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General News

Traffic jam to ease as Ofankor–Nsawam road opens for public use by end of Sept.

By *Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*

Chief Resident Engineer for the Ofankor–Nsawam road project, Ing. Kwabena Bempong, has assured that the construction team is “working assiduously to complete sections of the project and open to traffic to reduce the current negative impact on the travelling public by the end of September.”

Ing. Bempong made these remarks during an inspection of the project by President Nana Akufo-Addo, who was accompanied by Mr Francis Asenso-Boakyie and Mohammed Amin Adam on August 30.

The Ofankor-China Mall stretch, excluding the Amasaman Interchange area, is set to be opened to traffic by the end of the month. The opening of the section of the road will finally be a relief to residents in the area who have been subjected to traffic congestion as a result of the construction for a biennium.

The \$346.5 million road improvement project is co-financed by the government and Maripoma Enterprise Limited, a fully Ghanaian-owned firm, which is undertaking the project under a Design and Build Contract with Associated Consultants Limited overseeing the work.

The 33.4-kilometre road project commenced in July 2022 with an original completion target of July this year. As of July, about 60 per cent of the work had been completed, compelling the construction firm to request a year extension.

Senior Project Manager, Ing. Abdulai Mahama, outlined factors including the demolition of a shrine after appeasing its oracle with money and cattle to have contributed to the delay in the completion of the Ofankor-Nsawam road. This hindered construction works for about three and a half months.

The President has expressed his satisfaction with the quality of work being done and has urged the contractor to ensure that the project delivers value for money for the people of Ghana.

In a related development, the Flowerpot Interchange Project, which currently stands at 92% completion, is expected to be substantially completed by the end of October this year.

This project aims to improve the lives of commuters travelling from the northern to the southern sections of the Accra-Tema Motorway,

alleviate congestion at the Flowerpot Intersection along the Spintex Road, and provide a direct route to Accra East from Burma Camp and its surroundings to East Legon and vice versa.

President Akufo-Addo commended the progress made, expressing his satisfaction with the quality of work done on both projects.

These infrastructural developments are set to significantly enhance the travel experience and connectivity for residents and commuters in the affected areas.



Ofankor-China Mall stretch

Creative industry players rejected new recording studios, opted for cash instead - Okraku Mantey reveals

By *Amanda Cartey*

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts, Mark Okraku Mantey, has disclosed why the government's promise to build three music recording studios in Ghana was not fulfilled.

According to him, the project, which was a key part of the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) 2020 election manifesto, was derailed by a lack of support from industry players who preferred the allocated funds to be distributed among themselves rather than used to establish new studios.

Okraku Mantey revealed that

although the initiative was initially met with enthusiasm, this quickly waned as stakeholders in the creative industry voiced their preference for cash over the construction of the studios.

“Yes, yes, yes, they rejected it. You can quote me anywhere, anytime. They rejected it and asked that the money be shared among them because they already had studios that were doing well,” Okraku Mantey stated.

He explained that some industry players believed the existing studios were sufficient for their needs.

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Mark Okraku Mantey, Deputy Minister of Tourism

General News

Creative industry players rejected new recording studios, opted for cash instead - Okraku Mantey reveals

- Continued from page 2

Gospel musician Nacee was cited as one of the key critics of the project. Okraku Mantey mentioned that Nacee had publicly expressed his doubts about the need for additional recording facilities.

"Nacee, a few weeks ago, was on Hit FM and later on Peace FM, where he said that while he initially supported the idea, he no longer sees the need for more

studios," Okraku Mantey added.

The original plan was to build recording studios in the Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Western Regions to improve access to studio facilities for recording artists.

Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia highlighted this during the NPP's manifesto launch,

emphasising the potential of the creative arts sector and the need for better infrastructure.

"We see the creative arts as a major growth pole, it has so much talent, the problem is access to studios. As a result, we will set up large recording studios in Accra, Tema, Takoradi, and Kumasi for recording artistes to rent," Dr. Bawumia had stated.

Despite this pledge, the project did not materialise. Okraku Mantey expressed his disappointment that the creative industry players, who initially supported the idea, later pushed for the funds to be distributed among themselves, leading to the abandonment of the project.

EC gears up for election 2024 with nearly 200,000 recruits

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Electoral Commission (EC) is intensifying its preparations with an extensive recruitment drive for the upcoming December Polls.

In this regard, nearly 200,000 officials are being mobilised to play crucial roles in ensuring the smooth execution of the electoral process. This was disclosed by the Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission (EC) in charge of Corporate Services, Dr Bossman Asare during a press briefing on Saturday, August 31, 2024.

Dr Bossman Asare added that these officials will be instrumental in overseeing various aspects of the elections, from managing polling stations to assisting voters. He stated that this is a part of the EC's comprehensive strategy to ensure a well-organised, free and fair election.

"As we speak, we just completed the exhibition of the voter's register and when we finished that exercise, the onus is now on the Commission to ensure the finalisation of the voter's register."

"We have also recruited almost 200,000 individuals who are going to work with us at all the various polling stations; almost 40,653 polling stations," he said.

Dr. Asare further detailed the upcoming electoral timeline, indicating that candidates must submit their nominations between September 9 and September 13, 2024.

He added that, after this period, the Commission will print the notice of poll, which will list candidates for both parliamentary and presidential elections across all 276 constituencies.

"After which we are going to print the ballot papers we are going to use for the elections. So from the perspective and the standpoint of the Electoral Commission, we are fully ready for a successful, peaceful, transparent and credible general election," he said.

The Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission acknowledged the support received from political parties in ensuring a successful election, noting that this support serves as a crucial check on the Electoral Commission's responsibilities.

He further called on Ghanaians to abandon any intentions of creating confusion before and during the general election, while emphasizing that the EC will continue to uphold its values as a key institution in Ghana.

"When we are printing the ballots all the parties are there, when we are transmitting them all the parties are there including security so our system is transparent. As a commission we believe our reputation is on the line so we want to do better than what we did in the past so will continue to work with the parties so that we have a credible election and we think that the presence of the parties serve as a serious check on our work," he added.



EC officials



General News

UG champions replanting initiative to save endangered cotton tree

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The University of Ghana (UG) has taken a proactive stance in preserving the endangered Kapok tree, also known as the 'silk-cotton tree,' through a dedicated replanting initiative in collaboration with the Forestry Commission.

This effort is part of a broader conservation strategy that also focuses on other endangered tree species like the Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), Dawadawa (*Parkia biglobosa*), and Shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*).

Currently, only four Kapok trees remain within the lush environment of the University of Ghana, which also houses other notable plant species such as the Mahogany tree, Rainbow tree, Flamboyant tree, Moringa tree, and the symbolic Tree of Life.

In an interview with The Independent Ghana, Mr. Philip Quaye, the Senior Curator of Grounds and Environmental Health at the University, emphasized the stringent measures in place to protect these trees. The areas where the Kapok trees are planted are highly protected and off-limits

to unauthorized individuals.

"It is a softwood and highly prized. We receive seedlings from the Forestry Commission, which we will periodically plant to ensure the species does not go extinct," Mr. Quaye stated.

The Kapok tree, known for its impressive height—reaching up to 60-70 meters in tropical rainforests—has fibers inside its seed pods that are highly valued for their lightweight, buoyant, and water-resistant properties, making them ideal for stuffing pillows, mattresses, and life jackets.

The wood from the Kapok tree is also used for crafting canoes, carvings, and lightweight furniture. In various cultural beliefs, the tree is thought to be inhabited by spirits or serves as a gathering place for witches.

Despite the tree's potential, Ghana's cotton sector has struggled since its collapse in the 1980s, which has, in turn, impacted the supply of raw materials to the textile industry. Efforts to revive the cotton industry, including the establishment of a Cotton Development Authority

(CDA), have been hampered by limited resources and authority. According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, support for cotton research is also lacking.

However, former President John Dramani Mahama has pledged to rejuvenate the cotton industry in northern Ghana if elected in the 2024 elections. Speaking at a town hall meeting in Tamale in February

2024, he highlighted the potential of cotton as an easy-to-cultivate cash crop that requires little rainfall and does not interfere with other crops.

"With deliberate investment, the cotton industry, which has now virtually collapsed, will be revitalized to boost the economy," Mahama assured.



Kapok tree at UG, Legon

59 out of the 275 constituencies at risk of electoral violence in Dec polls - WANEP warns

By Amanda Cartey

Head of Monitoring and Evaluation at the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Dr. Vincent Azumah, has raised concerns about the potential for electoral violence in the upcoming December 7 elections, revealing that 59 constituencies across the country have been identified as hotspots.

Dr. Azumah noted that the aim of this revelation is to enable the implementation of effective response mechanisms to prevent any possible violence that could erupt during the elections.

"Among the 275 constituencies, 29 have been classified as very high risk, while 30 are at a high-risk level," Dr. Azumah stated.

He pointed out that certain constituencies, including Bawku, Ablekuma Central, Gushiegu, Asunafo South, Techiman South, Salaga, Tempene, Ashaiman, Assin North, Yendi, and Bantama, have been identified as areas with a higher likelihood of violence during the election period.

Dr. Azumah explained that the criteria for determining the risk levels of these constituencies include a range of factors, such as

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Voting exercise

General News

59 out of the 275 constituencies at risk of electoral violence in Dec polls - WANEP warns

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the local environment, historical conflicts, and the presence of organized crime. Specific concerns include chieftaincy and land disputes that could be manipulated during the election season, the strength of local security systems, and the proximity to regions with violent extremists.

The balance of political support between competing parties or candidates in these areas is also

a significant factor, as closely contested races may increase tensions, making violence more likely.

WANEP's assessment is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate risks in these identified hotspots. Dr. Azumah's warning comes in the wake of past electoral violence, particularly the tragic events in Techiman South during the last general elections, where

confrontations between police and voters resulted in the deaths of eight individuals. The incident remains under investigation.

In response to the potential threat, the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, has issued a stern warning against any attempts to disrupt the peace during this year's general election.

He emphasized that while the police

will maintain professionalism in ensuring security throughout the election process, they will not hesitate to act decisively against any troublemakers.

"We will not allow anybody or group to ride on their personal interest to disrupt the peace of the country and affect the masses," Dr. Dampare asserted.

Ghana Police Service's communication style not illegal - IGP defends

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Inspector General of the Ghana Police Service, Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, has firmly defended the current centralized communication strategy adopted by the police, dismissing appeals for its reversal.

The centralized approach has faced criticism from various stakeholders in the media, who argue that it hinders the timely and effective dissemination of information.

During his address at JoyNews' event focused on media protection and freedom on August 30, Dr. Dampare emphasized that the Police Service's communication practices are fully compliant with the law. He acknowledged the concerns raised but reiterated that the centralized system is not in violation of any legal provisions.

"At least no one has said the police have breached any law. We are within the law in all our actions," Dr. Dampare stated. He further noted the importance of addressing the issue in a constructive manner, saying, "All these concerns are appeals, and with appeals, how they are made is how we receive them."

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has been vocal in its opposition to the centralized communication mechanism. In a 2022 statement signed by its President, Albert Dwumfour, the GJA urged the Police

Administration to reconsider its stance, citing potential risks such as speculation, misinformation, and disinformation.

Mr Dwumfour reiterated these concerns at the event, expressing disappointment that despite previous assurances, the Police have not revisited their decision.

"We raised the issue again and received assurances that the matter would be considered. To date, we have received no positive response. We are once again urging the Ghana Police to decentralize information, thereby facilitating easier access to it," Mr Dwumfour

asserted.

Investigative journalist Manasseh Azure also weighed in on the matter, warning that the slow dissemination of information under the centralized system could lead to the spread of fake news.

"If we have to go to the Police headquarters to get that information, the fake news would spread, and by the time the national headquarters comes out with the truth, nobody may really remember what happened," Manasseh Azure cautioned.

Addressing earlier discussions on

the subject, Dr. Dampare explained that the previous decentralized communication approach had become problematic for the service. He highlighted issues such as the release of incomplete or inaccurate information, which, in his view, was damaging the service's reputation and creating public disaffection.

The decision to centralize communication was therefore taken after extensive consultations with regional commanders and Public Relations officers across the service.



Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, IGP



General News

Numerous shops destroyed as fire guts Zongo lane near Rawlings Park

By Amanda Cartey

Fire erupted at Zongo Lane near Rawlings Park in Makola, Accra, causing damage to several shops and likely leaving traders devastated on Sunday, September 1, 2024.

Head of the Public Relations Department of the Ghana National Fire Service, Alex Nartey, who was at the scene and engaged the media stated that the fire began as a small blaze but quickly intensified due to the inaccessibility of the area and the presence of highly flammable materials stored in many shops.

"The fire that started little has quickly spread as a result of inaccessibility and highly flammable materials found in the affected shops," Mr Nartey explained.

Firefighters arrived on the scene promptly and undertook a rigorous effort to control the flames. Despite their intense work, the fire caused considerable destruction before it was brought under control.

As the smoke began to dissipate, it became clear that the fire had caused severe damage. Numerous shops were left in ruins, with

valuable items such as clothing, electronics, and other goods completely destroyed.

The exact cause of the fire remains under investigation by the Ghana National Fire Service. Authorities are currently working to

determine how the blaze started and to assess the full impact on the affected businesses.

The recent incident is a stark reminder of a similar event in October 2022, where 200 makeshift structures at the Makola

Shopping Mall in Accra were destroyed by fire on a Friday night.

It took personnel from the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) close to four hours to extinguish the inferno with the assistance of reinforcements.



Ghana National Fire Service at the scene

Agric Minister unveils \$70m silo plan to avert food crisis

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Minister for Food and Agriculture, Bryan Acheampong, has announced the establishment of a state-of-the-art agricultural silo designed to enhance food security and optimize grain storage.

The facility, estimated to cost seventy million dollars, is expected to be completed within the next twelve months.

In a media briefing on Saturday, August 31, the Minister explained that the new silo will be crucial in managing the country's agricultural produce, ensuring

better preservation, and reducing post-harvest losses.

This development is part of the government's strategy to prevent a food crisis amid a prolonged dry spell affecting eight regions in the country's northern areas. These regions include Bono, Bono East, Oti, Northern, North East, Savannah, Upper East, and Upper West, contributing approximately 62% of the nation's grain production.

In response to the ongoing dry spell, the government has with immediate effect placed a ban

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Bryan Acheampong, Minister for Food and Agriculture

General News

Agric Minister unveils \$70m silo plan to avert food crisis

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on the export of grains including maize, rice, and soya bean. Also, the construction of nineteen (19) small earth dams which will cover six hundred and five (605) hectares in the affected regions are set to commence.

The dams will enhance irrigation, boost crop production, and support the livelihoods of individuals in the communities.

Mr Acheampong also outlined various measures the ministry is implementing to prepare for potential future challenges. He highlighted the ministry's efforts to develop the Ghana Agribusiness Platform, a nationwide initiative aimed at enrolling farmers.

This advisory platform will provide planting instructions through voice notes in multiple languages, ensuring that farmers across the country receive clear guidance.

"We will be back on course, of example next year when we have a dry spell, we will not have a challenge of this magnitude on our hands to deal with because we are now setting up the Ghana Agribusiness Platform enrolling all farmers and we should be able to be able to send them voice notes with instructions now we just have to send them an advisory and they decide that they won't read our advisory or they don't understand. So will give them an advisory in different languages

they understand that plant on let's say the 20th and those are the systems we are putting in place," he stated.

Additionally, the Minister mentioned the integration of crop and weather calendars under the WHO's West Africa Food System Resilience Programme (FSRP).

He assured that the impact of the current drought could have been more severe without the targets and investments made in previous years.

"Now the crop calendar and the weather calendar is being merged thanks to what we have called the Food Systems Resilience Program funded by the World Bank, we

have integrated that and we will be able to communicate to farmers and give them direct instructions based on their location so that at least if the farming season is supposed to start in August people won't start in July as they did this year so we are putting systems in place, we are putting irrigation infrastructure in place and we are doing a lot of land development so that we will avert.

"In addition to that, we are creating storage for the first time. We are building a sixty thousand metric tonne silo funded by the government of Ghana costing us almost seventy million dollars and it should be ready in about twelve months," he added.

Stop the bias, provide independent presidential candidates 2024 voter register - Abu Sakara to EC

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

A member of the Alliance for Revolutionary Change (ARC), Dr. Michael Abu Sakara Foster, has expressed serious concerns over the inability of independent presidential candidates to access the 2024 voter register.

He argues that the current situation, where the Electoral Commission (EC) has provided the provisional voter register exclusively to political parties, unfairly sidelines independent aspirants in the lead-up to the general elections.

The EC had earlier released the provisional voter register to political parties on August 19, following pressure from various political actors who demanded timely access for review. However, Dr. Abu Sakara, in an interview on JoyNews, described it as "unfortunate" that independent candidates have been excluded from this crucial process.

According to Dr. Abu Sakara, it is essential for the electoral field to be levelled, ensuring that all candidates, whether independent or representing political parties, have equal access to critical

electoral information. He called on the EC to rectify this imbalance by providing the voter register to independent candidates by Monday, September 2.

"Everybody should have the same opportunity for slotting in the ballot box," Dr. Abu Sakara emphasized. He pointed out the growing public distrust in the bipartisan system, evidenced by the increasing number of independent candidates. "The Electoral Commission being the referee should ensure that it adapts its processes to give all the contestants a fair chance," he added.

Since the provisional voter register was made available to political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has flagged several "very serious discrepancies" in the document, including missing names, incorrect placements of qualified voters on exception lists, and instances of disqualified voters appearing on the main register.

These concerns have led the NDC to request an emergency meeting with the EC, although the Commission has maintained that the voter register is both robust and credible.

Former President John Dramani Mahama, the NDC's presidential candidate, has also expressed caution, urging the EC to address any inaccuracies to avoid confusion during the elections.

In light of these issues, Dr. Abu Sakara, who has formed an alliance with independent presidential hopeful Alan Kyerematen, leader of

the Movement For Change, insists that independent candidates must be given the same access to the voter register.

This, he argues, is essential to ensuring that all candidates can fairly participate in the upcoming elections without any bias or undue advantage for any particular group.



Dr. Michael Abu Sakara Foster, member of the Alliance for Revolutionary Change (ARC)



General News

Visually impaired applicant sues KNUST for GHS1m over revoked admission

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is facing a lawsuit filed by a visually impaired PhD applicant, Isaac Anin Baah, for alleged discrimination and neglect in the university's admissions process.

The lawsuit involves KNUST, the Registrar, the Dean of the School of Public Health, and the Dean of the Graduate School, with Mr Baah demanding a GHC1 million for negligence along with legal costs.

He has demanded KNUST additional relief deemed appropriate by the court. The plaintiff applied to the university for a PhD in Public Health for the 2023–2024 academic year.

Mr Baah recounted receiving official admission letters from the offices of the Registrar and the Dean of the School of Public Health, complete with instructions on medicals, fee payment, and an invitation to an interview. He was

even given the green light to attend student orientation.

The university further reinforced his admission by including his name on both a joint list of all students admitted to PhD studies for the academic year and a specific list for the Department of Public Health, all published on KNUST's website.

However, according to a writ filed at the High Court in Kumasi, Mr Baah received a letter from the third defendant on November 13, 2023, instructing him not to attend the interview without any valid reason.

The lawsuit claims that KNUST withdrew his admission twice, despite his successful completion of a Master of Science (MSc) in Disability and Rehabilitation Studies at the same institution.

Mr Baah's legal action, submitted to a High Court in Kumasi, follows multiple unanswered requests from his lawyers for explanations regarding the revocation of his

admission.

The writ highlighted that Mr Baah's admission was initially confirmed through official letters and published lists, but he was later informed that his admission was a mistake without valid justification.

"Plaintiff states that he later received a surprisingly unexpected call from the Secretary of the 3rd Defendant informing him that his admission was an error and therefore, invalid," the writ added.

The writ underscores, "revoking an admission offer to the Plaintiff without any stated reasons, justifications or grounds raises concerns of discrimination based on his disability.

It further points out, "a Ghanaian Citizen with visual impairment seeking to pursue [PHD] with the Defendants should not be met by these unfortunate events but rather, to create the enabling environment and support to encourage other persons with

disabilities to defy all odds to achieve their dreams."

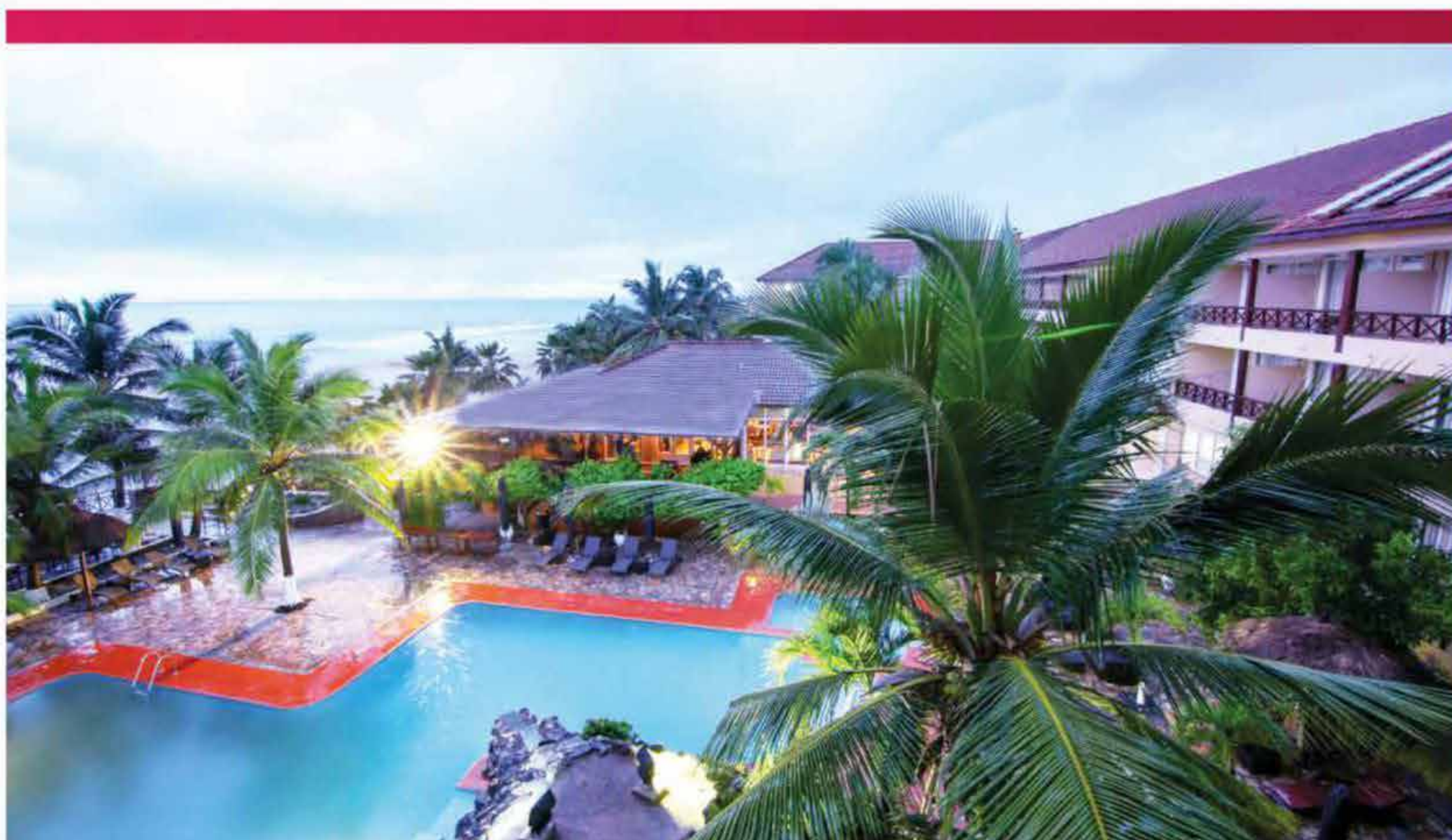
According to the court documents, Mr Baah's experience has caused him to lose a scholarship and has deeply affected his academic aspirations.

He is seeking compensation of one million Ghana Cedis for the distress and lost opportunities, alongside questioning the university's commitment to inclusive education as outlined in the Salamanca Statement and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Represented by Roseford Advocates, Baah's lawyer, Carruthers Tetteh, is alleging that KNUST's actions breach the Persons with Disability Act 2006 and other relevant regulations.

Mr Baah, an educationist and teacher at Nkwanta Kese Methodist Junior High School, is calling for a judicial review to address what he describes as unjust treatment based on his disability.





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Business

Awutu Senya East youth receive 5,000 fingerlings, fish feeds from gov't to boost agric sector

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Close to seventy (70) young individuals in the Awutu Senya East Municipality, Central Region, have received tarpaulins, 5,000 fingerlings, and fish feed packages valued at approximately 38,500 cedis each from the government to kickstart their fish farming businesses.

The beneficiaries were provided with these resources after undergoing an intensive two-day training in aquaculture organized by the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development. The Aquaculture for Food and Jobs Programme, unveiled by President Akufo-Addo in August, is part of the government's broader commitment to sustainable development, food security, and job creation.

This initiative aims to bridge the gap between the demand and

supply of seafood, promoting fish farming as a sustainable means to reduce reliance on imports.

Speaking to the media after distributing the first batch of fingerlings and fish feed to the beneficiaries, Mavis Hawa Koomson, the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, highlighted the government's commitment to boosting the aquaculture sector.

She added that the beneficiaries will be selected from the various assemblies, irrespective of their political affiliations.

"For the government to bridge the gap of demand and supply of seafood, we need to encourage fish farming to complement the government's effort. So that the government would be able to reduce the importation of seafood. Each beneficiary will receive 5,000 fingerlings and fish feed,

valued at approximately 38,500 cedis each," the Minister added.

The Minister, who also represents the Awutu Senya East constituency, urged the youth to take full advantage of the programme,

which is designed to enhance their future prospects through sustainable fish farming practices. She emphasized that encouraging fish farming is crucial for meeting the country's seafood demand.



Mavis Hawa Koomson, Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development

Farmers feed crops with water from polluted Pra River

By Amanda Cartey

The pollution of the Pra River due to illegal mining is causing severe consequences beyond the destruction of the water source and the lack of clean water for nearby communities.

Recent reports indicate that contaminated river water is now being used to irrigate crops, posing a significant public health risk.

A cocoa farmer from Twifo Praso in the Central Region shared this troubling practice during an interview with the media. He explained that the scarcity of clean water has forced farmers to rely on the polluted Pra River for both domestic and commercial purposes.

Harmful chemicals from mining operations have infiltrated into

the river, contaminating crops with toxic substances such as mercury, arsenic, and lead—dangerous elements used in mineral processing that pose risks to both aquatic life and humans.

Chief Executive Officer of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Dr. Opoku Ware Ampomah, has warned that Ghana risks seeing an increase in children born with cleft lip and palate due to heavy metals from illegal mining contaminating drinking water sources.

A video shared by the media highlighted the extent of the pollution, showing the Pra River's water a deep brown, indicating high contamination levels. The footage also showed numerous chamfan machines lined up along the river, confirming their use by illegal miners.

The impact of illegal mining on

the local water supply is dire. The Ghana Water Company Limited in the Central Region reported significant disruptions in water services to Cape Coast, Elmina, and surrounding areas.

Residents are facing severe shortages, with taps running dry for days, forcing them to endure increasingly difficult conditions due to the disruption of their once-reliable water supply.

There is growing pressure on the government to hold local authorities accountable as part of efforts to combat illegal mining. This follows the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, destooling Sabronum Gyaasehene Nana Awua Gyau Atuomi, Akyeamehene, and Baamuhene for their involvement in illegal mining. Stakeholders are urging the president to follow suit and sanction guilty government officials.



River Pra



International

Children die in building collapse after Nigeria flooding

By BBC

Two children in north-western Nigeria have died after the building they were in collapsed, adding to the dozens who have lost their lives during weeks of severe flooding, the country's disaster agency said.

The National Emergency Management Agency (Nema) reported that the children died in Katsina, one of the seven north-western states hit particularly hard by flooding.

A third child was left with injuries following the building collapse, Nema said. On Thursday, the agency said at least 179 people across Nigeria have died as a result of the floods, while tens of thousands have been forced from their homes.

In a statement, the office of Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu said he had received "the news of the devastation wreaked by floods on communities

and farmlands across the country with profound grief".

The president emphasised the need to address "environmental concerns" and "build a more climate resilient and adaptive society", the statement added.

Around 107,000 hectares of farmland have been washed away - a statistic that is causing concern as Nigerians are already struggling under steep increases in food costs.

The country is facing its worst economic crisis in a generation thanks to issues such as double-digit inflation and foreign currency shortages.

Nema and the UN's refugee agency noted that several of those displaced by the flooding had already fled their homes in the north-west due to repeated attacks by militants.

The UN's refugee agency said the

floods were a "devastating" event that has wrought "death and destruction".

In 2022, Nigeria experienced its worst flooding in more than a decade,

which killed more than 600 people and displaced around 1.3 million.

By Reuters



Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (Nema) has been conducting relief efforts

UNICEF issues emergency tender to secure mpox vaccines

By Reuters

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has issued an emergency tender to secure mpox vaccines for crisis-hit countries in collaboration with the Gavi vaccine alliance, Africa CDC and the World Health Organization, the organizations said in a joint statement on Saturday.

Depending on the production capacity of manufacturers, agreements for up to 12 million doses through 2025 can be made, according to the statement.

Under the tender, UNICEF will set up conditional supply agreements with vaccine manufacturers, the statement said.

This will enable UNICEF to purchase and ship vaccines without delay, once financing, demand, readiness and regulatory requirements are confirmed.

The collaboration - which would also include working with the Vaccine Alliance and the Pan American Health Organization as well as with Gavi, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and WHO - would facilitate donations of vaccines from existing stockpiles in high-income countries.

The statement added that WHO is reviewing information submitted by manufacturers on Aug. 23, and expects to complete a review for an emergency use listing by mid-September.

The agency is reviewing applications for emergency licences for two vaccines made by Bavarian Nordic

(BAVA.CO) and Japan's KM Biologics.

Earlier in August, the WHO declared mpox a global public health emergency following an outbreak of the viral infection in the Democratic Republic of Congo that spread to neighbouring countries.

More than 18,000 suspected cases of

mpox have been reported in Congo so far this year with 629 deaths, while over 150 cases have been confirmed in Burundi, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

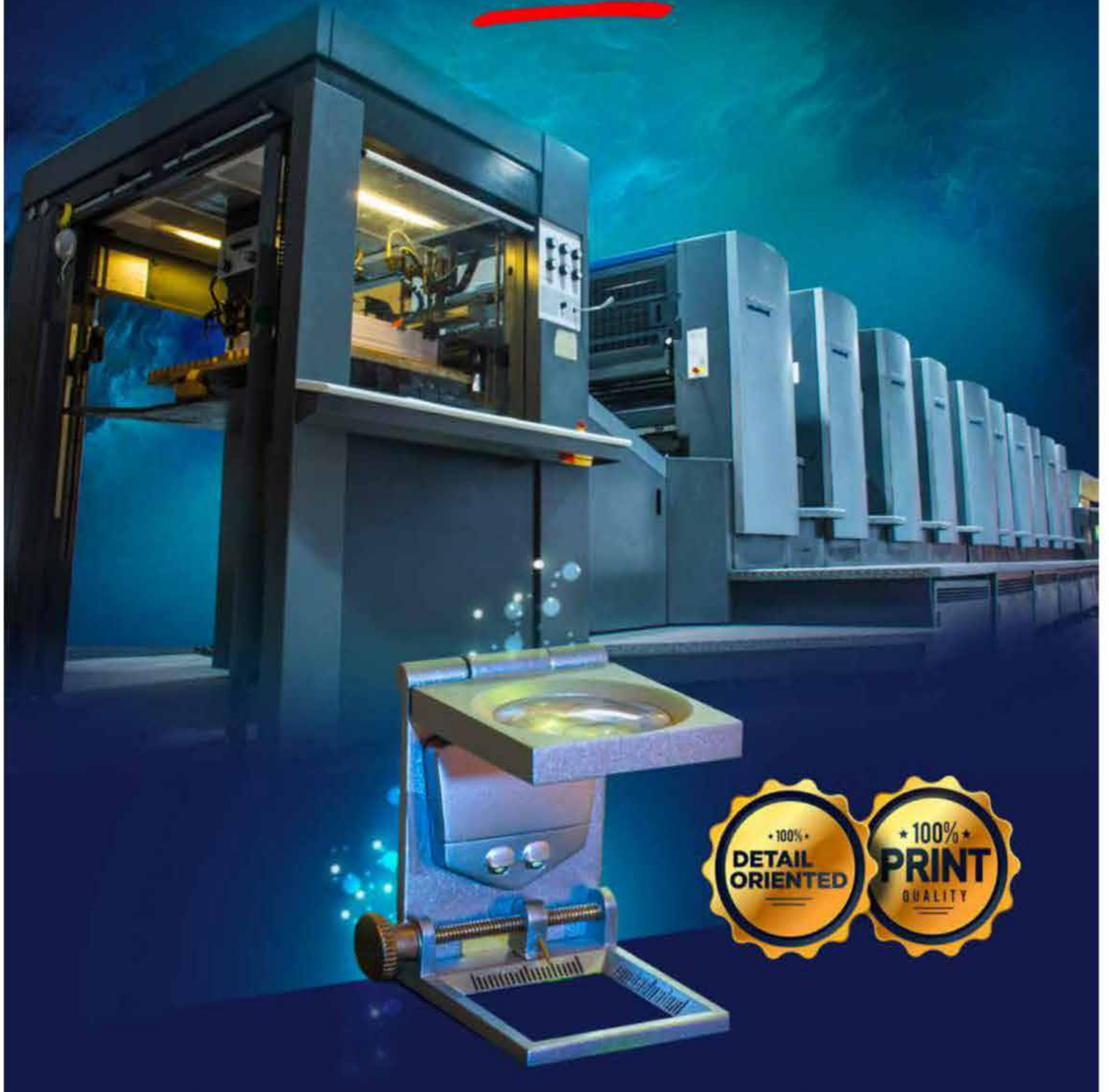
Sweden and Thailand have confirmed cases of the clade Ib type of the virus, outside of the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighboring countries.



Mpox vaccines

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