



Road congestion in Accra will worsen by 2030 – GSS

Page 7

NPP officially announces Napo as Bawumia's running mate for 2024 elections

Page 5



TUC to set up Ghana Labour Bank to support its members

Page 10

Retract “unconstitutional” SC judges recommendation to Akufo-Addo - NDC to Chief Justice

Page 6



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General News

Bills must be enacted before they can be legally contested - Speaker Bagbin rules

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, has firmly stated that no entity, including the judiciary, should interfere with the passage of bills before they receive presidential assent.

Speaking to the media, Bagbin expressed frustration over receiving legal notices about matters still under parliamentary consideration, warning that such actions undermine the legislature's authority.

"When it comes to lawmaking, until all the processes in this house are exhausted, there is no business for anybody including a court to consider because the Constitution, as the enabling legislation, takes care of all these challenges," Bagbin said.

"Until it is a law, it is assented to by the president, judiciary has no jurisdiction to try to find into it."

Bagbin emphasised the importance of respecting the legislative process to maintain the authority of Parliament.

"This is noteworthy, we have to take this seriously or else our legislative authority is being taken away from us by other agencies and arms of government, that should be resisted by this house, or else your being here is of no

consequence," he stated.

"The law is very clear on this and so until a bill is assented to by the president nobody has any business to take that process that is being considered by the House to the court," Bagbin continued. "I don't want to pre-empt the judgment of the Supreme Court in this matter but I have given notice because on a daily basis I am being served with writs as a party on matters that are being considered by the House, that is why I am compelled to say this."

Bagbin's remarks come ahead of the Supreme Court's ruling on July 17, 2024, regarding researcher, Dr. Amanda Odoi's application for an interlocutory injunction against Parliament's transmission of the anti-gay bill to the presidency.

The court will also address an application from media personality and lawyer Richard Dela Sky on the same day.

Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo, leading a five-member panel, noted that the court will issue separate rulings for each case.

The panel includes Justice Mariama Owusu, Justice Prof. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, Justice Ernest Gaewu, and Justice Yaw Darko Asare.

Currently, the Supreme Court is dealing with two lawsuits challenging Parliament's passage of the anti-LGBTQ+ bill. Richard Dela Sky argues that the "Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill" violates several provisions of the 1992 Constitution.

He seeks eight reliefs, including a declaration that the Speaker of Parliament violated Article 108(a) (ii) of the Constitution by allowing the passage of a bill imposing

charges on the Consolidated Fund or other public funds of Ghana.

Dr. Amanda Odoi also objects to certain provisions within the bill and seeks a restraining order to prevent the Speaker, the Attorney-General, and the Clerk of Parliament from forwarding the bill to President Akufo-Addo for approval.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

We are lagging in putting up infrastructure to check flooding - Housing Minister

Works and Housing Minister, Kojo Opong-Nkrumah, has openly acknowledged that the government is lagging behind in implementing measures to mitigate the recurring flooding in Accra.

The Ofoase Ayeribi MP shared his concerns with the media, emphasizing the persistent anxiety that accompanies the rainy season due to the inadequate infrastructure currently in place.

"When the rains start here in

Accra, you start getting palpitations because you start worrying, knowing very well that due to the inadequacy of the work done so far compared to the increasing pressure, there will be challenges," Opong-Nkrumah said.

He stressed the importance of understanding the severity of the flooding situation during heavy downpours and the immediate and medium-term steps needed to address it.

- continued on page 3



Kojo Opong-Nkrumah, Works and Housing Minister



General News

We are lagging in putting up infrastructure to check flooding - Housing Minister

- Continued from page 2

Despite the challenges, the Housing Minister remains committed to improving flood resilience in the capital.

Last week, he initiated the reconstruction of the Nima-Paloma storm drain, which extends from Asylum Down to the Odaw Channel, as part of efforts to bolster flood defenses in communities along the Odaw River basin.

“This significant milestone is expected to help reduce the perennial flooding challenges in Accra and bring much-needed relief to residents, commuters, traders, and businesses,” Oppong Nkrumah stated at the groundbreaking ceremony.

He also revealed that the government’s newly launched Flood Early Warning System is expected to be operational ahead of the next

rainy season.

This system, developed in collaboration with the Ghana Hydro Authority, Water Resources Commission, Ghana Meteorological Agency, and NADMO through the GARID Project, aims to provide advanced warnings to residents in flood-prone areas, allowing them to take necessary precautions.

“While structural interventions alone cannot completely eradicate the flooding challenges in Accra, the Ministry of Works and Housing is establishing a flood early warning system for the Greater Accra Region. The early warning system will provide advanced notification of impending floods to residents in flood-prone communities so they can take steps to protect lives and properties ahead of a flooding event,” he explained.

Parliament has approved \$250 million for the GARID Project, which focuses on one of the major water channels in the Greater Accra Region. This funding is intended to address previously unfunded parts of the program and cover some price variations.

“The Project deals with one out of about eight or so channels in the Greater Accra Region that convey high volumes of water out of the capital when it rains. That money was supposed to be top-up money to help pay for some previously unfunded parts of the program and to pay for some price variation,” Oppong-Nkrumah noted.

In the coming weeks, the Ministry plans to hand over the storm drains in Kaneshie to a contractor to commence work. This area, known for high volumes of water during rains, requires significant upgrades

to its drainage system to prevent flooding.

“Kaneshie is one of the areas which has high volumes of water coming in. If you look at the kind of drains that were constructed initially and the technology that was used, it requires some more expansion and depth. If it’s not done, there will be flooding at Kaneshie every time it rains, especially from the bank quarters intersection,” he added.

Additionally, the Ministry plans to construct retention ponds near the Aburi Mountain to hold and manage water flow into Accra.

With these projects and the funding in place, Oppong-Nkrumah is hopeful that significant progress will be made to alleviate the flooding situation in the capital.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty

CPP to unveil flagbearer for December polls by August

The Convention People’s Party (CPP) has announced that it will elect a flagbearer by August to participate in the upcoming December elections. Despite delays, the party remains dedicated to fielding a candidate for the polls.

On June 3, 2024, the CPP began meetings with its regional executives to review the party’s preparations. Speaking at the party’s headquarters, Coordinator for the National Organisational Committee, Moses Yirimambo Ambing, highlighted the CPP’s readiness to campaign and secure victory.

“Yes, it is justified that we are late in the calendar, but you see, history also tells another story that barely four months, we were able to reorganise ourselves to even win an election. But it is not like we are not doing anything,” Ambing said.

“What we are doing is data and research-driven. So, as we speak, we know the areas to hit, we know where the numbers are. We have done the work. So we are not sleeping. We have potential candidates in the constituencies who are working. So even though we are late, we know that by August

we are going to have a flagbearer to lead the CPP into the Flagstaff House.”

The CPP is also optimistic about the involvement of its former General Secretary, Nana Yaa Jantuah, in its campaign efforts leading up to the elections.

The party emphasised the importance of unity among its members.

“In fact, she did not resign from the party, she resigned from her position. And some of us have been engaging. She still loves the party. So surely Nana Yaa Jantuah will be involved and all our comrades who are sitting on the fence,” Ambing noted.

“The duty of the Independent Committee (IC) is to rally all of us ahead of the elections. So, tell NPP

and NDC that they should be ready for battle.”

The CPP’s announcement sets the stage for an active campaign season as the party gears up to present a strong challenge in the December elections.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



CPP Members

General News

Road congestion in Accra will worsen by 2030 – GSS

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) has issued a stark warning: Accra is on the brink of a traffic crisis.

By 2030, the capital's roads are set to become even more congested, a direct consequence of the region's rapid population expansion.

Recent projections by the GSS paint a picture of significant demographic growth within the Greater Accra region, spanning from 2021 to 2050.

Currently, in 2024, Ghana's population has surpassed 33 million, a leap from the 30.8 million recorded in 2021.

The Greater Accra Region, in particular, is bracing for an influx of school-aged children, with numbers expected to swell to 2.96 million by the end of this decade.

The demographic shift does not stop there; the number of young people between 15 to 24 years old is set to

almost double.

Deputy Government Statistician, Dr. Faustina Frempong-Ainguah, emphasised the urgency of the situation, stating, "government to intervene in the exponential population growth in the Greater Accra region covering smaller land spaces."

These projections are not just numbers; they serve as a crucial tool for future planning. They offer a glimpse into the demographic changes on the horizon and are vital for guiding policymakers, researchers, and the general public.

The GSS underscores the importance of this data in tracking Ghana's progress towards its developmental objectives on a national, continental, and global scale.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File photo

Govt has spent over GHS339m on National Cathedral project since 2020 - Abena Osei-Asare

The government has spent more than GH¢339 million on the National Cathedral project, which has been stalled for some time.

This significant expenditure was confirmed in Parliament on Wednesday, July 3, by the Minister of State at the Finance Ministry, Abena Osei-Asare.

She responded to an urgent query raised by the Deputy Majority Leader, Patricia Appiagyei, seeking clarification on the funds allocated and expended on the contentious project.

Abena Osei-Asare also mentioned that the accounts of the National Cathedral are currently undergoing audit.

"The total releases made for the National Cathedral by the government to date remain at GH¢339 million. This figure comprises GH¢225 million paid to the National Cathedral Secretariat, and GH¢113 million paid directly to the project consultant.

"There was a value-for-money audit

done on the project in 2021. Also, a statutory audit of the National Cathedral of Ghana accounts by Deloitte Ghana was started in July 2023 and is ongoing.

"Auditors had concluded the audit of the 18-month account ended December 31, 2020. Meanwhile, preparations are in place for the auditors to complete the remaining accounts for the periods ended December 31, 2021, 2022 and 2023," Abena Osei Asare said.

The National Cathedral project, which began in 2020, has been surrounded by controversy from the outset.

Its construction has sparked debates across various sectors of society, focusing on the necessity and timing of such a large-scale structure, as well as concerns regarding the transparency and management of allocated funds.

Meanwhile, the Minority in Parliament has called on the government to release the full value-for-money audit report allegedly conducted on the National Cathedral project.

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has demanded the release of the audit report. Mr Ablakwa asserted that the full report must be made available to Parliament if it indeed exists.

"All these claims that they have a value for money report, if that report exists, what you do is that you bring that report to the House so that we can peruse the document. It wasn't brought to us. We are demanding those documents," Ablakwa stated.

He further called for a comprehensive parliamentary probe into the

project, citing numerous issues that have arisen since its inception.

"This National Cathedral project has opened a can of worms from inflation pricing, procurement breaches, constitutional violations, conflict of interest, double identity, and demolition of properties; it is a whole mess that one parliamentary question cannot resolve. What we need is a full-scale parliamentary inquiry to go into the entire project," he stressed.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Abena Osei Asare, Minister of State at the Finance Ministry



General News

Oxygen shortage affects operations at Tamale Teaching Hospital

The Tamale Teaching Hospital, a crucial healthcare facility serving five regions in northern Ghana, is grappling with a severe oxygen shortage following a malfunction at its oxygen plant, according to local news reports.

The plant has been out of operation since Monday, July 1, due to a burnt engine component.

Public Relations Officer Zuberu Alidu disclosed the issue in a media interview, explaining the steps being taken to resolve the crisis.

“One of the components, a very important component of the oxygen plant, got burnt and because of that, the plant is not able to produce and supply,” Alidu said. “What we are doing now is liaising with suppliers

mostly in Kumasi because our suppliers within the Northern region, we are told that they aren't able to give us oxygen.”

Efforts are being made to secure oxygen from other regions, with the hospital coordinating with the Ghana Health Service to manage referrals effectively.

“For now, we have what we need. Besides this, we are also in touch with the facilities referring to us, especially with Ghana Health Service such that the referral that will come, we'll have what it takes to receive them,” Alidu added.

To mitigate the shortage, the hospital has deployed oxygen concentrators, according to a medical officer. The officer assured that measures are

underway to address the situation and urged the public to remain patient.

The malfunctioning oxygen plant and subsequent supply issues have posed significant challenges for the

hospital, highlighting the urgent need for a sustainable solution to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services in the region.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Tamale Teaching Hospital

State your stance on LGBTQ+ if you're Christ-like – Foh-Amoaning to Alan

The Executive Secretary of the Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values, Foh-Amoaning, has called on Alan Kyerematen, a presidential candidate for the Alliance for Revolutionary Change (ARC), to clarify his position on LGBTQ+ issues.

At an event hosted by the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) and the Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values, Foh-Amoaning urged Kyerematen to openly declare his opposition to LGBTQ+ activities.

He emphasised that as a self-proclaimed Christ-like individual, Kyerematen should show boldness in denouncing these practices.

“Former President John Dramani Mahama has already declared his stance on the matter; he has told us he is against it, doing so on January 31. Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia has also declared that he is against it. But I have not heard from Alan Kyerematen on the matter. He claims to be a Christian and Christ-like, but we have not heard from him. If you are really Christ-like, then I am humbly appealing to you to demonstrate your Christ-likeness and declare your position on the matter,” Foh-Amoaning stated.

He further announced that religious groups and the Coalition would seek clarification on this issue from all presidential and vice-presidential candidates, including Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh (NAPO) and Prof. Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Wengam of the Assemblies of God Church also spoke at the event, emphasising the need for increased evangelism to bring people

back to Christ.

Additionally, Apostle Dr. Aaron Ami-Narh of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council highlighted the spiritual dimension of the fight against LGBTQ+ activities, stressing the necessity of divine intervention.

The call for clarity on LGBTQ+ issues comes amid ongoing debates in Ghana regarding the proposed anti-

LGBTQ+ bill. Advocates argue that the bill is necessary to protect traditional family values, while opponents believe it infringes on human rights. As the 2024 elections approach, the positions of presidential candidates on this contentious issue are likely to be closely scrutinised by voters and advocacy groups alike.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Foh Amoaning, Executive Secretary of the Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values

General News

NSS releases outstanding April allowance payment amid strike action by some personnel

The National Service Scheme (NSS) has disbursed outstanding payments for April in response to a nationwide strike declared by its personnel.

The Concerned National Service Scheme (NSS) Personnel Association of Ghana (CONSPAG) initiated a nationwide strike on July 3, 2024, citing unpaid allowances, which had impacted their livelihoods.

In a prompt response, the National Executive Council of the National Service Personnel Association issued a statement on Wednesday, July 3, confirming that the Secretariat has processed payments for April.

These payments are expected to be credited to personnel accounts by July 5, 2024.

Furthermore, allowances for May are anticipated to follow shortly

after the April payments have been processed. Personnel have been encouraged to remain patient as efforts continue to address outstanding matters.

Meanwhile, the National Service Personnel Association (NASPA) has officially distanced itself from a purported strike declared by a group known as the "Concerned NSS Personnel Association of Ghana" (CONSAG).

In a statement signed by NASPA President Gideon Osei, the association clarified that CONSAG has no mandate to represent the interests of national service personnel.

"NASPA, the official representative body for all national service personnel in Ghana, categorically states that we have not declared any strike. We urge the public to disregard the statement from

the 'Concerned NSS Personnel Association of Ghana' as they are not a recognised organisation," the statement read.

NASPA emphasized its ongoing engagement with the National

Service Scheme (NSS) management to address the recent delays in allowance payments.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



NSS Personnels

Retract "unconstitutional" SC judges recommendation to Akufo-Addo - NDC to Chief Justice

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) has formally called upon Chief Justice Gertrude Torkonoo to retract her recommendation to President Akufo-Addo regarding the appointment of new Supreme Court judges, citing concerns over constitutionality.

In a press statement released today, the opposition party expressed strong reservations about the Chief Justice's recent letter advising President Akufo-Addo to nominate five judges to the Supreme Court. According to the NDC, such a recommendation represents a breach of constitutional norms and threatens the independence of the judiciary.

"The NDC urges Chief Justice Torkonoo to retract her recommendation to President Akufo-Addo for the appointment of new Supreme Court judges," stated Fiifi Kwetey, the General Secretary of the NDC, during a media briefing.

"This action undermines the principles of judicial independence

and could set a dangerous precedent for the politicization of Ghana's judiciary."

Kwetey emphasized the importance of upholding constitutional safeguards that ensure the judiciary operates free from political interference. He stressed that the appointment of judges to the highest court in the land should adhere strictly to meritocratic principles and due process, rather than being influenced by political agendas.

The controversy arose following Chief Justice Torkonoo's letter dated May 30, 2024, recommending five individuals for appointment to the Supreme Court, including Justice Afia Serwaa Asare Botwe, who currently presides over significant legal proceedings.

In light of these developments, the NDC has called for a retraction of the recommendation and urged Chief Justice Torkonoo to uphold the judiciary's role as an independent arbiter in Ghanaian democracy. The party underscored its commitment to safeguarding democratic

institutions and ensuring they remain resilient against political interference.

As the debate unfolds, stakeholders continue to monitor the situation closely, recognizing the critical importance of maintaining judicial integrity and independence in

Ghana. The NDC remains steadfast in its advocacy for transparent and constitutional processes in the appointment of judges, aiming to preserve the judiciary's credibility and effectiveness in upholding justice.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Fiifi Kwetey, General Secretary of the NDC

General News

NPP officially announces Napo as Bawumia's running mate for 2024 elections

The ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) has officially endorsed Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, popularly known as Napo, as the running mate for its flagbearer, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, in the upcoming 2024 general elections.

Dr. Bawumia introduced Napo, who currently serves as the Energy Minister and is the Member of Parliament for Manhyia, at a meeting with party executives at the Alisa Hotel in Accra.

The National Council and National

Elections Committee of the NPP were present to finalise the nomination.

The NPP General Secretary, Justin Frimpong Kodua, expressed the party's satisfaction with the choice. He highlighted Napo's achievements during his tenure as the Education Minister, particularly the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy.

He also noted the stable power supply under Napo's leadership as Energy Minister.

"So, ladies and gentlemen, if you

were to ask me what Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh brings onboard to the NPP presidential ticket, I will say he brings to us a bold, confident, hardworking, result-driven, decisive, grassroots mobiliser, charismatic, patriotic, and demonstrably incorruptible person," Kodua stated.

Several high-profile figures had been considered for the running mate position, including Chief of Staff Frema Osei-Opore, Agriculture Minister Bryan Acheampong, and Education Minister Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum.

Despite active lobbying from supporters of these candidates, Dr. Opoku Prempeh emerged as the chosen one.

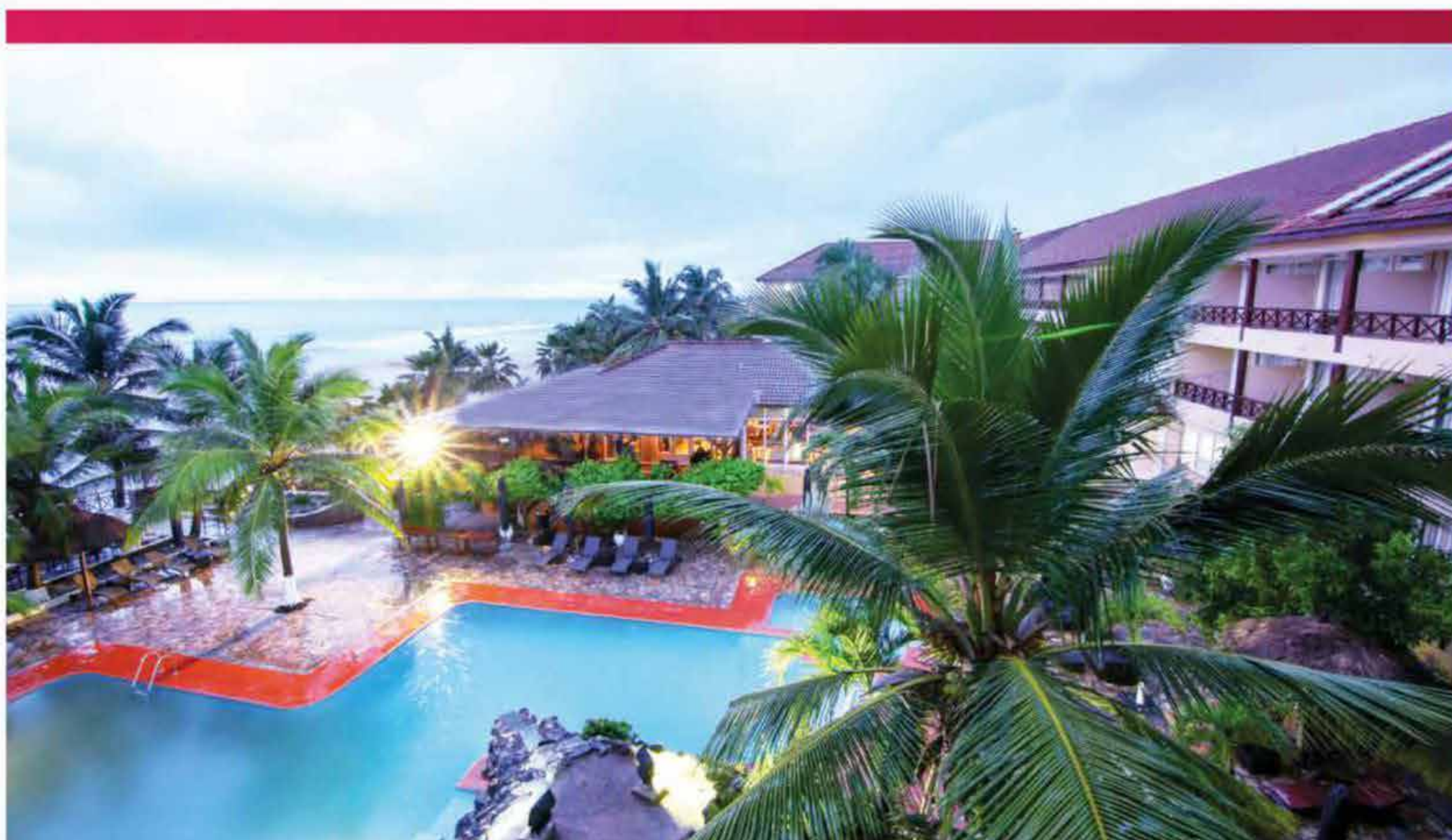
The announcement marks a significant step in the NPP's preparations for the 2024 elections, setting the stage for what promises to be a competitive race.

The party hopes that the Bawumia-Napo ticket will appeal to voters across the nation and secure another term in office.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia (L) and Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh



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Business

Ghana's exports to EU countries surged 200 million euros in 2023 - Trade Ministry

Ghana's trade with the European Union (EU) showed promising trends in 2023, with exports to the EU rising by 8% to reach 2.6 billion euros, up from 2.4 billion euros the previous year.

The data from the Ministry of Trade and Industry indicates that in 2023, exports worth 200 million euros were recorded.

Meanwhile, imports from the EU to Ghana decreased from 3.7 billion euros in 2022 to 3.3 billion euros in 2023, reflecting an 11% decline.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry reported that the total trade volume between Ghana and the EU amounted to 6 billion cedis in 2023, underscoring the significant economic partnership between the two regions.

Speaking at the 2nd Ghana-EU Business Forum, Minister for Trade and Industry, KT Hammond, highlighted Ghana's increasing export figures and assured investors of Ghana's status as a favourable destination for investment.

"The 2023 export figures from Ghana saw an 8% increase, reaching 2.6 billion euros, while imports from the EU declined by 11% from 3.7 billion euros to 3.3 billion euros," Minister KT Hammond noted during the forum.

The forum, themed "Fostering Investment in Non-Traditional Chains Under EU Global Gateways Strategy," aimed to bolster trade and investment relations between Ghana and the EU.

It served as a platform for discussions on enhancing economic cooperation, particularly in non-traditional sectors aligned with the EU's global strategy.

Deputy Director-General of the European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, Myriam Ferran, reiterated the EU's commitment to advancing sustainable development goals through strengthened trade and investment ties with Ghana.

"This strategy underscores the EU's commitment to collaborating with like-minded partners to build sustainable infrastructure and

connectivity worldwide," stated Myriam Ferran, emphasizing the EU's role in fostering sustainable bonds through robust partnerships.

In a significant move, the European Union launched a 32 million Euros Special Measure on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines, and Health Technologies in Africa (MAV+) during the forum.

This initiative aims to bolster vaccine manufacturing and pharmaceutical industry development in Ghana, reflecting the EU's proactive stance in supporting health infrastructure in Africa amidst global challenges.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



KT Hammond, Trade Minister

TUC to set up Ghana Labour Bank to support its members

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) has announced its intention to establish a Ghana Labour Bank to offer soft loans to all members of the Trade Union Congress.

Secretary General of TUC, Dr Yaw Baah, announced this initiative during the 11th Quadrennial Conference of the GPRTU held on Thursday, July 4, 2024, at Gomoa Fetteh in the Central Region.

"Yesterday, the TUC General Council met, and we have agreed that we are going to set up a Ghana Labour Bank".

"The Labour Bank will serve two purposes by providing loans for our members so that you can either procure a house or purchase a vehicle," he explained.

One of the numerous financial-related challenges members of the Union are currently facing is the high interest rates.

TUC members face challenges in

accessing due to the high interest rates charged by traditional financial institutions.

This makes it difficult for workers to afford borrowing, limiting their ability to finance personal and business needs.

Also, many union members, particularly those in lower-income brackets, struggle to access credit due to stringent requirements imposed by banks.

This includes the need for collateral, which many workers do not possess.

Consequently, the TUC has taken this decision to complement the efforts of banks in issuing loans to workers.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) in Ghana is the main umbrella organization for trade unions in the country.

It represents the collective interests of its member unions, advocating for

workers' rights, fair wages, and better working conditions.

The TUC engages in negotiations with employers and the government to secure favourable terms for workers

and plays a crucial role in shaping labour policies in Ghana.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Dr. Yaw Baah, Secretary General of TUC

International

Pay rise freeze for Kenyan MPs after public anger

Proposed pay rises for members of Kenya's cabinet and parliament will not happen after President William Ruto ordered a review of the plans following public outcry.

It comes a week after mass protests forced Mr Ruto to drop a controversial finance bill that had included tax hikes.

Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) Chairperson Lyn Mengich said on Wednesday the commission would "freeze" the salary increases for state officers due to "the current realities of the economy".

Initially the SRC had recommended a pay increase of 2% and 5% for all state officials, including judges.

People began questioning how the the salaries of politicians, including governors, could be raised when there was a supposed financial crisis.

The U-turn came after discussions with the National Treasury, said Ms Mengich.

Last year the SRC issued a notice, proposing that the increases take effect from the beginning of this month.

But Public Service Minister Moses

Kuria said he would not implement the increases "as applies" to the cabinet.

Mr Ruto abandoned plans to increase taxes after protesters complained they could not afford to pay them as they were already hit by the sharp increase in the cost of living.

Many said the government should first reduce spending, which President Ruto has vowed to do.

Several lawmakers – including Aaron Cheruiyot, a senator from the ruling coalition – have called for parliament to reject the pay increase.

Adan Keynan, an opposition party MP allied with the government, expressed a similar view, saying the proposed increase was "tone-deaf".

And opposition senator Edwin Sifuna said higher salaries could not be justified "when the whole country is saying we need to lessen the taxpayer burden".

On Tuesday, Samuel Njoroge, clerk of the National Assembly, told the People Daily newspaper that the SRC's recommendation could not be overturned as they affected all state officers.

"The changes are normal salary

reviews or increments in any organisation," he was quoted as saying.

But Mr Ruto has asked the treasury to review the notice.

"The president has emphasised that this is a time, more than ever before, for the executive and all arms of government to live within their means," a statement by his spokesman said.

Last week's protests, led by young people, were the biggest in Kenya since Mr Ruto took office in 2022.

The demonstrations have since morphed into calls for his resignation and demands that the security forces face justice over the killing of protesters.

It is estimated by the state-funded rights commission that 39 people have been killed in the demonstrations over the last two weeks.

On Tuesday, the protests appeared to degenerate into anarchy as shops and supermarkets were looted.

Police have published images of 38 people wanted for "engaging in lawlessness".

Some of the young Kenyans linked to organising the protests alleged that hired "goons" had infiltrated the demonstrations.

They said they were reassessing their strategy and were even thinking of calling off the protests altogether.

Source: BBC



Police use tear gas to disperse protesters during a demonstration

DR Congo soldiers sentenced to death for fleeing battle

Twenty-five soldiers have been sentenced to death by a military tribunal in the Democratic Republic of Congo for fleeing battles against M23 rebels and theft, their lawyer and an army spokesman said on Thursday.

Congo's army has been fighting the Rwanda-backed M23 insurgency for more than two years, as well as facing other militia violence, with around 2.7 million people displaced within North Kivu province. The rebels advanced into strategically important territory last week.

On Tuesday, the army detained 27 soldiers after they abandoned their positions in the villages of Keseghe and Matembe in the province. Army spokesman Reagan Mbuyi Kalonji said the runaways were found stealing goods from shops in the nearby village of Alimbongo.

They were detained along with four of their wives, who were staying in the village and who received the looted goods, Kalonji said.

A military tribunal was set up in Alimbongo on Wednesday to try them and the magistrate sentenced 25 to death for theft, fleeing the enemy and violating orders, among other charges.

One soldier was handed a 10-year prison sentence while the four wives and another soldier were acquitted.

All denied the charges, aside from one of the 25, who pleaded guilty. Their lawyer, Jules Muvweko, said he would appeal the verdict.

Congo's military, long blighted with internal divisions, insufficient resources, poor logistics and the country's endemic corruption, has become acutely dysfunctional in this crisis.

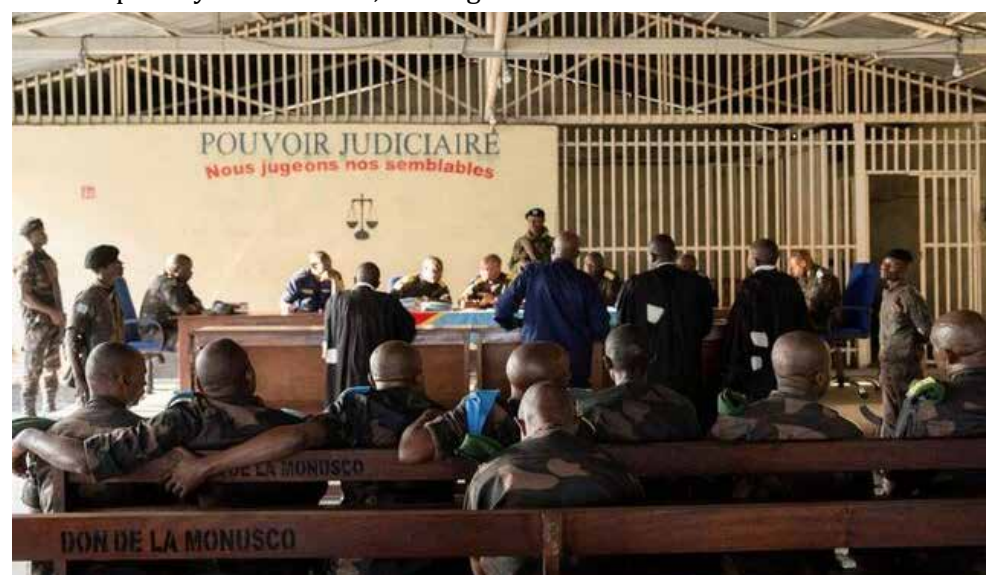
Eight officers were sentenced to death in May for cowardice and other crimes, exposing damaging disarray in Congo's armed forces which has been hobbling the fight against M23, army officers told Reuters.

Congo lifted a moratorium on the death penalty in March, citing

treachery and espionage in recurring armed conflicts as the reason.

The central African country had introduced the moratorium on the death penalty in early 2000, but had never abolished it.

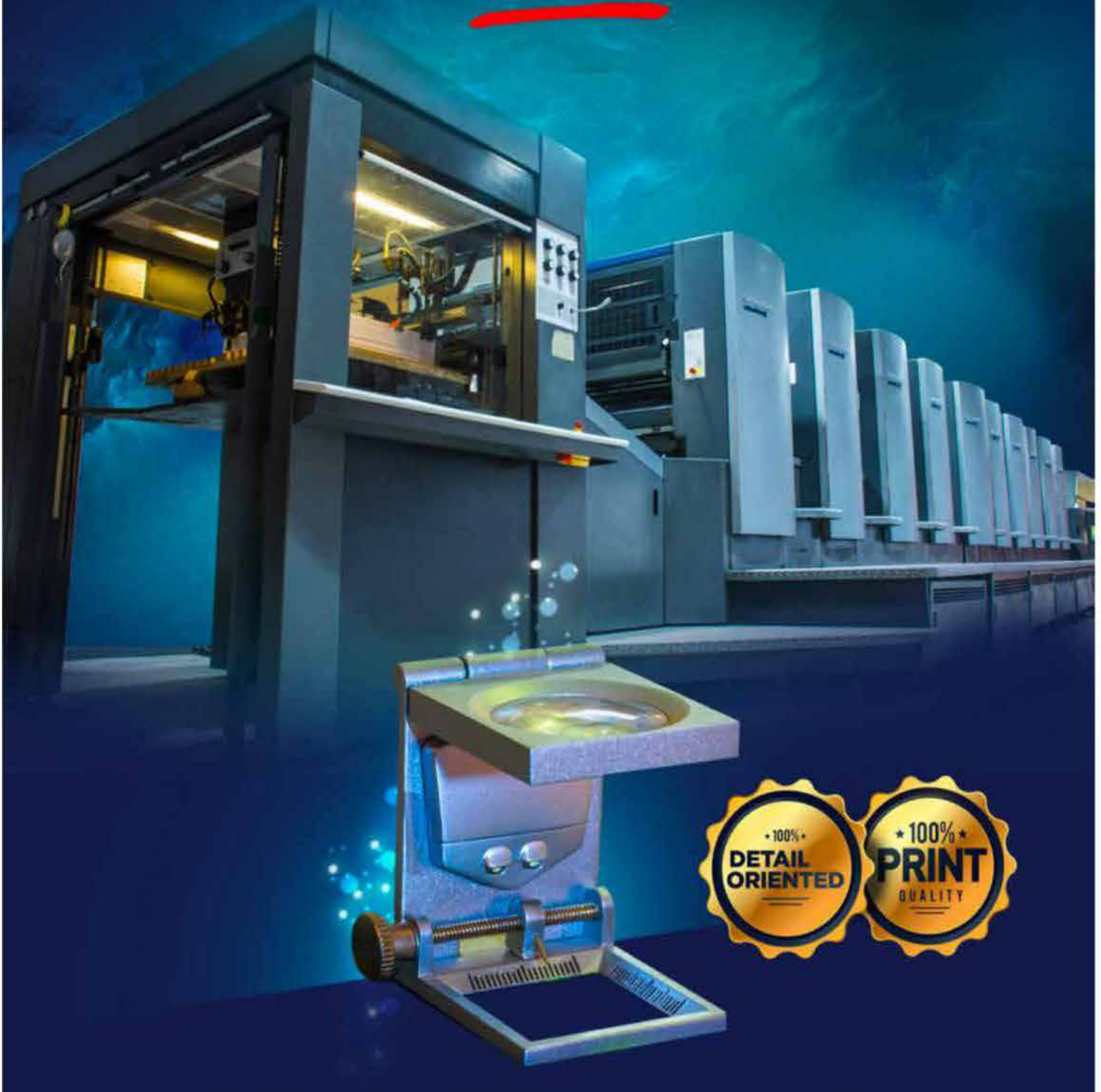
Source: Reuters



Members of the Congolese army sentenced to death for desertion and cowardice

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