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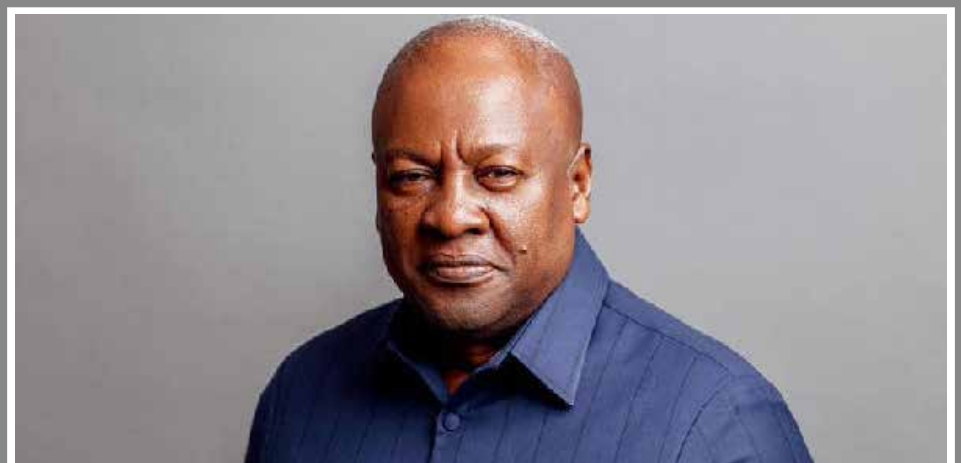


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General News

Mahama will not participate in IEA's presidential debate - Campaign team

Deputy Spokesperson for John Mahama's campaign team, Beatrice Annan, has firmly announced that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) flagbearer will not participate in any presidential debate organized by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

Madam Annan explained that the flagbearer, John Mahama, is unwilling to share a stage with the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, who has labelled Mahama as incompetent and failed to engage the media on the current state of the economy.

In an interview with the media, she stated, "I want to make it clear that John Mahama will not partake in any IEA debate. Our candidate will not share a platform with a candidate who has disparaged him. The NPP has a pattern of using unprintable terms against Mahama, and we will not accept this. His achievements are evident and do not require a debate for validation."

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) has set October and November as the dates for the presidential debates for aspirants who will be cleared by the Electoral Commission to participate in the country's next polls.

A Presidential Evening Encounters slated for September will precede the debates which will be held in Kumasi and Accra.

A Presidential Debates Committee is being constituted "to determine the ground rules to govern the debates and evening encounters, and also solicit questions from Ghanaians."

Meanwhile, the IEA has debunked

the notion that it is doing the bidding of any political party, stressing that it "will continue to provide a neutral platform for healthy contest of ideas."

The information was disclosed after the Mahama 2024 Campaign issued a sharp rebuke to the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) Ghana following its announcement of a presidential debate ahead of the December elections.

In a statement, the campaign criticized the IEA for failing to engage or inform the National Democratic Congress (NDC) before making the announcement.

The NDC, one of Ghana's major political parties, says it was taken by surprise by the IEA's plans.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Beatrice Annan, Deputy Spokesperson for John Mahama's campaign team

Crackdown on illegally imported vehicles to begin from October 1 - GRA announces

The Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has announced that it will begin impounding uncustomed vehicles across the country starting October 1, 2024.

This follows a 2-month amnesty period, running from August 1 to September 30, 2024, granted to all users of vehicles that have not undergone the proper customs procedures.

During this amnesty period, vehicle

owners are urged to regularize the documentation of their illegally imported vehicles without facing the penalties that would typically apply if such vehicles were seized by customs officials.

The GRA has strongly encouraged all users of uncustomed vehicles to take advantage of this opportunity to avoid future sanctions.

Following the expiration of the

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File photo



General News

Crackdown on illegally imported vehicles to begin from October 1 - GRA announces

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amnesty, the Customs Division will carry out an unannounced nationwide, inspection of vehicles on the roads, where any vehicles

found to be uncustomed will be impounded on the spot.

Vehicle owners have thus

been advised to ensure their documentation is in order before the deadline to avoid the inconvenience and penalties

associated with the impoundment of their vehicles.

Source: The Independent Ghana

Farmers losing 30% of their income due to post-harvest losses - WFP

Ghanaian farmers are losing as much as 30% of their income annually due to significant post-harvest losses, according to the World Food Programme (WFP).

These losses, estimated at \$1.9 billion annually, are primarily driven by inadequate post-harvest infrastructure, lack of market access, insufficient warehousing, bushfires, and poor road conditions, particularly affecting perishable produce.

Head of Food Systems at the WFP, Mr Steven Odartefio, while speaking at an event organised by the Graphic Communications Group in collaboration with his outfit, focusing on enhancing agricultural productivity, pointed out that these losses directly affect

farmers' livelihoods, as much of their output fails to reach the market.

"Although they harvest more, they supply less because, by the time it gets to the end market, certain activities contribute to losses of the produce," he explained.

He advocated for the introduction of local government structures to connect agribusinesses with farmers, enabling more efficient processing and reducing losses.

Executive Director of Agrisolve, Miss Elorm Goh, emphasized the severe impact on smallholder farmers during a recent stakeholders' breakfast meeting in Accra.

"If you lose even one per cent of your produce, it's a big deal, but

in this case, farmers are losing up to 50 per cent due to post-harvest challenges," she noted.

Miss Goh called for government-led initiatives to boost private sector involvement in providing essential infrastructure, such as warehouses and processing machinery.

She stressed that improved roads, better harvesting equipment, and more cold storage facilities could prevent the significant losses currently plaguing farmers, allowing them to retain more of their hard-earned income.

WFP's Country Director for Ghana, Madam Marbara Clemens, highlighted a partnership with the MasterCard Foundation aimed at providing technical support

and post-harvest equipment to 100,000 smallholder farmers.

This initiative seeks to enhance agricultural productivity by reducing post-harvest losses through innovative solutions provided by a network of aggregators.

Madam Clemens also called for a nationwide effort to improve the entire agricultural value chain, from seed production to processing, in order to attract more young people to the sector.

By prioritizing local produce, she emphasized, Ghana can improve food security while also boosting the incomes and living conditions of smallholder farmers.

Source: The Independent Ghana



File photo



General News

Kpone Barrier-Dawhenya residents threaten 20-day demo over stalled road project

Residents of Kpone Barrier-Dawhenya have threatened to stage a protest against the government over stalled works on the expansion of the 17-kilometre-long Tema to Central University section of the N1 Highway.

According to them, their demonstration will span 20 days for their ordeal to register in the minds of those in authority and ensure immediate resolution.

Residents who engaged the media say the daily traffic congestion they have been compelled to grapple with due to construction works on the stretch can no longer be tolerated.

"I have stopped my work. We have to start our day around 3:30 am just to get them ready, send them to school before you go to work and so I gave up," an aggrieved resident bemoaned.

Residents, motorists, and business owners along the Kpone Barrier to

Dawhenya stretch of the main Accra - Aflao road issued a similar threat in June of last year.

The government in June 2022 commenced the expansion of the 17-kilometre-long Tema to Central University section of the N1 Highway.

This followed the signing of a \$100m contract with a UK-based construction firm BHM on September 25, 2020, for the design and construction of 17 kilometres Tema - Aflao phase 1 project. Four years on, residents and motorists say their lives are being negatively impacted due to the slow pace of work.

Some appreciable level of work has been done on all four intersections and storm drains. However, a drive through the stretch shows work on some of the sites has stalled with some construction machines lying idle.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Residents of Kpone Barrier-Dawhenya

Akufo-Addo appoints another top gov't official as Ambassador-at-Large

President Akufo-Addo has expanded his diplomatic team by appointing Deputy Chief of Staff Fawaz Aliu as an Ambassador-at-Large, adding to his current role.

This latest appointment marks the second time in two months that the President has designated a top official to this prestigious position, following the recent appointment of his Executive Secretary, Nana Bediatuo Asante, as an Ambassador-at-Large.

The ceremony took place on Wednesday, August 7, at the Jubilee House, where President Akufo-Addo also named Major General Charles Kojo Abedi Awity as Ghana's Ambassador to Serbia, and Mr. Peprah Ampratwum as Ambassador In-Situ.

These new diplomatic roles are part of the President's broader

strategy to enhance Ghana's international relations and promote its interests abroad.

In his remarks, President Akufo-Addo expressed confidence that the appointees would excel in their new roles, strengthening Ghana's diplomatic efforts and forging deeper ties with other nations.

He urged them to actively seek out investment opportunities for Ghana and work to elevate the country's global standing.

Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, Major General Abedi pledged to serve Ghana with distinction, committing to the President's vision for a more robust and proactive diplomatic presence.

However, the timing and necessity of these appointments have sparked some debate among

Ghanaians, particularly given the ongoing economic challenges.

Critics have questioned whether the creation of additional high-level diplomatic positions is

appropriate at a time when there are widespread calls for a reduction in the size of government.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Nana Bediatuo Asante, Ambassador-at-Large



General News

No corruption-related evidence against Mahama in €5m Airbus deal - OSP

Special Prosecutor Kissi Agyebeng has revealed that the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and former President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, played no role in the controversial Airbus scandal during his administration.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor confirmed this after revealing that the individual referred to as Government Official 1 by the UK court and Individual 1 by the US court in the Airbus scandal is former President John Mahama.

Mr Kissi Agyebeng made this known while briefing the media on the Office's findings of the case after initiating investigations in February 2020.

According to Mr Agyebeng, the UK and US courts muffled the identities of the government officials involved in the case.

He, however, said, "We deem it necessary to reveal the identity of some of the individuals owing to the very heightened interest in the fact that the conduct of Airbus was held by the up UK and US court to be able to aim at courting undue favour and advantage from Ghanaian public officials and an elected high government official in the sale of C292 aircraft to Ghana and the persons held to be closely associated with the conduit of the courting of such undue favour and advantage...."

"The individual described as Government Official 1 by the UK court and Individual 1 by the US court is John Dramani Mahama," the Special Prosecutor said.

Mahama has on several occasions refuted that he played a role in the Airbus scandal and further challenged the Akufo-Addo-led government to prosecute him should he be found guilty.

Former President John Dramani Mahama was among the government officials implicated in the scandal, with former Special Prosecutor Martin Amidu suggesting that the label "Government Official One" in the scandal referred to the former president.

In a communication during his tenure as Special Prosecutor, Martin Amidu disclosed how John Mahama allegedly leveraged his position to secure a Ghanaian passport for his brother, Samuel Adam Mahama.

Martin Amidu said, "Amongst other reasons for the letter to the said Ministry, Samuel Adam Mahama's elder brother of full blood, who without a doubt and the evidence available to this Office answers to the description of the elected Government Official 1, allegedly granted a denial interview to the Daily Graphic which published the same on June 20, 2020, fortunately containing suspected admissions that he is the elected Government Official 1 referred to in the UK judgement."

"Serving appointees of this government have been unable to obtain the voice recording of this interview to enable the Office to confront the former president with his own admissions in the interview as answering to the description of the brother of Samuel Adam Mahama as Intermediary 5."

About the Airbus scandal case

Ghana's acquisition of three C295 military aircraft from Airbus, a process that began in 2011, has come under renewed scrutiny following a recent ruling by England's Crown Court in Southwark.

The purchases, which were initially presented as part of the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan of the Ghana Armed Forces, were approved by Ghana's Parliament despite significant debate.

These aircraft were intended to modernize the Ghana Air Force and were funded by loans from Deutsche Bank S.A.E. and Fidelity Bank Ghana Limited, with additional financing from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) for related military purchases.

The deals were met with opposition, particularly from Minority Leader Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, who questioned the transparency and legitimacy of the contracts.

He argued that the contract sums were inflated and criticized

the government for a lack of transparency, relying on publicly available information to substantiate his claims, which were largely dismissed at the time.

On January 21, 2020, the court approved a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA) between the UK's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and Airbus SE, which admitted to extensive bribery schemes across several countries, including Ghana.

The DPA allows the SFO to delay prosecution if the company complies with specific conditions, a decision that the court deemed fair, reasonable, and in the public interest, given the potential economic impact of immediate prosecution on Airbus.

The court's findings revealed that Airbus engaged in corrupt practices to secure contracts in multiple countries, including Ghana.

The judgement highlighted that Airbus, through intermediaries, attempted to bribe officials linked to a high-ranking Ghanaian government figure between 2011 and 2015 to secure the sale of two C295 aircraft.

Initially, Airbus planned to pay a €5 million bribe disguised as a

commission to "intermediary 5," who had close ties to a powerful Ghanaian official overseeing the aircraft purchase deals.

Although this particular payment was never completed due to procedural safeguards, subsequent transactions were arranged through a Spanish third-party company, enabling Airbus to funnel nearly €4 million in bribes to the intermediary.

The third-party company, inserted into the deal to bypass due diligence processes, facilitated the sale of two aircraft.

However, the arrangement fell apart during negotiations for the third aircraft after Airbus conducted an internal investigation, leading the Spanish company to withdraw. Claims by "intermediary 5" for an additional €1.6 million related to the third aircraft were also not honoured by Airbus.

The Crown Court's judgement does not grant Airbus and its officials immunity from prosecution. The SFO retains the right to pursue criminal charges if Airbus fails to meet the conditions of the DPA.

Source: Andy Ogbarmey Tetteh/The Independent Ghana



John Dramani Mahama, Former President of Ghana

General News

6-month maternity leave key to healthy, exclusively breastfed babies - National Breastfeeding Programme

The National Breastfeeding Programme has made a passionate appeal to Parliament to extend the number of months given to mothers as maternity leave to enable them to exclusively breastfeed their infants.

Ghana currently provides 12 weeks of maternity leave, but the Ghana Health Service (GHS) reports that only 9% of women receive this benefit.

Head of the National Breastfeeding Programme, Madam Gifty Ampah, advocates for an increase in maternity leave to 18 weeks to support mothers in achieving six months of exclusive breastfeeding, deemed necessary to ensure the growth and good health of babies.

"We also want to implore our parliamentarians, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations to look at that bill that increases the number of weeks. We are asking for 18 weeks, but the ILO says we can only get up to 16 weeks. However, we want you to give us 18 weeks so that we can look after the future leaders," she stated.

She highlighted the significant number of women who do not receive maternity leave and encouraged corporate employers

to ensure their female employees benefit from this essential time off.

"We have a whole 91% of women who are working in all kinds of spaces but are not given maternity leave. So we want to encourage all corporate people to ensure that their women enjoy maternity leave, and then when they come back, we make the necessary arrangements to support them to continue exclusively breastfeeding their children until the six months," she said.

The 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) revealed that 47.4% of infants aged 0 to 5 months in Ghana were not

exclusively breastfed.

This means about 53% of children under 6 months were exclusively breastfed.

Exclusive breastfeeding means no other food or drink, not even water, except breastmilk (including milk expressed or from a wet nurse) for the first 6 months of life, with the exception of rehydration solution (ORS), drops and syrups (vitamins, minerals, and medicines), according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Deputy Director, Nutrition, Ghana Health Service, Mrs. Veronica Quartey, has stated that not

breastfeeding a child has dire consequences on the growth of the child.

Mrs. Quartey said that infants under six months who did not undergo exclusive breastfeeding might suffer low intelligence scores, leading to school dropouts.

On the other hand, she stated that exclusive breastfeeding provided total nutrition, reduced the risk of obesity in adolescents as well as later in life, and also increased intelligence.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File photo

Anum Traditional Council suspends Adontehene for impeding development

The Anum Traditional Council, headed by Okusiako Brempong Kumi Sasraku VIII, the chief of Anum in the Asuogyaman District of the Eastern Region, has suspended the Adontehene of the area, Okogyeaman Akwasi Anyane.

This action follows accusations that he has been obstructing development efforts. The suspension was decided and announced during an emergency meeting held at the Ahui-Kpoomo Palace in Anum, on Thursday, August 8, where all divisional and

sub-chiefs were present.

The ritual to formalize the suspension included the slaughtering of a sheep and the pouring of libation.

Okusiako Brempong Kumi Sasraku VIII criticized the Adontehene's behaviour as being out of line with traditional practices.

Despite numerous warnings from the Council, Okogyeaman Akwasi Anyane allegedly failed to comply,

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Adontehene of the area, Okogyeaman Akwasi Anyane



General News

Anum Traditional Council suspends Adontehene for impeding development

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leading to his removal from office. Several sub-chiefs and divisional chiefs condemned the

Adontehene's actions and called for a cessation of resistance to local development.

In defence, Okogyeman Akwasi Anyane refuted the allegations and cited his involvement in various development projects as evidence

of his commitment to progress.

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Phoebe.M.Doku*

OSP requests Interpol to revoke Red Notice for Samuel Mahama, others

The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) has announced that it has requested the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) to retract the Red Notice issued against Samuel Adam Foster, also known as Samuel Adam Mahama, in connection with his involvement in the Airbus bribery case.

A Red Notice is an alert issued to law enforcement agencies worldwide, asking them to locate and temporarily detain an individual pending extradition, surrender, or other legal processes.

INTERPOL stated that Mr Adam Mahama was being sought on allegations of accepting a bribe from Airbus to influence public officials to expedite the deal.

Speaking at a press briefing in Accra, the Special Prosecutor, Kissi Agyebeng, explained that the request to withdraw the notice was made after no evidence of bribery or corruption was found against Adam Mahama, his brother, former President John Dramani Mahama, or their business associates.

"The Special Prosecutor has also directed authorised officers of the

OSP to rescind the 13 May 2020 warrants of arrest obtained from the Circuit Court, Accra for the arrest of Samuel Adam Foster (also known as Samuel Adam Mahama), Philip Sean Middlemiss, Leanne Sarah Davis, and Sarah Furneaux.

"On 8 August 2024, the Special Prosecutor notified INTERPOL of the withdrawal of the Red Notice in respect of Samuel Adam Foster (also known as Samuel Adam Mahama), Philip Sean Middlemiss, Leanne Sarah Davis, and Sarah Furneaux," Mr Agyebeng said.

Mr Agyebeng also revealed that

his office has decided to conclude the investigations into the alleged bribery of top Ghanaian officials by Airbus SE, carried out through intermediaries, concerning the sale of military transport aircraft to the Republic of Ghana between 2009 and 2015.

According to him, the office will also not "institute criminal proceedings against any person in respect of this investigation".

Source: *The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



Kissi Agyebeng, Special Prosecutor



General News

Akufo-Addo yet to receive approved Affirmative Action Bill - Gender Minister

Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Darkoa Newman, has clarified that the recently passed Affirmative Action Gender Equity Bill 2024 has not yet been presented to President Akufo-Addo to be assented to.

The bill, passed by Parliament on Tuesday, July 30, is designed to address gender imbalances in the country's social, cultural, economic, and political spheres, which have been perpetuated

by historical discrimination and entrenched patriarchal systems.

It also seeks to enhance gender equity in both public and private sectors.

Following the bill's passage, various gender advocates and civil society organisations have urged the President to sign it into law.

However, at a press briefing held at the Ministry of Information on Thursday, August 8, the Okaikwei

South MP indicated that there are still a few outstanding tasks to be completed before the bill can be submitted to the President for his assent.

"I have heard many people asking 'Has the president signed it?' I would like to inform everyone here that it hasn't reached the president yet," the Minister said.

"I met with the Head of Legislation and he is still tidying up a few things in the Act. Once he is done,

then it can be sent to the President for his assent," the Minister added.

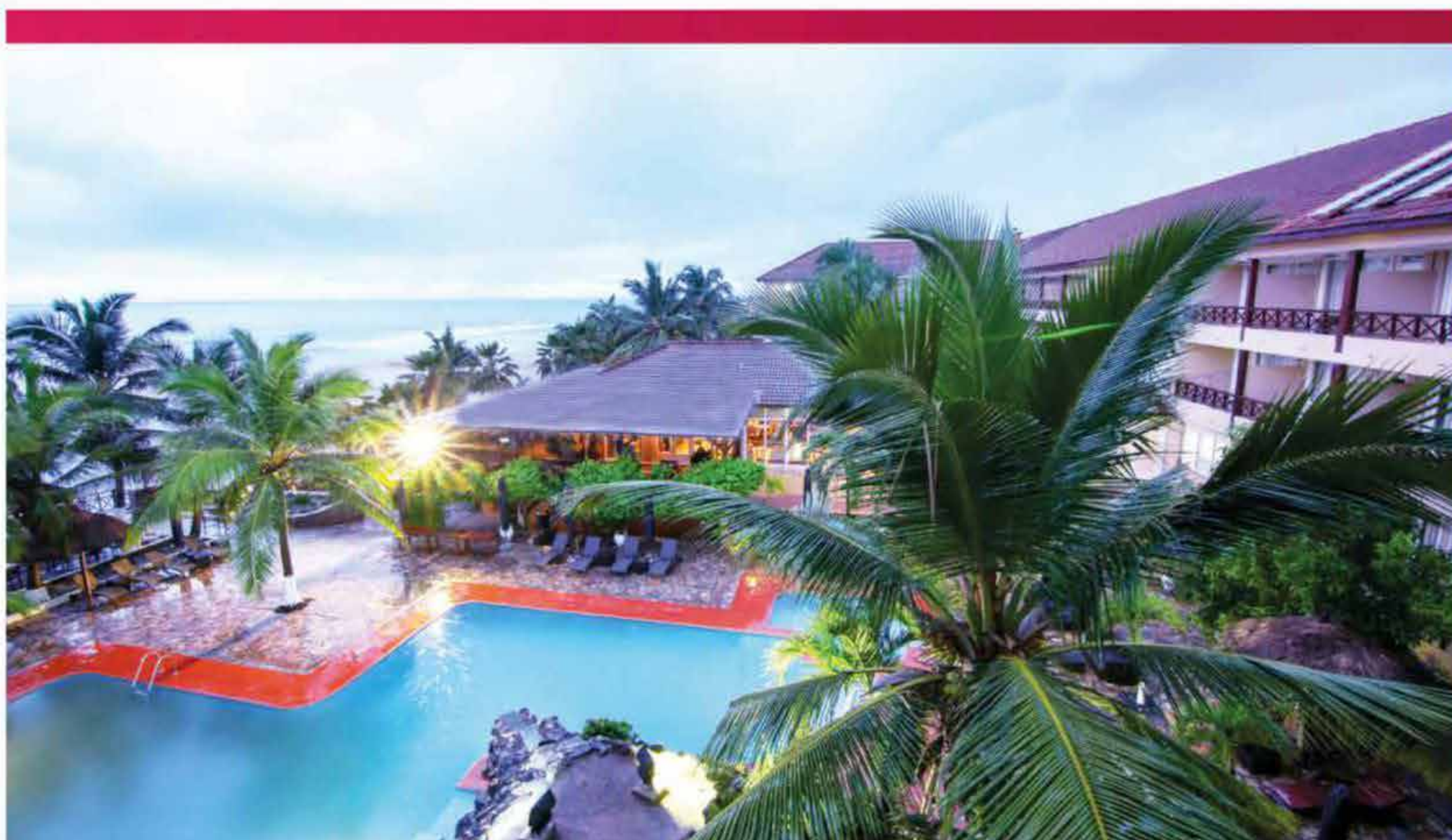
The minister emphasized that the version of the Bill circulating on social media is not the final draft, noting that the initial version was withdrawn for revisions.

However, she assured that the key provisions have remained largely unchanged.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe.M.Doku



Darkoa Newman, Gender Minister



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Business

AGI sabotaging effort to pluck out 'currency speculators' - Finance Minister claims

Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam has accused the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) of shielding certain companies engaged in currency speculation which has resulted in the exchange rate fluctuations the country is presently experiencing.

Currency speculators engage in buying and selling currencies with the aim of profiting from fluctuations in exchange rates. Their large-scale trades can sometimes lead to sharp movements in a currency's value, potentially causing depreciation.

The Minister pointed out that specific companies within the industrial sector have been identified as major contributors to these volatilities, however, efforts by the government to apprehend such culprits will be met with stern opposition by the AGI.

"While we have commendable corporate citizens, we also have those whose practices are harmful. For instance, some companies sell products, collect payments in cedi, then convert the cash to dollars and hoard it in banks, worsening our forex

challenges. If we begin to crack down on this behaviour, the AGI might accuse us of targeting their members," the Minister cautioned.

He provided an example to underscore his point: "One company deposited \$50 million in a bank without holding any cedi. This single action caused the Cedi to depreciate by 2 points—when the rate was at 13 cedis to the dollar, it jumped to about 15 cedis due to this deposit. These practices are damaging our currency."

During a recent engagement with the AGI, Dr. Amin Adam warned that the government might soon be compelled to take action against these companies to ensure the stabilization of the currency.

In response, AGI's Chief Executive Officer, Seth Twum Akwaboah, expressed the association's commitment to ethical standards, affirming that AGI would not defend any member found guilty of such activities.

He assured that the association would investigate the claims and hold any

culpable members accountable.

"As an association, we operate with high ethical standards, and if any member is involved in these practices, we will expose and deal with them severely. While we were unaware of these specific instances, I do not doubt the Minister's assertions," Akwaboah stated.

He further urged AGI members to adhere to best practices, adding, "In any community, there are always a few bad actors. Our member companies

must stop engaging in such practices. If caught, AGI will not defend you—this is a firm assurance. However, we also need to understand the circumstances that led to such actions."

The AGI also took the opportunity to outline several critical challenges that must be addressed to better support industries across the country.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

Bawumia proposes 1% mining export tax to check gold smuggling

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) flagbearer, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, has pledged to slash the mining export tax to 1% if he secures victory in the 2024 general elections.

Speaking at a campaign rally on Thursday, August 8, 2024, Dr. Bawumia presented this proposal as a key tactic to address the pervasive issue of gold smuggling, which he identified as a critical problem in Ghana's mining sector.

He argued that reducing the export tax would make gold smuggling less attractive financially, thereby promoting legal and transparent trade. This move is anticipated to increase domestic gold production, enabling more refining to be done within the country.

Dr. Bawumia also linked this tax cut to his broader economic vision, which includes the "gold for oil" and "gold for reserves" initiatives. These programs aim to leverage

gold exports to stabilize the national currency and strengthen Ghana's foreign reserves, which he considers essential for the country's economic stability and resilience.

He highlighted the success of a previous reduction in the gold export levy from 3% to 1.5% in 2021, noting that it had led to a significant decline in gold smuggling.

Dr. Bawumia credited this outcome to the creation of a more favourable tax environment that encouraged miners to adhere to legal export practices, resulting in a more regulated and transparent gold market.

"A few years ago, I pushed for the reduction of the gold export levy (withholding tax) from 3% to 1.5%. The result of this is that after a sharp decline in 2021, the gold export volumes have been steadily recovering, with 2024 showing promising signs. In the first half of 2024, the small-scale mining sector alone produced a total export volume

of 821.97 troy ounces."

"This is more than double that of Jan-Jun 2023 (404.06 troy ounces) and 2022 (262.05 troy ounces). Also, in value terms, 2024 recorded \$1.77 billion higher than 2023 and 2022 just from the small-scale sector."

"Given our strategic intention to realize higher production volumes to

refine locally and support the gold for oil and gold for reserves programmes for a stable currency, I will further reduce the withholding tax from 1.5% to 1%, in the next government under my presidency."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President of Ghana



International

Oil prices steady after two days of gains

Oil prices held steady on Thursday after two sessions of gains, with growing supply risks in the Middle East offsetting demand concerns that had pushed prices to their lowest since early 2024 at the start of the week.

Brent crude futures fell 4 cents to \$78.29 a barrel by 1309 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude dipped 10 cents, or 0.1%, to \$75.33.

Brent had gained on Wednesday, recovering from a sharp drop on Monday, when Brent settled at its lowest since early January and WTI in early February.

Prices were supported on Wednesday by a 3.7 million barrel drop in U.S. crude inventories, far exceeding analyst expectations of a draw of 700,000 barrels and marking a sixth straight weekly decline to six-month lows.

“Crude oil futures experienced volatility in reaction to a mix of economic concerns and rising geopolitical tensions. Weak US economic data, including poor job growth, have raised concerns about a possible recession in the U.S.,” said Mazen Salhab, market strategist for BDSwiss.

“Despite these economic fears, oil prices might find support on the back of tensions in the Middle East.”

The killing of senior members of militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah last week raised the possibility of retaliatory strikes by Iran against Israel, stoking concerns over oil supply from the world’s largest-producing region.

Also lending some support, Libya’s National Oil Corporation declared force majeure at its Sharara oilfield on Tuesday, a statement said, adding that the company had gradually reduced

the field’s production because of protests.

Analysts at Citi said there was a possibility of a bounce in prices to the low to mid-\$80s for Brent.

“Upside risks in the market remain, from still-tight balances through

August, heightened geopolitical risks across North Africa and the Middle East, the possibility of weather-related disruptions through hurricane season and light managed money positioning,” Citi said.

Source: Reuters



File photo

WHO calls emergency meeting to discuss jump in mpox cases from DRC

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called an emergency meeting to discuss a jump in mpox cases spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made the announcement on Wednesday, amid an outbreak that has seen nearly 27,000 cases in the DRC and claimed about 1,100 lives, many of them children.

Since last September, cases have surged in the central African nation due to a strain of the virus that has now been detected in its neighbouring countries.

“In light of the spread of mpox outside DRC, and the potential for further international spread within and outside Africa, I have decided to convene an Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations to advise me on whether the outbreak represents a public health emergency of international concern,” the WHO chief said in a social media post.

Ghebreyesus said he convened the meeting after cases of mpox appeared to spread to countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, where they had not been previously reported.

The committee will advise the WHO on the question of whether the outbreak represents a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) – the highest level of alarm that the WHO can sound.

The WHO said the meeting would occur “as soon as possible”, but has yet to offer specific dates.

Mpox is largely spread through sexual contact and is especially prevalent among men who have sex with other men.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said last week that mpox has been detected in 10 African nations this year, including the DRC, where more than 96 percent of all cases are located.

The agency added that cases are up 160 percent this year, with deaths

increasing by 19 percent. The disease also appears especially prevalent among the young, with 70 percent of cases and 85 percent of deaths in the DRC occurring among children under the age of 15.

The WHO declared mpox, also known as monkeypox, a global emergency in 2022 after it spread to more than 70 countries.

Vaccines helped neutralise the threat

in wealthy nations, but were not made adequately accessible to poor ones, making the disease harder to ultimately eradicate and underscoring the global health risks of discrepancies in vaccine access.

“We do not want the world to sit and watch and wait,” said Maria Van Kerkhove, who leads WHO’s outbreak department. “The time [to act] is now.”

Source: Al Jazeera and News Agencies



Mpox vaccine

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