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General News

'Agyapadie' book is a malicious tactics to undermine my credibility, integrity – Akufo-Addo

President Akufo-Addo has condemned the "Agyapadie" document as a malicious attempt by his political opponents to tarnish his credibility and integrity.

The Agyapadie document alleges that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) is involved in a scheme to seize state assets.

Speaking at the Ghana Report Summit, which focused on "Dealing with Misinformation and Disinformation, Election 2024," the President addressed the harmful impact of false information on the democratic process.

President Akufo-Addo dismissed these claims as fabricated, aimed at discrediting his administration.

"This baseless accusation is yet another example of the malicious tactics used to undermine my credibility and integrity," President Akufo-Addo stated.

He recounted previous instances of similar tactics: "In the lead-up to the 2008, 2012, and 2016 presidential elections, I was the target of numerous false and malicious stories aimed at attacking my character. In 2008,

unfounded allegations of drug trafficking were spread, along with rumors about my health designed to question my ability to serve as President."

"In 2012, there were false reports of my alleged arrest in London for drug possession and fabricated quotes intended to incite ethnic tensions. In 2016, opposition sympathizers alleged that I had killed my late wife. Now, with the 2024 elections approaching, they are using the fabricated 'Agyapadie' document as evidence of a supposed grand scheme by my party to seize state assets," he recounted.

President Akufo-Addo emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to combat misinformation and disinformation.

He advocated for stronger regulatory measures to hold individuals and organizations accountable for spreading false information.

"Collaborations with technology companies are essential for developing mechanisms to monitor and control the spread of misinformation on digital platforms," he said.

He also stressed the importance of public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the dangers of misinformation and promote media literacy.

"Supporting fact-checking organizations to verify information and debunk false claims is crucial. All political actors must commit to truthfulness and transparency in their campaigns. The spread of false information for political gain undermines the democratic process and erodes public trust," he added.

President Akufo-Addo called for

constructive dialogue among political parties and candidates, urging them to present their policies and ideas to the electorate honestly and respectfully.

He also highlighted the significant role of civil society organizations in promoting transparency, accountability, and media literacy.

"The public must play their part by verifying information before sharing it and relying on reputable news sources," he concluded.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Works on Saglemi Housing Project to resume in September - Oppong-Nkrumah

Minister for Works and Housing, Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, has projected that work on the Saglemi Housing Project will continue in September of this year.

Minister for Works and Housing, Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, revealed this during a media briefing following his appearance before the Public Accounts Committee on Thursday, August 1, 2024.

He noted that five proposals have been submitted for the project's completion. Deloitte has been appointed as the independent evaluator to review these

proposals and determine the most suitable option.

Deloitte is expected to deliver its evaluation report within seven days.

The next step will involve selecting the preferred bidder to complete the Saglemi Housing Project, which still has over 1,500 units pending.

In response, the National Tenants' Union of Ghana is preparing legal action and protests against involving the private sector in the project's finalization.

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Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, Minister for Works and Housing



General News

Works on Saglemi Housing Project to resume in September - Oppong-Nkrumah

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According to a press release from Secretary-General Frederick Opoku, the Union contends that private sector involvement could undermine efforts to provide affordable housing for individuals who cannot meet current market rates.

The Ministry of Works and Housing had formally invited private sector proposals for the project's

completion on April 17, 2024.

The Saglemi Housing Project was launched in 2012 by the erstwhile Mahama administration with the goal of building 5,000 housing units to address Ghana's housing deficit.

The government secured a \$200 million loan for this ambitious initiative. However, the project

has faced significant challenges, leaving 1,506 units unfinished, with some only at the foundation stage.

Essential infrastructure, including water, electricity, and sewage systems, is still missing, impeding further progress.

An assessment by GIS in 2017 indicated that an additional \$100

million would be required to complete the project.

Despite this estimate, the progress made so far falls short of meeting these needs, leaving the project stalled.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe.M.Doku

UCC Governing Council terminates Prof. Boampong's appointment as VC

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) Governing Council has officially ended the tenure of Professor Johnson Nyarko Boampong as Vice-Chancellor.

Prof. Boampong, who began his four-year term in August 2020, saw his appointment terminated on July 31, 2024.

Despite earlier reports suggesting a two-year extension of his term, a notice from Professor Harold S. Amonoo-Kuofi, Chairman of the University's Governing Council,

has declared this extension null and void.

"Please be advised that the purported renewal or extension of your appointment as Vice-Chancellor, decided at the Council's meeting on July 28, 2023, for an additional two years starting August 1, 2024, is null and void. This extension breaches the University's Statutes regarding the renewal of a Vice-Chancellor's appointment," the notice stated.

The notice further clarified that

while the Vice-Chancellor's appointment could be extended, no such extension has been formally agreed upon.

It explained, "Although your appointment may be extended by up to two years at a time, with a maximum extension of five years beyond your retirement age, this is applicable only to your general role within the University, not specifically to the Vice-Chancellor position. Statute 8.2 of the University's Statutes places a limit on such extensions."

Prof. Boampong has been advised that if he wishes to pursue an extension, he should formally apply to the Council following the established procedures.

"You may apply to the Council for consideration to renew your term as Vice-Chancellor for a period not exceeding your retirement age and in compliance with the University's Constitution and Statutes," the notice concluded.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Professor Johnson Nyarko Boampong

General News

2024 elections will test the strength of our democracy - National Security Minister

National Security Minister Albert Kan Dapaah has warned that the upcoming 2024 elections will be a critical test of Ghana's democratic resilience.

Speaking at a forum on violent extremism and peace, he highlighted growing concerns among political parties about the judiciary's ability to handle election disputes.

Kan Dapaah expressed worry over the declining trust in the judicial system, noting that many leading political figures have voiced skepticism about the court's capacity to deliver impartial justice in the event of electoral conflicts.

"The 2024 general elections will certainly test the strength of our democracy, our ability to prevent electoral violence given the high stakes involved where the two major political parties appear convinced about their prospects of emerging victorious. That obviously creates a security challenge for me."

"We may for the first time experience a situation where none of the major political parties will be willing to explore the courts to address their grievances. I have heard some senior people in the political space saying that they have lost faith in the court's ability to address their concerns when it comes to elections," he remarked.

Kan Dapaah called for a more transparent electoral process to rebuild trust among political actors and the public.

In a related statement, President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Reverend Matthew Kwasi Gyamfi, urged politicians to prioritize national peace over

personal ambition.

"Our advice and our suggestion goes first and foremost to those who are vying for power, please if you lose accept it," he advised.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



Albert Kan Dapaah, National Security Minister

226 people scammed of GHC11K by online fraudsters from Jan. to June - CSA

The Cyber Security Authority (CSA) has highlighted a concerning rise in online blackmail incidents.

According to the Authority, 226 victims lost GH¢112,209 from Jan to June 2024.

These incidents typically involve scammers who use social media to build relationships, trick victims into intimate video calls, secretly record these interactions, and later exploit the footage for blackmail.

In its statement, the CSA has advised the public to be cautious when accepting friend requests from strangers and to use robust passwords to protect their personal information.

The CSA's alert from March 2024 had already noted a dramatic 254% increase in online blackmail

cases compared to the previous year.

The additional 141 reports from March to June have exacerbated the issue. To date, 226 cases have been reported this year, resulting in a cumulative loss of GH¢112,209.

"Following the March 2024 alert, in which the Cyber Security Authority (CSA) noted a 254% year-on-year increase in online blackmail cases for the first two months of the year, an additional one hundred and forty-one (141) reports were filed between March and June.

"The two hundred and twenty-six (226) cases recorded so far this year have resulted in a loss of GH¢ 112,209."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe.M.Doku



File photo



General News

Gas shortage imminent as Ghana Gas begins maintenance work from Aug. 1 to 7

The Ghana National Gas Company Limited (Ghana Gas) has announced a planned maintenance shutdown of its Gas Processing Plant (GPP) and offshore gas export facilities from August 1 to August 17.

During this period, Ghana Gas will carry out thorough inspections and necessary upgrades to its infrastructure.

The aim is to identify potential issues and implement corrective measures to improve the overall performance of the gas facilities.

The company has noted that during the maintenance period, there will be a reduced gas supply from the Sankofa OCTP to the Takoradi Distribution Station (TDS).

In a press statement signed by its Head of Corporate Communications, Ernest Owusu Bempah, Ghana Gas assured stakeholders that all efforts will be made to complete the maintenance within the specified timeframe to minimize any impact on gas supply.

The company says it has worked closely with its partners and stakeholders to mitigate the effects of the shutdown on the energy sector and the general public.

Ghana Gas acknowledged the inconvenience that the maintenance shutdown might cause and apologized for any disruptions.

However, the company stressed that this temporary inconvenience

is necessary for the long-term benefit of maintaining a safe and reliable gas supply.

The company reiterated its commitment to transparency

and will keep stakeholders informed about the progress of the maintenance work.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Ghana Gas Facility

I will review Ghana's deal with IMF when I become President - Mahama

Former President John Mahama plans to renegotiate the terms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout and increase local ownership of future oil and mining projects if he wins the upcoming December election.

Mahama, who served from 2012 to 2016, will challenge the ruling party's candidate, Vice President Mahamadu Bawumia, and has a strong chance of success due to the current severe economic crisis, per recent surveys conducted.

Having previously managed an IMF program during his presidency, Mahama, believes the IMF is open to discussions and renegotiations.

"I've been in an IMF programme before when I was president, and I know that the IMF is not averse to sitting and talking and renegotiating issues," he said in an interview with Reuters.

Ghana defaulted on most of its \$30 billion external debt in 2022, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine war, and rising global interest rates.

The country secured a \$3 billion IMF bailout in May 2023 and restructured its debts, with repayments frozen until 2025. The IMF has already disbursed \$1.56 billion, with an additional \$360 million expected by December. Mahama plans to seek further IMF funds to aid in resuming debt repayments.

Mahama intends to amend the public finance management law to enforce a debt-to-GDP ceiling of 60-70% to prevent excessive borrowing.

Additionally, he aims to respect existing production contracts without raising taxes, instead focusing on obtaining higher royalties from future projects.

"I think we are at the upper range of taxes on profit ... But I do think that in some cases the level at which we locked in the royalties is low," he noted.

He also envisions higher government stakes in future projects through the Minerals Income and Investment Fund, a

sovereign wealth facility.

Mahama ascended to the presidency in 2012 following the death of John Evans Atta-Mills and won his own mandate later that year.

He lost the 2016 and 2020 elections to Nana Akufo-Addo, who is stepping down after two terms.

Mahama's tenure saw significant infrastructure investments but faced criticism for power shortages, economic instability, and allegations of political corruption, although he was not personally implicated.

Critics argue these issues have persisted or worsened under Akufo-Addo.

Source: The Independent Ghana



John Dramani Mahama, Flag bearer of the NDC

General News

U.S. Embassy to switch to a new visa services provider website starting August 26

The U.S. Embassy in Accra has revealed plans to switch to a new visa services provider starting August 26, 2024.

As a result, the current visa service provider's website and services will be discontinued on August 16, 2024.

This transition means that from August 16 to August 26, applicants will be unable to schedule new visa appointments, cancel or reschedule current appointments, or access customer service.

However, all existing nonimmigrant visa interview appointments will remain valid during this time.

Key Details for Visa Applicants:

Interviews on or Before August 16:

No further action is required.

Continue to access your account at ustraveldocs.com to review appointment details and contact customer service as needed.

Interviews Between August 16 and August 26:

No further action is required, but you will lose access to your ustraveldocs.com account after August 16.

Print your appointment confirmation letter before August 16.

Attend your scheduled visa interview as rescheduling or cancellation will not be possible during this period.

If you miss your interview, check the website after August 26 for rescheduling instructions.

Interviews on or After August 26:

No further action is required, but access to your ustraveldocs.com account will end on August 16.

Print your appointment confirmation letter before August 16.

Beginning August 26, visit the new visa services website to create a new user account for managing appointments and accessing customer service.

For Applicants Who Have Paid the Visa Application Fee:

Schedule a visa appointment as soon as possible and follow the guidance based on your interview date.

For Those Planning to Travel to the U.S. in August or September:

Pay the visa application fee and schedule your appointment promptly. Note that appointment slots are limited during these months.

For Those Planning to Travel After September:

Consider waiting until after August 26 to begin the visa application process.

Important Dates to Remember:

August 16: Last day to access ustraveldocs.com for fee payments, appointment scheduling, and customer service.

August 21: Last day to drop off documents at Premium Delivery locations.

August 23: Last day to drop off documents at Ghana locations for Embassy delivery.

August 26: New visa appointment website goes live with updated services.

The U.S. Embassy encourages all applicants to take

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



File photo

Over 40 shops at Kwadaso market destroyed by fire

Fire broke out in the early hours of Thursday, August 1, 2024, at the Kwadaso market in the Ashanti region, devastating over 40 shops and their contents.

The inferno wreaked havoc on the M line of the market, leaving traders in despair over the loss of millions of cedis worth of goods, including fabrics, footwear, frozen foods, plantains, yams, and more.

The traders, whose businesses are their sole source of livelihood, are now facing an uncertain future.

During a media engagement, some of them affected traders expressed their distress.

One trader lamented, "All our plantain have been burnt, we are at a great loss, GHC4,000 to GHC5,000 plantain all destroyed. We bought the plantain on credit and we have to pay, we don't know how to go about it.

Those who gave us the plantain on credit will definitely come after us, they wouldn't care. We really need help, myself and my colleagues. I'm 62 years old, this is the only business I can do, I don't have the energy to do any other business."

Adwoa Connie, another affected trader, expressed her anguish, "I sell fabrics, shoes, hair scarves, and

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Kwadaso market



General News

Over 40 shops at Kwadaso market destroyed by fire

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other kinds of stuff. I took a loan, I had a call that all my fabrics were destroyed, and I'm appealing to the government to come to my aid so that I can restart the business.

I'm 71 years old and my kids are in school, there is no help anywhere. This is the only job I can do. I got new stock just Wednesday and everything is gone. I have kids

too, the money lost could be over a million cedis. I'm pleading with the government to come to my aid."

The Ashanti Regional Fire Service's Public Relations Officer revealed that the fire was brought under control after deploying two fire appliances, a fire tender, and a water tanker. He noted that access

to the market was hindered by obstructions and blockages, which delayed their response.

"The fire affected 40 stalls and their contents, which include frozen foods, provisions, and other stuff. There were no casualties. When we got there, the fire was well alight. The entrance of the market had some obstructions around

it, so the doors could not open fully, and the gate not open fully. Access to the scene of the fire was a challenge because there were a lot of obstructions on the road, which also affected our response," he stated.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of the fire.

Source: *The Independent Ghana*

Sponsors of anti-LGBTQ bill to protest on Aug. 21

Proponents of the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill also known as the anti-LGBTQ bill have announced their decision to protest on August 21, 2024, over the Supreme Court's delay in ruling on the injunction applications against the transmission of the bill to President Nana Akufo-Addo.

Ningo-Prampram Member of Parliament, Sam Nartey George, made this known when he expressed his displeasure with Chief Justice, Gertrude Torkornoo, who is presiding over a five-member panel hearing the case.

"We want to do a peaceful march on the 21st of August to the Chief Justice because right now it is not the president that is holding it. It is the Chief Justice. She is the one who is preventing parliament from sending it to the president."

"...The people of Ghana just want her to do what we pay her salary for. Hear the case and give a judgement...If you don't give a judgement, we are all hanging in the air," he revealed during a visit to the National Chief Imam and the Acting President of the Osu Traditional Council on July 31, 2024.

On his part, the matter should have been dealt with already but the Chief Justice keeps prolonging the case.

The Supreme Court of Ghana has postponed its ruling on the injunction applications filed by Broadcast Journalist Richard Dela Sky and Researcher Dr. Amanda

Odoi regarding the transmission of the controversial anti-LGBTQ bill to President Nana Akufo-Addo.

The court announced that it will deliver its ruling on the injunction applications concurrently with the final judgement.

Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo emphasised that an expedited trial would better serve the interests of justice in this matter.

The decision comes amidst heightened public interest and legal scrutiny surrounding the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill recently passed by Parliament.

During separate hearings, the Supreme Court addressed the concerns raised by Richard Dela Sky and Dr. Amanda Odoi. Mr. Sky

challenges the constitutionality of the bill, arguing that it violates multiple provisions of the 1992 constitution and encroaches upon fundamental human rights.

Dr. Odoi, on the other hand, expressed specific reservations about certain provisions within the bill and sought an injunction to halt its transmission to the President for approval. Her legal counsel, Dr. Ernest Ackon, contended that the bill's passage lacked a fiscal impact analysis, potentially infringing Article 108 of the constitution.

In response, the Attorney-General, Godfred Yeboah Dame, defended Parliament's actions, asserting that the Speaker's discretion in transmitting bills to the President is constitutionally bound and

does not require additional fiscal scrutiny beyond what is explicitly stated in the bill.

Thaddeus Sory, representing the Speaker of Parliament, argued against the injunctions, emphasizing that the legislative process remains ongoing until the bill receives presidential assent, thus placing it outside the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to intervene prematurely.

Parliament on Wednesday, February 28, passed the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill also known as the anti-LGBTQ bill after three years following its introduction.

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



File photo

General News

NDC PC distributes reflective jackets to motorbike riders

The parliamentary candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for Krachi East Constituency, Mr. Nelson Kofi Djabab, has distributed 100 reflective jackets to commercial motorcycle riders at Dormabin and Dambai to ensure the safety of riders.

The distribution aims to improve road safety consciousness among motorriders before, during and after the December polls.

He told the Ghana News Agency (GNA), in an interview, that, the exercise was to ensure the security of lives and properties as one of the strategic pillars in the roadmap for sustainable development.

Mr Djabab said it was also to separate authentic motorbike riders from miscreants who parade as motorcycle operators but engage in criminality.

The parliamentary candidate

engaged riders in areas such as Dormabin, Tokuroano and Dambai to educate them on adhering to road safety measures which include respecting the traffic roles and the rights of other road users.

"I hope this campaign will remind riders of the need to ride properly to prevent avoidable accidents and fatalities," he told motorcycle operators.

Mr Djabab said the reflective jackets have a unique identifier, adding that each commercial motorcycle rider jacket has been branded with "Building the Krachi East We Want Together."

He urged riders to always be in their protective gear.

Mr Djabab used the opportunity to express the next NDC government's commitment to invest in the youth in all ways possible.

Source: GNA



Mr. Nelson Kofi Djabab, NDC Parliamentary candidate for Krachi East Constituency

Politicians will prove source of their wealth under my presidency - Osofo Kyiri Abosom

Reverend Christian Kwabena Andrews, Founder and Leader of the Ghana Union Movement (GUM), has promised to promote accountability among political actors if elected as President in the 2024 General Election.

He expressed concern about the "unexplained wealth" of some politicians and assured that his Government would compel affluent politicians to declare their assets and prove their source of wealth.

In news brief shared with the Ghana News Agency, Rev. Andrews, said the lack of accountability among the political class fuelled corruption and encouraged the desire to venture into politics for wealth accumulation.

"Politicians will be made to prove their source of wealth when I become President. We must ensure that politicians account to the people on the source of their wealth beyond what they legitimately earn

for serving the country," he said.

The GUM placed third in the 2020 presidential election, beating traditional Convention People's Party, People's National Convention, and the Progressive People's Party.

The party garnered 105,548 votes, representing 0.805 per cent of the total ballots cast.

Rev. Andrews said GUM would build on its achievements in 2020 and work assiduously to affect the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Party has promised to establish factories in every region and operate a free port to boost economic activities and improve the living conditions of the people.

"I will focus on the ceramic manufacturing industry when I become President," Rev. Andrews said.

Source: GNA



Reverend Christian Kwabena Andrews, Founder and Leader of the Ghana Union Movement (GUM)



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Business

Fuel prices to drop between 2% and 4% in August – IES

The Institute of Energy Security (IES) has forecast a decline in fuel prices for the first half of August, attributing this anticipated decrease to favorable international market conditions.

According to a Research Analyst at IES, Adam Yakubu, the projected reduction in gasoline, gas oil, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices ranges between 2% and 4%.

This forecast is based on positive developments in the global fuel market and a slowdown in the depreciation of the Ghanaian Cedi.

“Following the positive realized on the foreign fuel market coupled with the slowed depreciation of Ghana Cedi recorded on the domestic forex market, the Institute for Energy Security (IES) projects a fall in fuel prices in the coming days.

“This anticipated fall in the first half of August 2024 is attributable to

the favorable international market dynamics. Fuel Prices are expected to fall between 2% and 4% for the three petroleum products under review.”

In a statement released on July 30, Yakubu noted that the improvement in the foreign fuel market, coupled with a decelerated depreciation of the Cedi, has led the IES to predict lower fuel prices in the coming days. The anticipated decline is a result of these positive market dynamics.

For the latter half of July 2024, fuel prices showed favorable trends: gasoline decreased by 2.99%, gas oil by 4.59%, and LPG by 1.10%. Additionally, the Ghanaian Cedi's depreciation slowed to 0.52%, the smallest drop since February 2024.

The IES's analysis for July's first pricing window revealed national average prices of GH¢14.23 per liter

for gasoline, GH¢14.70 per liter for gas oil, and GH¢15.22 per kilogram for LPG.

However, the IES market scan indicates that Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) like Star Oil,

Zen Petroleum, and Benab Oil have recently charged higher prices, reflecting the peak prices during this period.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File photo

Komenda Sugar Factory to be managed by Indian investors for 20 years - Trade Minister

Minister for Trade and Industry Kobina Tahir (K.T.) Hammond announced plans by the government to lease the defunct Komenda Sugar Factory in the Central Region to Indian investors for approximately 20 years to revive the facility.

He mentioned that the lease agreement could be renewed once the contract is finalized.

Speaking to journalists after touring the Komenda Sugar Factory on Wednesday, July 31, 2024, K.T. Hammond stated that the factory is entirely owned by the Government of Ghana, with the investors only managing the assets and making payments to the government.

He clarified that the government does not hold any shares in the sugar produced.

The Minister of Trade and Industry in an interview with the media said, “That whole thing belongs to Government of Ghana. The asset is ours; we are leasing it and there’s a

board in place. It’s a company which has a board. We just put them in charge.”

“We’re not going to have shares in their products but the company is 100% Ghana owned,” he stated.

In response to the question regarding the lease period to West Africa Agro-tech Limited, the trade minister stated, “I am thinking of giving it to them 15 or 20 years with an option of an extension or some sort of renewal after the initial lease.”

K.T. Hammond stated that GH¢45 million was expended by government to keep the Komenda Sugar Factory running.

He mentioned that West Africa Agro-tech Limited, the investors in the Komenda sugar factory, imported 1,000 tonnes of raw sugar for a test run.

This test was conducted to see if white sugar could be produced.

The Government of Ghana transferred the Komenda Sugar Factory to a strategic investor in November 2019 after a three-and-a-half-year hiatus.

The \$35 million factory, which was inaugurated under former president John Dramani Mahama, has been non-operational since May 2016.

In September 2018, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo revealed that the factory’s sale was due to several issues, including a lack of sufficient sugarcane in the surrounding area.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Komenda Sugar Factory



International

Nigerians fight police amid protest against bad governance

A tense standoff has erupted at the Kurudu Axis in Abuja, where enraged youths have blocked the road with burning tires, halting traffic and disrupting daily activities.

The protesters are demanding attention to their grievances, while the police are struggling to restore order amid the chaos.

Despite the police's efforts to engage in dialogue and disperse the crowd using tear gas, the situation remains volatile. The confrontation has intensified, with traffic brought to a complete standstill and safety concerns mounting.

In addition to blocking the road, some protesters have started looting nearby stores, further escalating the unrest.

The hashtag #EndBadGovernanceinNigeria has gained traction online, with many Nigerians expressing support for the movement amid soaring food inflation at 40 percent and fuel prices that have tripled following recent reforms introduced by President Tinubu.

Markets across Nigeria have seen residents stockpiling food and essentials in anticipation of potential violence as the protests continue.

The use of tear gas by the police has exacerbated tensions, and it remains uncertain how the situation will be resolved as both sides remain at an impasse.

Source: *The Independent Ghana*



People protest against hardship on the street of Lagos, Nigeria

'Slave auction' pupils to face disciplinary in South Africa

Four schoolchildren in South Africa are to face a disciplinary hearing over a viral video in which black students are seen being auctioned off as slaves, the authorities in Cape Town have told the BBC.

The footage, showing pupils in a cage while other students bid for them, caused outrage when it was shared on social media last Friday.

It was filmed at Pinelands High School and involved students in grade eight, which is the first year of secondary school when pupils are aged around 14.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has said it has opened its own investigation into the incident.

It comes as two other schools in the country - where white-minority rule ended three decades ago with the election of anti-apartheid fighter Nelson Mandela as president - are dealing with alleged racist incidents.

"It is disturbing that these incidences continue to occur 30 years into democracy," the SAHRC said, adding it was even more distressing that they had occurred in schools.

The four Pinelands High School students believed to be behind the mock auction are currently suspended.

"The investigation is ongoing and nearing completion with 24 learners having been interviewed in the first two [school days]

since the allegations were made," Bronagh Hammond, spokesperson for the Western Cape Education Department, said on Wednesday in a statement sent to the BBC.

"Steps will also be taken against other learners who may have transgressed certain provisions within the code of conduct," she added.

The incident first came to light after one of the pupils showed the footage to his mother, Merle Potgieter, who then told the school's management and local media.

She says her son, who is 14, fought off boys who were attempting to force him into the caged enclosure alongside other black boys who were already inside it.

According to Ms Potgieter the alleged perpetrators were coloured - which is a South African term meaning mixed-race.

In the footage of the mock auction, children can be heard calling out various bids of up to 100,000 rand (\$5,400; £4,200).

"Going once... going twice... sold!" one boy can be heard shouting.

Counselling support had been prioritised for those affected - and all grade eight pupils had had debriefing sessions, Ms Hammond said.

Slavery in Cape Town dates back to the 1650s when the Dutch colonised the peninsula and thousands of enslaved people were brought to the region from south-east Asia, Madagascar and Mozambique.

Today Cape Town is considered one of the most racially segregated and unequal cities in South Africa, despite its multi-ethnic mix.

This is due to the legacy of apartheid, when the white regime in the 1950s pushed black and mixed-raced communities into segregated townships outside the city.

The apartheid government also entrenched a racial hierarchy, which put black people right at the bottom.

On Tuesday, MP Makhi Feni, chair of the parliamentary committee on education, urged the schools at the heart of the latest scandals to "consider meaningful programmes that will foster social cohesion and South African-ness".

"The question we all ought to ask genuinely is what emboldens a person, hardly a teenager, with no knowledge of where we come from as a country, to act in a manner that points to racism. Surely, our children are not and should not be racist," he said.

Meanwhile, the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party is demanding that the pupils be suspended for at least two years and perform "community service in black areas".

It has threatened to call protests and shut down the school if it finds the authorities' ultimate handling of the incident less than satisfactory.

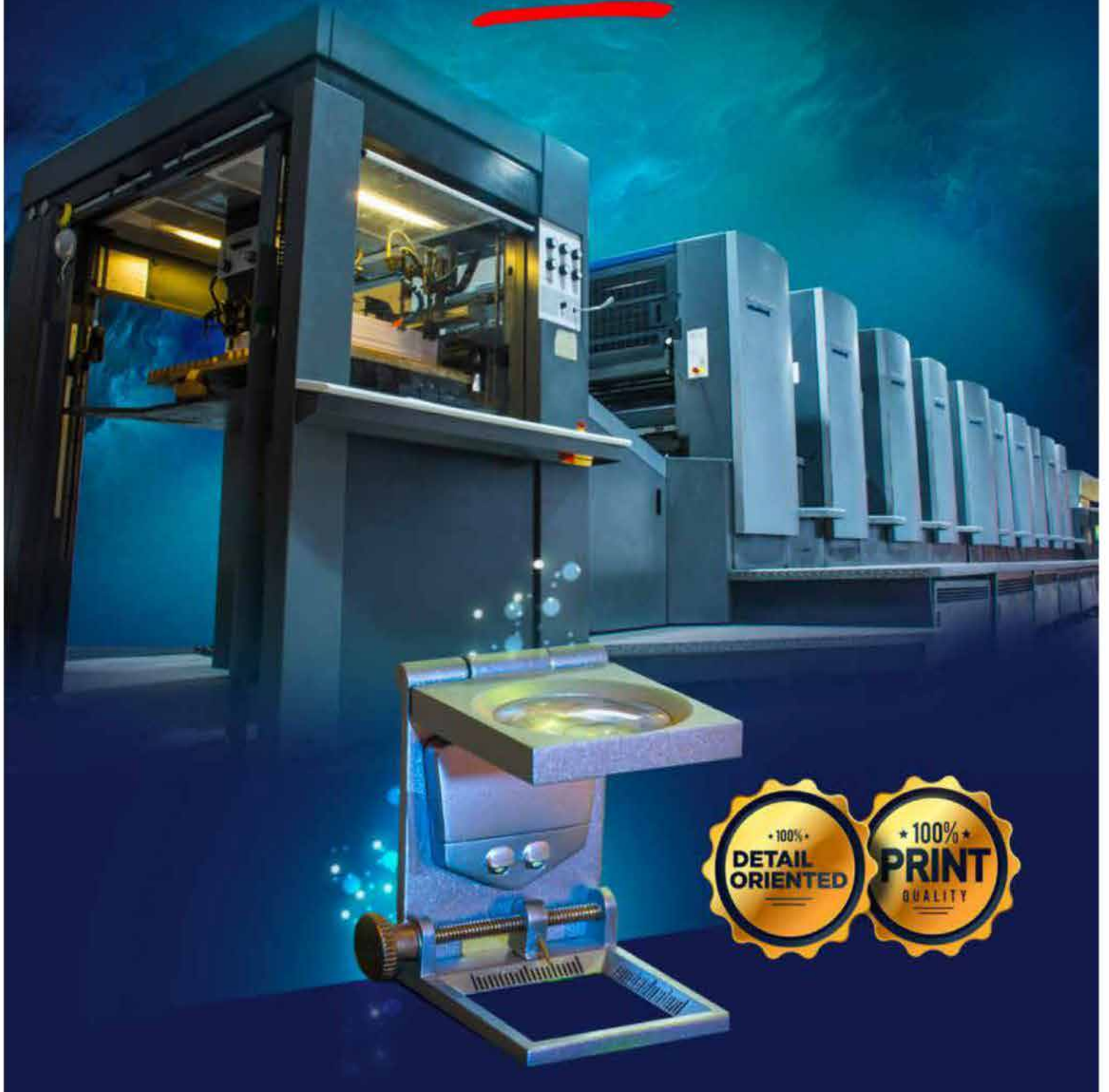
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