategy to harness the skills of dedicated party members, particularly well-trained polling agents who are committed to upholding integrity and resisting bribery during the electoral process.

"We are not depending on the courts this time around," Kwetey stated, echoing sentiments expressed by the party's flag bearer, John Dramani Mahama.

"Our approach is to deploy competent polling agents and ensure meticulous result collation at every level of the party machinery."

He called for the Electoral Commission (EC) to uphold neutrality and oversee a transparent electoral process that allows Ghanaians to freely choose their

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Fiiifi Fiavi Kwetey, General-Secretary of the NDC



General News

2024 election victory will not come from the court - NDC

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leaders without bias toward any political party.

"The role of the EC is to ensure fairness, not to influence election outcomes," Kwetey emphasised. "They must assure Ghanaians of their impartiality and refrain from actions that could favour any party's electoral prospects."

Highlighting the stakes of the upcoming elections, Kwetey framed it as a pivotal moment for Ghana's future, urging unity among party members and voters alike.

"This election is not just about the NDC; it's a battle for the soul and future of our country," he asserted. "We must unite to remove the current

administration, which we accuse of economic mismanagement, corruption, and other malpractices."

Kwetey stressed the importance of prioritising national interests over personal agendas, urging unwavering loyalty to both the party and the nation.

"This is the time for unity and steadfast loyalty," he concluded.

"We must place the greater good of our party and country above individual ambitions as we work towards a decisive victory."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey

School Feeding caterers paid first-term arrears

The Government of Ghana has announced the fulfilment of its commitment to caterers under the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) by clearing all arrears for the first term of the 2023/2024 academic year.

This payment, facilitated through the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, encompasses all 16 regions of the nation.

In a statement released on Monday,

July 1, the GSFP detailed that the academic term commenced on October 3, 2023, and comprised 58 official cooking days.

However, the initial four days from October 3 to October 6 were designated for the cleaning of kitchen environments, as per instructions to the caterers.

Consequently, the caterers provided meals for a total of 54 days during this term.

The caterers have been compensated at a rate of GH¢1.20 per child for each school day they served meals.

The National Secretariat of the GSFP has highlighted that the payments were meticulously calculated based on the actual number of days meals were served to students, ensuring transparency and precision in the disbursement process.

Siiba Alfa, Head of Public

Relations, signed the statement, acknowledging the patience and dedication of the caterers amid the delays in the payment process.

"We recognize the endurance and selfless service of our cherished caterers, who continue to provide for our children under challenging circumstances," Alfa stated.

Source: The Independent Ghana



School feeding program

General News

Committee divided as Atta Akyea allegedly distances himself from leaked IGP tape report

The Committee investigating allegations against Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. George Akuffo Dampare is reportedly divided over their final report, according to sources.

Chairman Samuel Atta Akyea, who is also the MP for Abuakwa South, has allegedly distanced himself from the widely circulated report, stating it lacks his signature, indicating he was not consulted on its conclusions.

Sources indicate that Atta Akyea is unhappy with the committee's decision not to call additional witnesses to support allegations, especially concerning supposed extrajudicial killings under Dr. Dampare's supervision. One such case includes the death of Albert Donkor in Nkoranza, which had sparked public outrage and protests.

The absence of the chairman's signature on the report caused a delay in presenting it to Parliament on June 18, 2024, by Majority Chief Whip Frank Annoh Dompoh. In response, Atta Akyea plans to present his own report, highlighting his dissenting views, and has authorised Kennedy Agyapong to lay the report on his behalf.

Excerpts from the report reveal that two police officers, Superintendent George Lysander Asare and Superintendent Emmanuel Gyebi, were found to have lied under oath during their testimonies before the committee.

The report states: "Supt Gyebi, during his testimony under oath on August 31, 2023, denied ever speaking directly to Chief Bugri Naabu on his phone or on the phone of Supt Asare. However, when he appeared before the

committee again on October 10, 2023, he changed his earlier testimony and affirmed that he indeed spoke to Chief Bugri Naabu on the phone."

The report quoted Supt Gyebi as follows: "And the question I quote 'have you ever spoken to someone on Supt Asare's phone who claims to be Bugri Naabu?' And the answer I gave is incorrect. I answered no, and I want to change it to yes."

Regarding Superintendent Asare, the report noted that he falsely denied being present during a phone conversation between Supt Gyebi and Chief Bugri Naabu, a former Regional Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) central to the leaked tape.

"Supt Asare also, in answering a question under oath posed by Hon. Peter Lanchene Toobu on

September 4, 2023, on whether he was present when Chief Bugri Naabu spoke to Supt Eric Emmanuel Gyebi on the phone, responded in the negative. However, he changed his initial response to this question to the affirmative when he appeared before the Committee on October 10, 2023."

He is also quoted as saying, "Hon. Chairman, I want to change my answer to 'I was there when they spoke' because at that time the question was not all that straightforward."

The committee determined that the officers were in contempt of Parliament under Order 30 of the Standing Orders of Parliament (2000), as amended by Order 31 (f) of the Standing Orders of Parliament (2024).

Source: The Independent Ghana



Kobina Tahir Hammond, Minister for Trade and Industry



General News

It's false, Dan Botwe hasn't resigned from Bawumia's campaign team - Krobea Asante

Head of New Media for the Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia campaign, Krobea Kwabena Asante, has rebutted claims regarding Hon. Daniel Kwaku Botwe's, resignation as Chairman of the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Dr Mahamudu Bawumia's campaign team.

He labelled the reports as false and urged the public to disregard them.

Taking to social media, Mr Asante clarified that the Member of Parliament for Okere constituency in the Eastern Region of Ghana, Hon. Dan Botwe, continues to hold his position as campaign chairman.

He stressed that Mr Botwe is not the Campaign Manager and urged the public to dismiss what he termed as inaccurate information.

He added that Mr. Botwe is actively involved in the campaign to secure Dr. Bawumia's victory on December 7.

"Hon. Dan Botwe is not the Campaign Manager for him to resign as the Campaign Manager. He is the Campaign Chairman and

has not resigned. Ignore that fake news," Krobea Kwabena Asante clarified.

Earlier this year, the NPP announced its campaign team for the 2024 elections, led by flagbearer Dr. Mahamudu

Bawumia.

It added that Dr. Bawumia will serve as the Campaign Chairman of the overall coordinating committee, with Dan Botwe appointed as the Campaign Strategist.

Dr. Gideon Boako has been designated as the party's spokesperson for the 2024 campaign, and Dennis Edward Aboagye will serve as the Director of Communications.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Diana Asonaba Dapaah, Deputy Attorney General

2024 elections likely to impact Ghana's economic recovery programme - IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has expressed concerns about potential risks posed by Ghana's upcoming general elections in December 2024, which could impact the gains achieved under its program with the country.

The IMF emphasized the importance of maintaining progress in domestic revenue mobilization and tightening expenditure controls to prevent any policy setbacks ahead of the elections.

Despite these concerns, the IMF noted Ghana's overall strong performance under the program, meeting quantitative targets and implementing structural reforms

aimed at enhancing economic resilience and improving public finances.

The IMF also praised Ghana for measures taken to stabilize inflation and bolster foreign reserves.

"These efforts should be supported by continued progress in improving tax administration, strengthening expenditure control and management of arrears, enhancing fiscal rules and institutions", the IMF advised.

The IMF however stated that despite the elections-related concerns, "Ghana's performance under the

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IMF



General News

2024 elections likely to impact Ghana's economic recovery programme - IMF

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programme has been generally strong, both in terms of meeting the quantitative objectives (for example on budgetary performance), and also in implementing structural reforms”.

The statement said the reforms are aimed at making the economy

more resilient, ensuring a lasting improvement in public finances, and laying the foundations for stronger and more inclusive growth.

“The authorities have so far demonstrated a strong commitment to the programme objectives, and we welcome Finance Minister Adam’s

signaling of the government’s continued commitment to the policies under the programme”.

The Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, Gita Gopinath in a statement praised the government and the Bank of Ghana on decisive steps that have been taken to contain inflation

and rebuild foreign reserve buffers.

She however stated that maintaining an appropriately tight monetary stance and enhancing exchange rate flexibility are important.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay

Western Regional fishermen ‘cry’ over insufficient govt support during closed season

Some fishermen in the Western Region have voiced their concerns about the insufficient support and a lack of premix fuel before the closed fishing season.

This comes after the 2024 closed fishing season was announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Hawa Koomson on July 1, 2024 at an event in Dixcove, Western Region.

The government provides the fishermen with a bag of rice according to them and this they protest is not enough to sustain them.

Hence they have called on the government to provide financial aid to alleviate the hardships during the ban.

“The one bag of rice they are bringing would not be enough for a family of four or more without money.

How are we going to cope with this?

So, the government should rather put in place proper financial support for each fisherman because the fishing industry is the major source of livelihood in their Ahanta Area,” one of them said on behalf of

the rest.

Meanwhile, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Hawa Koomson, has given a stern warning to fishermen as the closed fishing season begins.

This period is vital for allowing fish stocks to replenish and sustain the country’s marine resources.

At an event in Dixcove, Western Region, on July 1, Koomson emphasised the imposition of severe penalties for those who violate fishing regulations.

“It has come to my notice that some

fisherfolks are planning to land their fish at the Togo border during the closed season.

Therefore, kindly be warned that they will be apprehended and charged if they go ahead with their intention.

Furthermore, there shall be no use of monofilament nets and any unauthorised fishing gear after the opening of the season,” she stated.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Hawa Koomson, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development

General News

US establishes ICT facility in northern Ghana for 1,700 students

The United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has inaugurated an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) centre in the Nanton District of the Northern Region.

This initiative aims to enhance education quality in the area by providing essential teaching and learning resources.

The newly established ICT centre, the first of its kind in the district, is set to benefit more than 1,700 students across six schools.

Housed in a facility donated by the Haira Excellence Academy, the centre received substantial support from private sector partner IPMC Ghana, which contributed 21 laptop computers along with necessary accessories and audiovisual literacy instruction materials.

In addition to the ICT centre, USAID has facilitated a significant donation of teaching and learning materials to bolster educational outcomes in the region.

These materials include English teacher guides, read-aloud compendiums, supplementary readers, student textbooks and workbooks, flash cards, and alphabet charts and cards.

Deputy Education Minister, Rev. Ntim Fordjour at the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) centre in the Nanton District of the Northern Region

The agency allocated \$70,000 (equivalent to over one million Ghanaian Cedis) for printing and distribution, benefiting 154 low-fee private schools across 13 districts in the Northern, North East, Upper East, and Upper West Regions.

During the commissioning

ceremony, U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Rolf Olson, emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts between the private sector, government entities, and educational institutions in enhancing education quality.

He highlighted that the ICT centre and educational materials are outcomes of these partnerships, aimed at improving teaching standards and promoting educational access in underserved communities.

The ICT centre and educational material donations are integral components of the USAID Advancing Partnerships for Improved Learning (APIL) Activity.

This initiative supports over 200 low-fee private schools in northern Ghana, aiming to provide quality education opportunities for children in marginalised areas.

Olson underscored the United

States' commitment to Ghana's education sector, emphasising its role in fostering economic development, reducing poverty, and promoting social cohesion through quality education.

He noted that quality education enhances opportunities for decent work, income generation, and overall well-being among citizens.

The United States remains Ghana's largest bilateral development partner, with substantial support provided through USAID in sectors such as education, health, economic growth, and agriculture.

In 2023 alone, development assistance from USAID to Ghana exceeded \$140 million, underscoring ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable development and prosperity in the country.

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*



Deputy Education Minister, Rev. Ntim Fordjour (L) together with U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Rolf Olson (R)



General News

Free SHS bill hasn't been subjected to rigorous stakeholder consultation – Apaak

The Minority in Parliament has voiced disappointment over what it perceives as inadequate stakeholder consultation regarding the upcoming Free Senior High School (SHS) Bill, slated for debate in Cabinet this week.

The bill, currently being formulated by the Ministry of Education (MoE), aims to establish legal provisions for free and compulsory education at the senior high school level.

Announced last Friday by the Minister of Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, the bill includes proposals to extend secondary education to six years by integrating Junior High School (JHS) into the secondary school system.

Additionally, it proposes to modify the role of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), transforming it from an admission requirement to a tool for school selection.

However, concerns have been raised by stakeholders, including education think tank Africa Education Watch, which stated it was not consulted during the bill's drafting process.

This lack of consultation has

sparked apprehension about the inclusiveness and thoroughness of the bill's development.

In an interview with the media, July 1, Deputy Ranking Member of Parliament's Education Committee, Dr. Clement Apaak, expressed disappointment over the absence of stakeholder engagement in the bill's formulation.

"It is unfortunate that such a bill has not been subjected to rigorous stakeholder consultation and inputs. I think that is most unfortunate, even as we wait to see the bill and examine its content in full so that we can see whether it meets the requirements that we all expected or not," Dr. Apaak remarked.

He emphasised the significance of involving all relevant parties to ensure that the Free SHS Bill addresses the diverse needs and concerns within the education sector effectively.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Dr Clement Apaak, Deputy Ranking Member on the Education Committee

Finance Minister to address parliament about expenditure on National Cathedral today

The Minister for Finance, Dr Mohammed Amin Adam, is scheduled to appear before Parliament on Wednesday, July 3, to address an urgent question from Deputy Majority Leader Patricia Appiagyei about expenditures related to the National Cathedral project.

Majority Leader Alexander Afenyo-Markin has confirmed that the Minister will be asked about the financial specifics of the National Cathedral project and whether a value-for-money audit has been conducted.

Deputy Majority Leader Appiagyei has highlighted the significance of the Minister's appearance to ensure transparency in the use of public funds for the National Cathedral.

The Finance Minister is expected

to provide detailed information on the project's finances and clarify if a value-for-money audit has been performed, aiming to ensure accountability and transparency.

Majority Leader Afenyo-Markin made these announcements on the floor of Parliament on Friday, June 28.

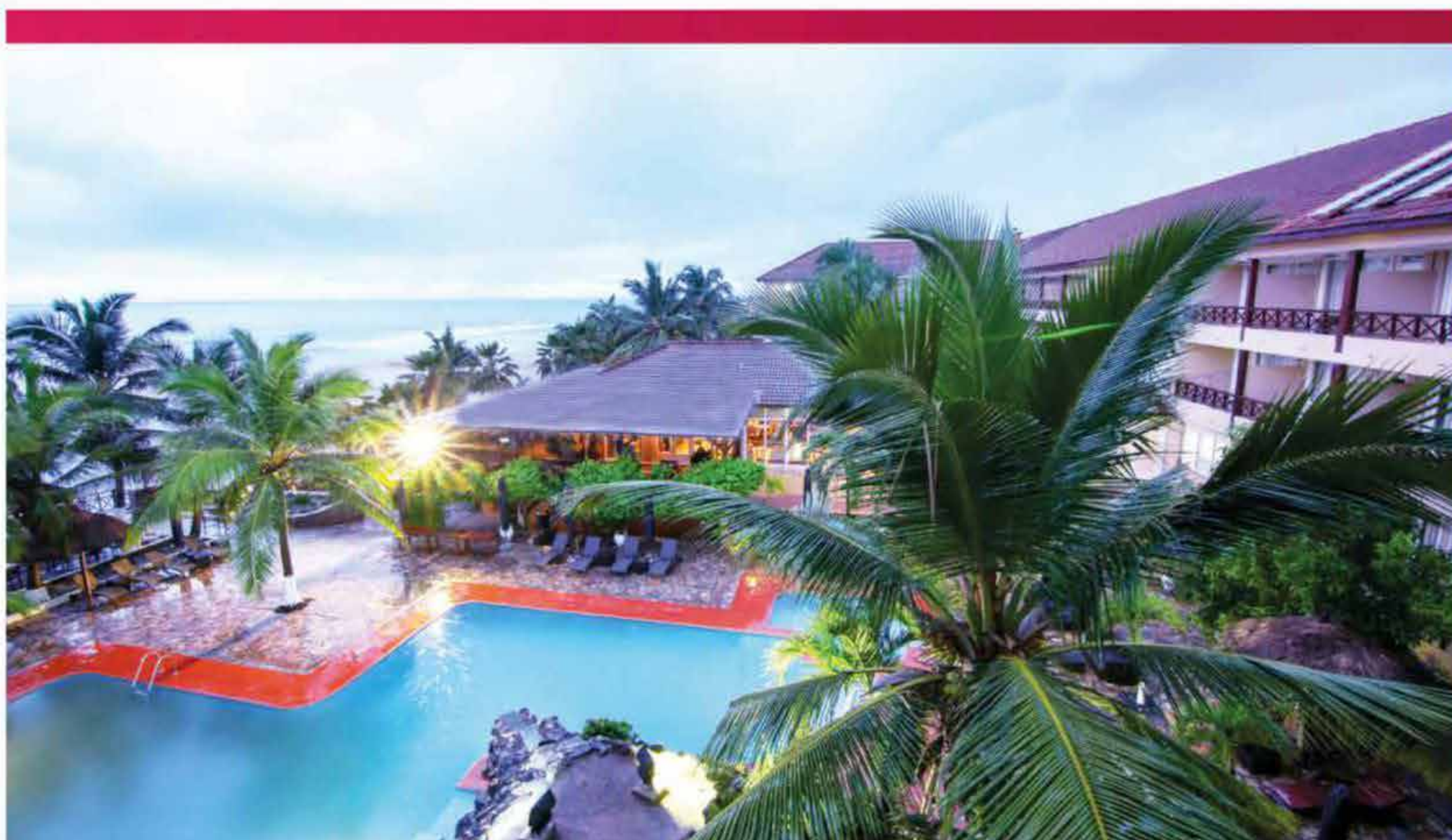
Meanwhile, ahead of Dr Mohammed Amin's appearance, the Minority is calling for broader accountability measures from the government.

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has urged the Speaker to enforce the House's decision to establish a bipartisan committee to investigate issues surrounding the project.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Dr Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister



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Business

Ghana's economy to grow by 3.1% in 2024 - IMF

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Mission Chief for Ghana, Stéphane Roudet, has noted that his outfit has revised its projection for Ghana's economic growth this year.

The Fund earlier projected that Ghana's economy will grow 2.8 per cent this year and 4.4 per cent next year on the back of on-going reforms.

Stéphane Roudet has however noted that due to the sustained growth in the economy, the Fund projects a 3.1% growth for the country in 2024.

He made this known when he announced that the IMF Executive Board has completed the second review of Ghana's 36-month Extended Credit Facility Arrangement.

This allows for the immediate disbursement of SDR 269.1 million (about US\$360 million).

Ghana's performance under the program has been generally strong, according to the Fund.

"All quantitative performance criteria for the second review and almost all

indicative targets were met. Good progress is being made on the debt restructuring, and key structural reforms are advancing."

"The authorities' reform efforts are paying off. Growth has proven more resilient than expected, inflation has declined rapidly from its 2022 highs, and the fiscal and external positions have improved significantly," the IMF noted.

On June 11, 2024, the authorities reached agreement with Ghana's Official Creditor Committee (OCC) under the G20's Common Framework on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalizing the agreement in principle on a debt treatment, which was reached in January 2024.

This agreement on a debt treatment, consistent with program parameters, provided the financing assurances necessary for the second review under the ECF Arrangement to be completed.

The authorities have also recently reached agreement in principle with representatives of Eurobond holders on a restructuring consistent with

program parameters, subject to confirmation on comparability of treatment by the OCC.

Ghana's primary fiscal balance improved by over 4 percent of GDP last year. Looking ahead, the authorities are committed to further advancing fiscal consolidation, including by achieving primary fiscal surpluses of ½ percent of GDP this year and 1½ percent of GDP in 2025.

These efforts are underpinned by reforms to bolster revenue mobilization and streamline non-

priority expenditures, while expanding social protection programs to mitigate the impact of fiscal adjustment on the most vulnerable.

The authorities are also taking steps to strengthen tax administration, expenditure controls and management of arrears, fiscal rules and institutions, and SOEs management—including in the energy and cocoa sectors.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Stéphane Roudet, International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Mission Chief for Ghana

Ghana Plastic Manufacturers Association to protest against 5% tax imposition on July 10

The Ghana Plastic Manufacturers Association have announced plans to embark on a protest against the implementation of a five percent excise tax on locally manufactured plastic products on Wednesday, July 10.

According to a statement released by the Association's President, Ebo Botwe, they voiced their discontent with the tax and announced plans for the demonstration.

The statement outlined that the protest will commence at Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, pass through Accra Technical University, and culminate at the Ministry of Finance.

In June, the Association had warned of halting production for a week if their demand for thorough consultations with the Ministry of Finance concerning the excise tax was not met.

They pointed out that despite sending a meeting request letter in

April 2024, they had not yet received any response from the Ministry of Finance.

Meanwhile, in June 2024, Plastic manufacturers in Ghana threatened to shut down operations in response to the government's decision to impose a 5% tax on plastic products. This development has raised concerns about the potential economic repercussions and the broader impact on employment and the environment.

President of the Ghana Plastic Manufacturers Association, Ebo Botwe, emphasised the critical need for the government to reassess its stance. He called for renewed dialogue with all stakeholders to avert potential economic repercussions from the impending production shutdown.

He noted that over 30,000 workers in the plastic manufacturing sector might face layoffs.

He stated, "Let's defer the

implementation of this tax. The timing is not right, especially when businesses are already suffering from the effects of the exchange rate. We have been burdened with numerous taxes, and imposing another one now shows a disregard for the growth of businesses.

"Many companies are relocating from Ghana due to the high cost of

doing business, and we are losing our competitiveness. Most imports now avoid the Tema port, opting for Eastern and Western corridors instead. What will be achieved by raising taxes and driving prices up?"

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Ebo Botwe, Ghana Plastic Manufacturers Association President



International

Tear gas fired at anti-government protesters in Kenya

Kenyan police have fired tear gas in the capital, Nairobi, and the coastal city of Mombasa to disperse anti-government protests.

In both city centres many businesses have remained closed. Demonstrators have also taken to the streets of other cities including Kisumu.

Human rights groups say since the protests against a controversial finance bill began two weeks ago 39 people have been killed by security forces.

President William Ruto has since dropped the proposed tax increases - but the demonstrations have morphed into calls for him to resign and anger over police brutality in the most serious crisis of his presidency.

The scale of demonstrations are smaller than last week's, but chaotic scenes have been witnessed in Mombasa, where cars were seen burning as protesters clashed with police.

In Nairobi there is a huge security presence with running battles along some of the main roads leading to the centre. Groups of protesters lit fires and threw stones at police.

In the central business areas of Nairobi and Mombasa some shop-owners have hired vigilantes to patrol with clubs to guard against looting.

Astin Kibowen, 21, who is guarding the music shop where he works in Nairobi, told the BBC he wanted the president "to listen to our cries, to our voices".

Since President Ruto came to power two years ago promising to revitalise the economy, Kenyans have been hit by a cost-of-living crisis with more taxes on salaries, fuel and on gross sales.

On one of the main streets in downtown Nairobi, activists placed empty coffins in front of riot police to draw attention to their excessive use of force during the countrywide protests.

The state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) says most protesters were killed last Tuesday when MPs voted to pass the bill and huge crowds gathered to demonstrate.

Seventeen people had died in Nairobi and 22 others killed in other parts of the country, it said in a statement on Monday evening.

There had also been 361 injuries, 32 cases of "enforced or involuntary disappearances" and 627 arrests, it said.

Amnesty International says 24 protesters died in the protests. Earlier, the police put the death toll at 19.

An artist has told the BBC she intends

to capture the demonstrations as they happened in Nairobi.

"We are mourning the children killed by police. As others chant, I'm doing art. I saw a flag was laid on this man when he was shot last week," Linda Indakwa, 29, said as she pointed one of her artworks where she has set up in a street in the city centre.

KNCHR condemned "in the strongest terms possible the unwarranted violence and force that was inflicted on protesters, medical personnel, lawyers, journalists and on safe spaces such as churches medical emergency centres and ambulances".

It said the force used against the protesters "was excessive and disproportionate".

President Ruto said the police had "done their best they could" while speaking at a roundtable interview with journalists on Sunday.

He added that "if there were any excesses" they would be addressed through "existing mechanisms".

The president also laid out the repercussions of rejecting the finance bill, saying it meant Kenya would have to borrow one trillion shillings (\$7.6bn; £6.1bn) just "to be able to run our government" - a 67% increase on what had been planned.

It would also affect the education, health and farming sectors, he said.

Source: BBC



Police use tear gas to disperse protesters during a demonstration

TotalEnergies to exit gas field offshore South Africa in blow to country

French oil major TotalEnergies (TTEF.PA), has notified South Africa's petroleum regulator that it intends to withdraw from its 11B/12B offshore gas field but has yet to submit a formal request to do so, a source at Petroleum Agency SA said.

TotalEnergies discovered the first of two large mainly gas finds in Block 11B/12B offshore the southern coast in 2019, and the withdrawal is a setback for South Africa which was banking on the gas potentially supplying an idle national gas-to-liquid refinery at Mossel Bay.

Talks over the gas price have stalled for years, while TotalEnergies has invested heavily to explore neighbouring Namibia, a global exploration hotspot since TotalEnergies, Shell (SHEL.L),

and Galp (GALPLS), opens new tab hit new finds.

"The main reason (for the withdrawal) is the inability to secure a market for the gas," the source told Reuters on Tuesday.

"They have not withdrawn their production right application (to 11B/12B)," added the source, who was not authorised to speak to the media.

TotalEnergies did not respond immediately to a request for comment. Bloomberg reported the news earlier on Tuesday.

TotalEnergies partnered with QatarEnergy in March to buy a stake in a licence seeking oil and gas on the west coast of South Africa as part of

plans to develop the Orange Basin in Namibia.

The prolific Orange Basin, where most of Namibia's petroleum finds have

been made, extends southwards into South African waters.

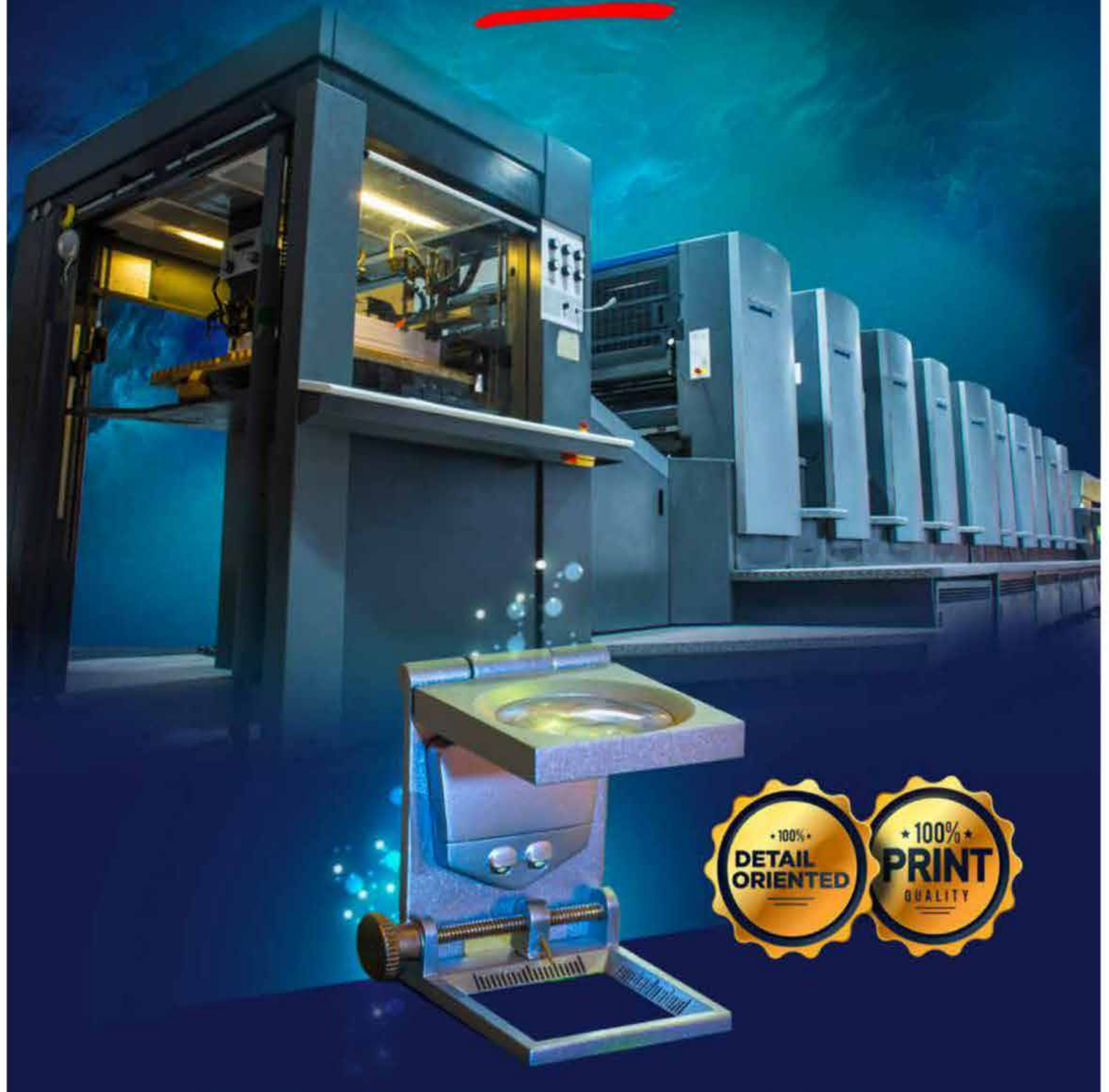
Source: Reuters



Police use tear gas to disperse protesters during a demonstration

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