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General News

V/R: 275,465 children to be vaccinated against Measles and Rubella - GHS

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Deputy Director of Health Services in the Volta Region, Dr. Senanu Djokoto, has disclosed that approximately 275,465 children aged 9 months and under 5 years have been targeted for the immunization exercise against Measles and Rubella slated for October 2 to 6, 2024.

Engaging the media on September 13, Dr. Senanu Djokoto assured the public of the efficacy and safety of the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine that will be used. He emphasized that the required quantity of vaccines for the exercise is adequately supplied.

“We have more than enough vaccines. Vaccines are supplied throughout the year to meet our demands. We are to target 275,465 children (9-59 months), 16% of the total population,” Dr. Senanu Djokoto told The Independent Ghana.

Immunization will take place in health centers and at a number of temporary immunization posts set up in schools, markets, bus stations, churches and all communities in the country. Eligible children will be provided Vitamin A supplements during the campaign.

Parents are advised to ensure that their children remain at the place of

vaccination for at least 15 minutes after administration of the vaccine.

The GHS has advised that anyone who experienced severe allergies after receiving the previous MR vaccine, with a weakened immune system (AIDS patient or cancer patient) or anyone seriously sick, should not participate in the upcoming exercise.

Some children may react mildly to the MR vaccine. Some of the common reactions include fever, pain at the site of the injection, redness and swelling at the site and rashes.

Eight confirmed measles cases have been recorded so far this year, the Deputy Director of Health Services indicated. Measles and rubella diseases continue to claim the lives of nearly 164,000 people worldwide every year, hence the need for Ghana to expedite its efforts to protect the health safety of its citizens.

Rubella

Rubella, also called German measles is caused by rubella virus: it is usually a non-life threatening disease but can be a very dangerous disease in pregnancy. Rubella infection in early pregnancy may result in miscarriage or the birth of an infant with congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). CRS can cause blindness, deafness, mental

retardation, heart defects and a range of other conditions from diabetes to autism (a disorder that affects the social, emotional, and behavioural development of children).

An estimated 112,000 babies around the world are born with CRS every year in Ghana. The incubation period of the rubella virus is usually 14 days and begins at the moment of infection and lasts until the appearance of a rash. It is spread through direct contact with an infected person or pregnancy (virus can pass through the placenta into the circulatory system of the unborn child causing deformity to the unborn child).

Measles

Measles is a dangerous disease caused by a small germ, called the measles virus. It is transmitted from person to person when droplets containing the measles virus discharged from a patient's mouth or nose, when he/she coughs or sneezes, are inhaled (breathed in) by another person. The period from infection to onset of symptoms is usually around 10 -14 days.

Symptoms of these two diseases include inflamed/red eyes (conjunctivitis), fever, skin rash, runny nose, cough, hearing problems.



Child vaccination

Ibn Chambas cautions Akufo-Addo against electoral violence

By Amanda Cartey

Former United Nations Special Representative, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, has urged President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to take decisive measures to prevent a repeat of the violence witnessed during the 2020 elections in the upcoming December polls.

Dr. Chambas emphasized that it would be unacceptable for Ghana's record to reflect election-related violence under the Akufo-Addo administration. He called on the president to do everything possible to safeguard the nation from another regrettable episode of electoral violence.

“With all due respect to Mr. President, the 2024 elections are all about legacies—your legacy. It should not be under your watch that Ghana

experiences violence and mayhem during these general elections. Please, Mr. President, make it a pledge, your mantra, your cardinal goal to ensure that not a single Ghanaian's blood is shed,” he stated while delivering a speech at the maiden edition of the Diplomatic Honours in Accra on Saturday, September 14, 2024.

“The events of 2020 were, to some extent, a blemish on our otherwise enviable record of peaceful elections. Let it not be repeated; let us draw the line,” he added.

In the December 2020 elections, the Ghana Police Service confirmed the deaths of five people from 61 electoral and post-electoral incidents nationwide.

The police reported that twenty-one

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Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Former United Nations Special Representative



General News

Ibn Chambas cautions Akufo-Addo against electoral violence

- Continued from page 2

of these incidents were true cases of electoral violence, with six involving gunshots that resulted in the death of five individuals.

The incidents occurred in the Awutu Senya East constituency, Ododiodio constituency, Ablekuma Central, and other constituencies across the country.

President Nana Akufo-Addo condemned the violence in his victory speech and called for peace. However, there were criticisms that his response lacked concrete actions to address the violence and bring

perpetrators to justice.

As Ghana approaches the 2024 elections, both the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Mahama, and the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, have expressed their commitment to ensuring a peaceful electoral process.

John Mahama has assured Ghanaians that neither he nor his party will instigate violence. Dr. Bawumia has also called for peace, rejecting any form of violence, and urged Ghanaians to embrace unity and reject divisive

rhetoric, emphasizing that political power should not come at the cost of lives or well-being.

President Nana Akufo-Addo has reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring a peaceful electoral process and a smooth transfer of power during the 2024 general elections.

"The peaceful transition of power, evidenced by changes in national political leadership—from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and back—underscores the maturity of our democratic institutions and the

resilience of our electoral process." "Our democratic journey has been made possible by the active participation of the citizenry, a robust civil society, and a free media.

These elements collectively reinforce Ghana's reputation as a stable democratic nation. It is within this context that we must address the growing challenge of misinformation and disinformation, which threaten and undermine the democratic gains we have made," President Akufo-Addo said.

Punish any Chinese national who will violate your laws - China urges Ghana

By Phoebe Martekie Doku and Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Chinese government has urged Ghana to take legal action against any of its compatriots who breach local laws, in response to ongoing issues related to illegal mining by some Chinese nationals. Chinese Ambassador to Ghana, Tong Defa, addressed the menace of illegal mining activities, known locally as "galamsey," that have caused significant damage to Ghana's water bodies and forest reserves at a recent press conference.

He acknowledged the involvement of some Chinese nationals in illegal mining but emphasized that the Chinese government is firmly against such activities.

Ambassador Tong Defa, referenced a 2018 agreement between President Akufo-Addo and the Chinese President, which stipulated that Chinese nationals engaging in illegal activities in Ghana would be subject to local laws.

He reiterated China's stance against illegal mining, stating, "We discourage Chinese people from participating in illegal mining. I know there are some Chinese involved in this illegal mining but we discourage them. We always request Chinese citizens here to do things legally, to do things according to laws and regulations and even traditional customs."

"I know there are some Chinese involved in illegal mining but we discourage them. Our president has told president Akufo-Addo to deal with any Chinese official who commits illegal sins in Ghana should

be dealt with according to the law," he added.

Several Chinese nationals have been arrested for their involvement in illegal acts but only a few have faced the full rigor of the law.

Huang Yanfeng, aka Helena Huang, was arrested on May 9, 2017, together with her gang of four other Chinese nationals. Huang Yanfeng, who was standing trial for transporting large quantities of rosewood to Tema for illegal export to China, was deported and her prosecution was discontinued.

Also, Aisha Huang was in 2018 deported from Ghana due to her involvement in illegal mining. Former Senior Minister, Yaw Osafo-Maafa, told Ghanaians at a town hall meeting in the United Kingdom that the government didn't want to sacrifice its diplomatic relations with China.

Years later, Huang surfaced in Ghana, prompting calls for her arrest amid allegations of illegal mining activities. Then Information Minister Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah clarified that the notorious Chinese illegal mining kingpin, Huang was repatriated from Ghana in December 2018.

Huang's involvement in illegal mining activities was proven in court and she was sentenced to 4 and a half years in prison in addition to a fine of GH¢48,000 on Monday, December 4, 2023.

According to a report by The Fourth Estate dated 2022, there are only Chinese in Ghana's prisons in spite of the hundreds of Chinese illegal miners arrested from 2013 to 2020. In June this year, the Deputy

Greater Accra Regional Manager of the Forestry Commission, George Agbenowoshi, revealed that Chinese nationals frequently arrested for illegal mining activities are often discharged by the courts due to a lack of interpreters.

He noted that these cases typically drag on in court and are eventually dismissed because of the language barrier. In response to this worrying remark, the Chinese Speakers Association of Ghana (CSAG) offered its translation and interpretation services to the Forestry Commission to help address challenges for a fee.

Since August 2021, a total of 76 individuals have been convicted for illegal mining offenses, comprising 18 foreigners and 58 Ghanaians, the Attorney-General said at the Ghana Bar Association Conference in Kumasi on Monday, September 9, 2024.

Under the new legislation, Act 995, those convicted face stringent

penalties. Foreigners found guilty now face a minimum sentence of 50 years, while Ghanaians involved in illegal mining are subject to a minimum of 20 years in prison. Most of these convictions have been secured under this new law, which imposes harsh sentences and heavy fines for non-Ghanaian offenders.

Despite a series of government interventions ranging from deploying security forces to arresting offenders the problem of galamsey continues unabated.

This ongoing crisis has spurred several unions to announce a nationwide protest should the government fail to impose a comprehensive ban on illegal mining. This comes after the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has recently highlighted a worsening water crisis, attributing the pollution of crucial water sources to these illegal mining operations.



Tong Defa, Chinese Ambassador to Ghana

General News

No Mahama, no IEA presidential debate - NPP

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Spokesperson for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party Dennis Miracles Aboagye, has announced that the Vice President will only participate in the upcoming presidential debate organized by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) if his main rival, former President John Dramani Mahama, is also present.

The IEA has scheduled two presidential debates ahead of the 2024 general elections, set for October 22 and November 19.

Speaking in an interview on Citi FM, Mr Aboagye emphasized that while Dr. Bawumia is ready to engage in debates on national issues, he believes the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Mahama's participation is essential for a comprehensive discussion.

"Dr. Bawumia is eager to participate, but there is no debate if Mahama is absent. The December polls will be a contest between Dr. Bawumia and Mahama, and both must engage to provide voters with a balanced discourse," Mr Aboagye stated.

The IEA outlined its debate schedule in a statement, detailing two presidential debates, one vice-presidential debate, and five evening encounters with the candidates ahead of the December 7 elections.

The vice-presidential debate is slated for November 5, while the evening encounters will kick off on Wednesday, September 18, with the last one scheduled for October 15.

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) and its flagbearer, John Dramani Mahama, have expressed a preference to focus their campaign efforts on engaging with the electorate.

The NDC has argued that its resources are better spent promoting its policies to voters rather than participating in debates with the ruling party's candidate, who, they claim, has failed to deliver on economic promises such as stabilizing the cedi's depreciation,

replacing taxation with production.

The outcome of these deliberations by the two major political parties will determine the structure of the presidential debate as Ghana prepares for the upcoming election.



John Dramani Mahama (L) and Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (R)

GNFS to blacklist areas that have recorded violence against its officers

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) has vowed to withdraw its services from areas that have been and continue to be hostile towards its personnel.

In an engagement on Saturday, September 14, the Service highlighted that some individuals have developed a troubling habit of attacking firefighters who arrive late at fire scenes, which it described as unacceptable.

GNFS stated that firefighters risk their lives to save others and protect property, yet they often face a lack of respect from the Ghanaian public. The Service has reminded the public that assaulting firefighters is illegal and will result in severe legal consequences.

The GNFS has also warned that it will vigorously defend its personnel and ensure that anyone who attacks firefighters will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The Service identified several factors contributing to delays in responding to fire incidents, including

outdated and malfunctioning equipment as significant obstacles impeding the firefighters' ability to perform their duties effectively.

GNFS also noted that discussions between the Service and the government are ongoing to address these challenges.

"Anyone who attacks our personnel will be dealt with. If you don't understand our services there are channels of reporting. Report to the respective authorities. We have regional commanders, the district fire officers, chief officers and others. You have no right to hit an officer, we will deal with you all. If these assaults will not stop we want to go to places that are not friendly to our people because there are a lot of risks associated with our work".

Additionally, the Service disclosed that efforts are underway to equip Ghana with state-of-the-art fire and rescue equipment.

Recently, the Service reported that an attack on its personnel resulted in one firefighter being seriously injured and another traumatized.

The officer who sustained severe injuries, Assistant Divisional Officer (ADO) Abdul Aziz Annor, was assaulted by a driver and his companion while refilling the fire truck at La Palm T-junction in Accra on Tuesday, September 10. ADO Annor suffered a fractured ankle and is currently being treated at the 37 Military Hospital.

Another incident occurred on

Thursday, September 5, at the Dansoman roundabout, where firefighters from the Dansoman Fire Station were both verbally and physically attacked by local residents while responding to a fire.

Meanwhile, the attackers have been apprehended and, as of September 9, were granted bail with two sureties each, amounting to GH¢5,000.



Alex King Nartey, GNFS Public Relations Officer



General News

EC to announce disqualified presidential candidates by Sept 17

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Electoral Commission (EC) has stated that latest by Tuesday, September 17, 2024, it will announce which presidential and parliamentary candidates will be disqualified or approved for the upcoming general elections.

This decision comes after the conclusion of the nomination filing process for candidates vying for office on Friday, September 13.

To ensure a thorough review of the submitted forms, the EC has established two committees responsible for scrutinizing the documents of all candidates. According to the Deputy Commissioner in charge of Operations, Samuel Tetteh, the review process is well underway, with the EC already identifying some issues in the forms.

“We should be able to know all those who qualified for the next aspect which is balloting for positions on the presidential ballot paper,” Mr Tetteh remarked.

It is reported that the committees have identified multiple instances

of duplicate endorsements among aspirants, raising the likelihood of disqualifications. Those whose forms contain errors have been contacted by the EC and given a window to correct the mistakes before the final decision is made.

Among the political parties, the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) has nominated Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia as its candidate for the presidential race. The opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) will be represented by former President John Dramani Mahama.

Notable figures also in the running include Kofi Akpaloo of the Liberal Party of Ghana (LPG), Christian Kwabena Andrews of the Ghana Union Movement (GUM), and Dr. Hassan Ayariga of the All People's Congress (APC).

Other political parties that successfully filed their nominations are Alhaji Mohammed Frimpong of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Akua Donkor of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), and Nana Akosua Frimpongmaa Sarpong Kumankumah, representing the Convention People's

Party (CPP).

In addition, Bernard Mornah will represent the People's National Convention (PNC), while Dr. Daniel Augustus Lartey stands for the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP).

This election will also feature a strong contingent of 11 independent candidates, including Alan Kyeremanten, who resigned from the NPP to run independently. Other male independent candidates include Nana Kwame Bediako, Samuel Appiah Danquah, George Twum Barima, Kofi Koranteng, Desmond Abrefa, Nana

Stephens, Elder Paul Perkoh, James Kwasi Oppong, John Kpikpi, and Dr. Sam Ankrah. Janet Asana Nabla stands out as the only female independent candidate.

However, two potential candidates are in a state of uncertainty. Dr. Nii Amu Darko (independent) and Kofi Asamoah Siaw of the Progressive People's Party (PPP) submitted their nominations after the 5 p.m. deadline on Friday. They now await the EC's decision on whether their nominations will be accepted or rejected.



Jean Adukwei Mensa, Electoral Commissioner

2-year-old baby among 4 dead in Kpone Kokompe fire outbreak

By **Amanda Cartey**

A tragic fire outbreak at Kpone Kokompe farms in the Greater Accra Region has claimed the lives of four individuals, including a 2-year-old infant.

The victims also include a 27-year-old man, a 14-year-old girl, and an 11-year-old boy, all of whom were burnt beyond recognition.

The fire, which erupted around 11:20 p.m. on September 12, destroyed 10 wooden structures before being brought under control by the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS).

Divisional Officer III (DOIII) Matthew Kumi, the second-in-command at the Devtracco Fire Station, revealed that the fire service received a distress call at 11:28 p.m. and arrived at the scene by 11:47 p.m. They were able to extinguish the blaze with reinforcement at 12:55 a.m.

Although the exact cause of the fire

is yet to be determined, authorities noted the presence of motorcycles, gas, and other materials that may have contributed to the rapid spread of the flames.

DOIII Kumi advised the public to equip their homes with smoke detectors, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers to prevent such devastating incidents in the future.

“These will help raise awareness or control the fire to avoid casualties,” he said, cautioning against illegal connections as it might trigger fire.

“The Fire Service is always available, so do not hesitate to call or reach out to us using the emergency numbers 112 and 192 when there is an emergency,” he said.

Mr. Gideon Bolgla, one of the fire victims, recounted that he was asleep with his family when the fire broke out. He rushed outside, calling for assistance from neighbors.

He mentioned that the fire had consumed all their possessions, leaving them with nothing, and appealed to relevant authorities for help.

Similarly, Mr. Augustine Hevi, another victim, urged the Member of Parliament, the Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Assembly, the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), and other stakeholders to come to their rescue by providing shelter and support.

In a statement on social media, the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) expressed condolences to the bereaved families and the victims of the disaster. The Tema Regional Fire Commander, ACFO II Patrick Sallah, visited the affected victims to offer support and assess the damage. The GNFS reiterated the importance of fire safety measures, noting that investigations into the cause of the fire are ongoing.



Kpone kokompe after fire outbreak

General News

Govt dismisses small-scale ban calls; assesses its input in 'galamsey' fight;

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel Abu Jinapor, has dismissed recent calls for a blanket ban on small-scale mining as a solution to illegal mining. Citing the economic implications, Jinapor argued that such a ban could severely impact the country's economy.

The Minister highlighted the significant role of gold exports in Ghana's economic growth, with gold export revenue increasing by 46.4 percent to US\$5.04 billion in the first half of 2024, according to the Central Bank of Ghana's Monetary Policy Report.

"Small-scale mining accounts for 40 percent of our gold output... our foreign exchange earnings will deplete by 40 percent. If you allow the ban tomorrow, it means that you will have to look at the consequences on the national economy, which will definitely be catastrophic," he explained in an interview on JoyNews.

The report noted that the growth in

gold and crude oil exports played a crucial role in the country's provisional trade surplus of \$1.81 billion during the same period.

Despite this economic progress, growing frustration over the environmental destruction caused by illegal mining has led to calls for stronger government intervention. The Trades Union Congress and several civil society groups have urged President Akufo-Addo to declare a state of emergency in affected mining regions.

Organised Labour has also issued a warning of a nationwide strike by the end of September if the government fails to take decisive steps to halt the crisis.

Mr. Jinapor acknowledged the public outcry but cautioned against the potential social and economic instability that might arise from drastic actions like a state of emergency.

He reassured the public that the government is committed to engaging with labour unions and civil society organizations

to find effective solutions to the ongoing galamsey crisis, balancing environmental protection with economic stability.

Amidst calls for intensified efforts to curb illegal mining, President Akufo-Addo has established a five-member ministerial ad-hoc committee to evaluate the government's strategies and actions in combating illegal mining, commonly referred to as "galamsey."

The committee has been tasked with reviewing the effectiveness of current measures aimed at addressing the environmental damage caused by galamsey activities and to recommend any necessary improvements.

The committee, composed of senior government officials, will assess the policies implemented to curb illegal mining, as well as the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and local authorities in their efforts to contain the menace.

Key areas of focus include

reviewing the enforcement of mining regulations and determining the adequacy of resources provided to combat the environmental degradation caused by illegal mining.

Leading the committee is National Security Minister Albert Kan-Dapaah, who will be joined by Lands and Natural Resources Minister Samuel Abu Jinapor, Defense Minister Dominic Nitiwul, Employment Minister Ignatious Baffour Awuah, and Information Minister Fatima Abubakar. Their mandate includes examining the impact of illegal mining on the country's natural resources and providing recommendations to enhance the government's ongoing anti-galamsey initiatives.

The ministerial committee is expected to provide key insights and recommendations that will shape future government initiatives aimed at eliminating illegal mining and preserving Ghana's natural resources.



Illegal mining (Galamsey)

General News

\$2 billion needed to resolve Ghana's energy sector debt - John Jinapor

By Amanda Cartey

The Member of Parliament for Yapei-Kusawgu and former Deputy Minister of Energy, John Abdulai Jinapor, has stated that the next government would need approximately \$2 billion to address the growing debt in Ghana's energy sector if he returns to power.

Speaking during a media engagement, Mr. Jinapor highlighted the significant financial burden facing the sector, criticizing the current administration for its lack of a clear plan to resolve the issue.

He expressed concern about the energy sector's deteriorating state, describing it as being "on the verge of collapse."

"President Mahama will be inheriting a very rundown and weak energy sector that is choking from debt," Mr. Jinapor remarked.

"An oil sector where major industry players are exiting Ghana. We must necessarily restore and reset this

country. We cannot continue on this trajectory.

We cannot continue on this path. This is not what we envisaged. Based on our conservative estimate, President Mahama will require about two billion dollars to clear the pipeline debt in the energy sector."

Mr. Jinapor further pointed out that the sector's debt continues to compound, making the situation increasingly unsustainable. He noted that, despite the government's earlier claims of abundant gas supplies, it is now procuring crude oil worth \$40 million every month, translating to \$480 million annually. He argued that these funds could be used to construct a second gas processing plant, addressing the root cause of the crisis.

The government of Ghana has struggled to meet its payment obligations to electricity suppliers, primarily due to accumulated debts, delayed payments, and inefficiencies within the state-owned Electricity

Company of Ghana (ECG). According to Mr. Jinapor, the ECG is only able to recover about 45% of the revenue from the power it sells, exacerbating the financial challenges in the energy sector.

As a result, Ghana currently owes around \$2.2 billion to Independent Power Producers (IPPs), with much of the debt stemming from interest on delayed payments, exchange rate losses, and idle capacity charges.

While the government has managed to secure restructuring deals with

five of the seven IPPs, negotiations remain unresolved with Chinese-owned Sunon Asogli Power and Karpowership. This leaves the government exposed to potential legal actions or the risk of power shutdowns if agreements are not reached.

The situation has raised concerns about the long-term stability of Ghana's energy sector, with stakeholders calling for decisive action to prevent further deterioration.



John Abdulai Jinapor, MP for Yapei-Kusawgu and former Deputy Minister of Energy

GAF 2024 enlistment portal opened, recruitment ends Oct 11

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has commenced its 2024 recruitment for the Regular Career Officer Course and Short Service Commission Officers, with the application window open until October 11, 2024.

The online application portal became operational on Friday, September 13, and prospective candidates are encouraged to complete their submissions before the October 11 deadline.

In a press release, GAF emphasized that it does not use intermediaries or charge any recruitment fees.

GAF further urged the public to report anyone claiming to be an intermediary and soliciting payment for assistance with the application process.

"The Ghana Armed Forces further wishes to state that individuals who present themselves as middlemen, intermediaries or agents demanding payment in order to assist any candidate(s) should be reported to the nearest Military Installation or Police Station. In the same vein, interested applicants who choose to pay monies to

purported agents for help are equally culpable in the fraudulent act," portions of the statement read.

GAF also recommended that interested applicants check the Daily Graphic edition from Friday, September 13, 2024, available at Graphicnewsplus.com, for comprehensive details about the enlistment process.

"The Ghana Armed Forces further wishes to state that individuals who present themselves as middlemen, intermediaries or agents demanding payment in order to assist any candidate(s) should be reported to the nearest military installation or Police Station. The public is hereby cautioned that anyone who pays monies to agents or individuals with the hope of securing enlistment into GAF is equally culpable in the fraudulent act.

"Interested persons are therefore to refer to the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times for more information regarding the enlistment process and desist from patronising fraudulent recruitment sites on social media," it added.

It further advised applicants to remain vigilant against fraudulent recruitment schemes on social media. GAF also urged caution regarding misleading

recruitment advertisements circulating on social media.

It further added that online application scratch cards, priced at GH¢350.00, can be purchased at designated Ghana Post offices nationwide.

"The scratch cards for the online application are on sale at GH¢350.00 each across the country at designated Ghana Post offices listed in the advert. The portal for the online application has been activated hence interested persons can log on to <http://apply.mil>.

gh to apply. The closing date for the online submission is Friday 11 October 2024.

GAF wishes to remind the general public that it does not employ middlemen or agents for enlistment. Therefore, the public is strongly advised to desist from paying monies to any person(s) who present themselves as middlemen or agents with the promise of helping potential applicants to secure enlistment into GAF.



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Business

SOEs' contribution to GDP reaches 10% in 2024 as losses decline - Akufo-Addo

By Amanda Cartey

The contribution of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has reached 10% in 2024, marking a significant rise from previous years, President Nana Akufo-Addo has announced.

He made this revelation during the 2024 State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA) Annual Stakeholders Engagement held at the Rock City Hotel in Kwahu-Nkwatia, Eastern Region under the theme, "5 Years of Championing Specified Entities' Governance and Growth: The Challenges and The Way Forward."

"I am proud to report that the contributions of our state-owned enterprises to the nation's GDP have steadily increased from 3% in 2020 to 6% in 2021, and reaching 10% in 2024," President Akufo-Addo said.

He further highlighted the remarkable decrease in operational irregularities and financial losses among SOEs. "The average losses of state-owned enterprises have fallen sharply from 14.4 billion cedis in 2022 to 2.6 billion cedis

in 2024," he added.

SIGA announced a reduction in the losses incurred by SOEs by GH¢9 million for the 2023 financial year, signifying an 83.13 percent decrease from the previous net loss of GH¢14,402,000 in 2022 to GH¢2,573,000 in 2023.

According to the President, the establishment of SIGA under the SIGA Act 2019 has been instrumental in enhancing the governance, transparency, and accountability of SOEs. He noted that this has not only improved the overall performance of these entities but has also significantly reduced their financial losses.

The President emphasized that the improved performance of SOEs is aligned with his administration's vision of building a "Ghana Beyond Aid," in which public enterprises operate efficiently, contributing significantly to national development.

At the event, SIGA's Director General, John Boadu, also applauded the progress made in compliance and financial reporting among SOEs. He pointed out that prior to SIGA's establishment, only 16 out of 175 specified entities

had filed their financial statements and management accounts, and just two had filed audited financial reports.

"In contrast, today, 147 specified entities have filed both their audited financial statements and management accounts as of May 2024," Boadu revealed.

Despite the positive developments, Dr. Kwabena Donkor, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Administration and State

Interests, raised concerns over the non-compliance of some SOEs, particularly the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), which has failed to publish its audited accounts since 2017 despite receiving recognition from SIGA.

He called for a review of how SOE executives are appointed and a stronger emphasis on financial accountability, saying, "We cannot celebrate mediocrity in management. These companies must rise up."



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Fuel prices to drop by 4% today

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Chamber of Petroleum Consumers (COPEC) has predicted a decrease in fuel prices for the upcoming pricing window starting today Monday, September 16, 2024.

According to COPEC, consumers can expect an average reduction of about 4% in the prices of petrol, diesel, and LPG.

In July, fuel prices experienced a notable increase, a trend anticipated by industry experts such as the Chamber of Petroleum Consumers.

The Chamber had previously urged the government to either reduce taxes on LPG or provide subsidies to alleviate the financial burden on consumers.

Prior to June, international fuel prices had seen a decline, but according to the Institute for Energy Security, Ghanaians could not benefit from these lower prices due to the deteriorating value of

the cedi.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Economic Affairs has recently suggested that Ghana consider adopting the US dollar to stabilize the economy, as the cedi continues to lose its purchasing power.

But in a press release, COPEC's Executive Secretary, Duncan Amoah, indicated in a statement that, "Barring any unforeseen major changes in global Petroleum FOB prices, indications across the downstream petroleum market are that, the pump retail prices

of Petrol, Diesel and LPG are to go down to the benefit of consumers come the next window beginning 16 Septembers 2024."

COPEC's prediction includes a drop in the average retail price of petrol to GH¢12.956 per litre, diesel to GH¢13.642 per litre, and LPG to GH¢15.345 per kilogram.

These anticipated reductions are attributed to the declining global prices of petroleum products, with crude oil

prices being the lowest this year.

The organization also called on the government to reduce taxes on fuel products, particularly LPG, to make it more accessible and to mitigate environmental issues related to firewood use.

Additionally, COPEC suggested reviving the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) to lessen reliance on imported refined fuel and to address issues such as fuel contamination.



File photo

International

Emergency meeting in South Sudan after elections postponed

By BBC

The government of South Sudan is holding an emergency cabinet meeting hours after it announced that long-delayed national elections would be postponed by two years. The polls were due to take place this December.

A 2018 peace deal that ended a civil war allowed president Salva Kiir to remain in charge of a transitional government with his former foe Riek Machar serving as his deputy.

South Sudan, the world's youngest country, has not held national elections since independence in 2011.

The decision to postpone the vote by another two years has not come as a great surprise.

The political leaders of South Sudan have not exactly been racing to get ready for a vote.

This has fuelled suspicion that they are clinging onto power in the oil-rich country.

President Salva Kiir's office says essential tasks like writing a new constitution have to happen before an election.

Officials have also cited logistical and security challenges, which could not be overcome by the end of the year.

Those in charge are the same leaders who plunged the country into a five-year civil war. Given the current relative peace and the fact that neighbouring Sudan is being destroyed by conflict, South Sudan's politicians may not come under much international pressure.



Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of Southern Sudan

Comoros president 'out of danger' after knife attack, minister says

By Reuters

Comoros president Azali Assoumani is "out of danger" after he was injured on Friday in a knife attack by a 24-year-old policeman who was found dead in his cell a day later, officials said on Saturday.

The attack occurred around 2 p.m. local time (1100 GMT) on Friday in Salimani Itsandra, a town just north of the capital Moroni.

"The president is doing well. He has no health problems, he is out of danger. A few stitches were given," energy minister Aboubacar Saïd Anli said at a press conference in Moroni on Saturday.

Azali was attacked as he attended a funeral, according to the presidency. The motive for the attack has not yet been determined. The attacker, Ahmed Abdou, went on leave on Wednesday before orchestrating the attack on Friday.

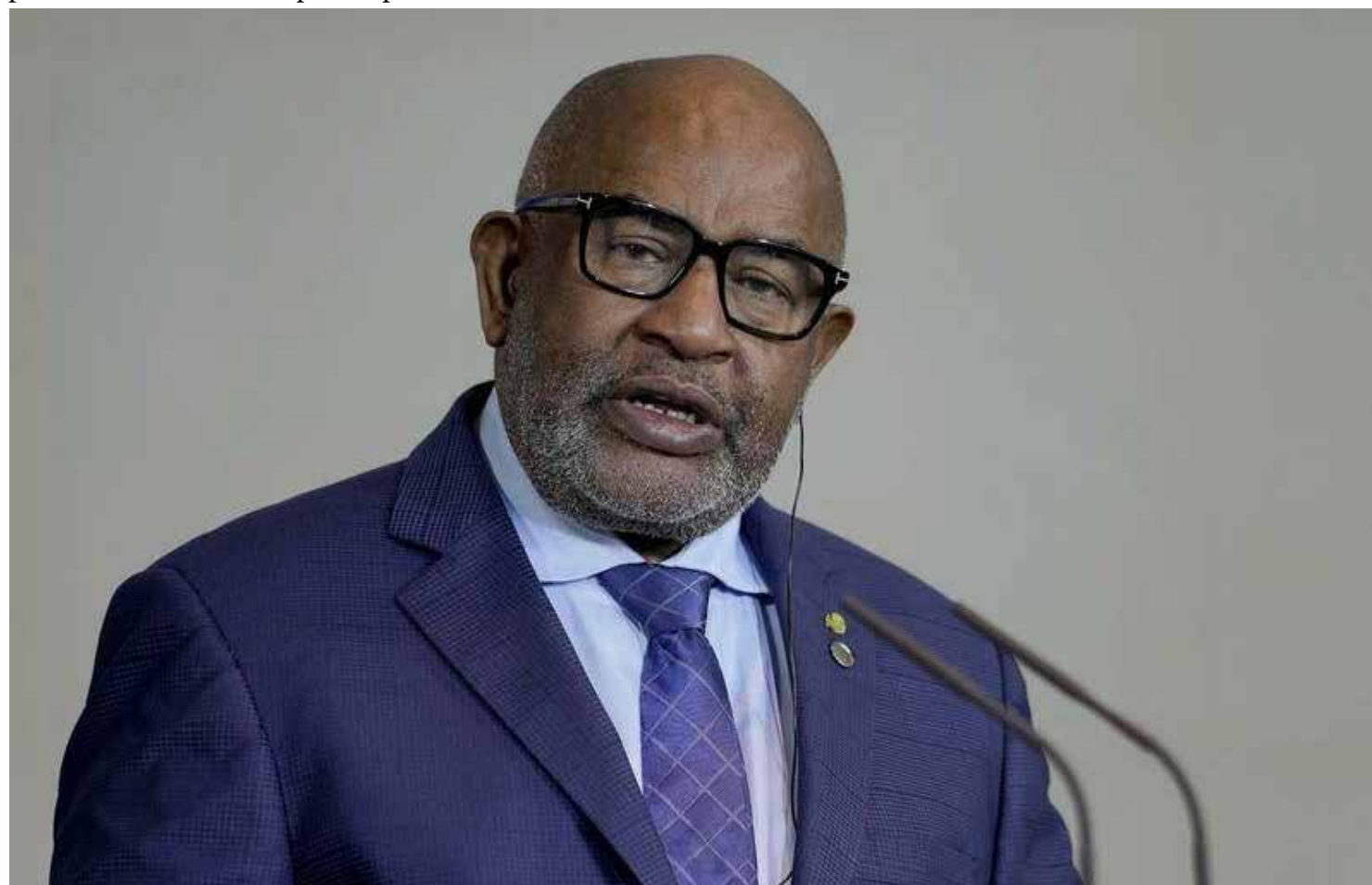
Abdou was placed in a cell after he was taken into custody. However,

"this Saturday morning, when investigators went to see him, they found him lying on the ground, his body was lifeless," Ali Mohamed Djounaid, Comoros' public prosecutor, said at a separate press

conference.

He added that an investigation was being conducted to determine the motive of the attack and the cause of his death.

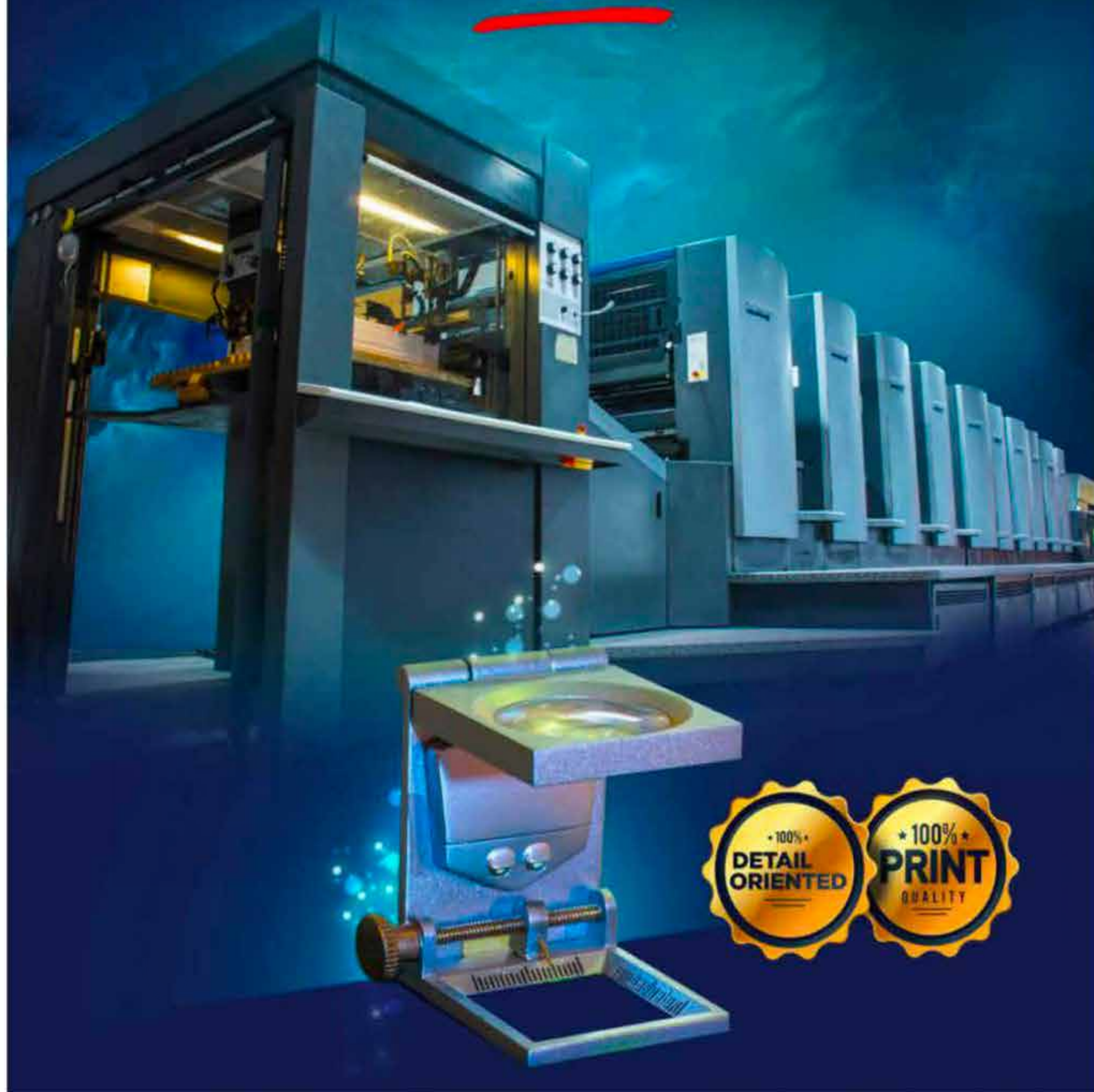
In May, Assoumani was sworn in for a fourth term in office following a tense January election which his opponents claim was tainted by vote fraud. Officials deny the allegations.



Azali Assoumani, Comoros President

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