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General News

Recent power outage due to challenge with GNGC gas processing plant - GRIDCo, ECG

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Ghana Grid Company Ltd. (GRIDCo) and the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) have attributed the recent power outages experienced by some customers to a challenge at the Ghana National Gas Company (GNGC) Gas Processing Plant (GPP) located in Atuabo.

A pipeline runs from the gas processing plant near Atuabo to the Takoradi Thermal Power Station, in Aboadze, in Western Region. The Takoradi Thermal Power Station which started operation in 1997 was initiated by the Volta River Authority to complement the existing Hydro Plant at Akosombo and Kpong.

In a joint press release, both companies informed the public that the challenge has limited the gas supply for power generation, causing intermittent power supply to certain areas.

GRIDCo and ECG revealed that engineers from GNGC are actively working to address the technical difficulties at the processing plant and are making efforts to restore the full gas supply as soon as possible.

"We apologise unreservedly for the inconveniences caused to the public as a result of this challenge," the companies added. The public is encouraged to remain patient as work continues to restore uninterrupted electricity supply.

This week, several parts of the Greater Accra Region such as Dome, and Adenta have recorded intermittent power outages that lasted for several hours.

In a related event, the Minority in Parliament has raised concerns over a reported load shedding, being concealed by GRIDCo due to dubious contracts signed by the government through the Ghana Gas Company.

The Minority Caucus revealed that a power deficit of over 500 megawatts was recorded on Tuesday, September 24, negatively impacting customers.

Ranking Member on the Energy Committee of Parliament, John

Jinapor, alleged that there is pressure on the Ghana Gas Company from the Presidency to sign an \$800 million contract with the Phoenix Park Gas Processors Consortium under questionable circumstances, without parliamentary approval.



File photo

Govt to implement Credit Scoring System for loans in October

By **Phoebe Martekie Doku**

The government of Ghana has announced that its individualized Credit Scoring System for all citizens will take effect in October 2024.

This initiative aims to make credit purchases more accessible by assessing an individual's creditworthiness, determining their ability to buy goods on credit and repay loans in instalments.

Government has indicated that the Ghana Card will provide a unique identity and essential information about the bearer - including bank accounts, SIM card, SSNIT, NHIS and the National Digital Property Address System, thereby providing a definite location for the borrower.

At a recent campaign gathering in Assin Fosu, the Vice President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia highlighted the system's potential to boost economic growth, create jobs by empowering small businesses and young entrepreneurs, as well as improve access to credit.

He stated, "This system will open up

new opportunities for individuals and small businesses to access credit, which in turn will drive economic growth and job creation."

The government declared its intention to introduce this initiative two years ago when the Vice President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia graced the 18th Biennial Connexional Youth and Students Assembly (YASA) of the Methodist Church of Ghana at Nyanyano in the Central Region.

Meanwhile, a section of the public has raised aspersions about the proposal's feasibility and effectiveness, questioning its practicality and minimizing its potential advantages.

The implementation of the personalized credit scoring system and the digitization of land registration, according to the government, are crucial aspects of Ghana's larger digitalization strategy.

Through these initiatives, the government seeks to harness technology to boost economic development, enhance public safety, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.



Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President



General News

TUSAAG begins strike for better working conditions today

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Technical University Senior Administrators Association of Ghana (TUSAAG) will today lay down their working tools for a nationwide strike against the government's refusal to revise allowances and adhere to obligations under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The allowances set to be revised include vehicle maintenance, off-campus allowances, fuel, utility, and sanitation/security allowances.

In a statement dated 26th September 2024, the Association revealed that the government has refused "to honour agreements made in July 2024, following the directive from the

Ministry of Finance in May 2024".

On their part, the government's neglect is "a clear violation of rights and demonstrates an unacceptable lack of attention for the Association".

The statement also accused the government of being biased in handling the payment of standard allowances, giving preferential treatment to other unions representing similar categories of employees in public universities while neglecting TUSAAG.

"TUSAAG is unable to tolerate working conditions that undermine the principles of fairness and equity," the statement added. TUSAAG is demanding from the government an acknowledgement of grievances and a commitment to uphold the terms of

the CBA.

A Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is a legally binding agreement between an employer (or a group of employers) and a trade union that

represents employees. It outlines the terms and conditions of employment, including wages, working hours, benefits, job responsibilities, and other employment-related matters.



Technical Universities in Ghana

Grant them bail now! - Mahama kicks against draconian decision remand of anti-galamsey protesters

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Former President and flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Dramani Mahama, has described the decision to remand demonstrators from the Democracy Hub protest for two weeks as an abuse of their rights.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter) on September 26, 2024, Mahama criticised the authorities for what he called a "high-handed" judicial decision, stressing that it undermines the democratic rights of citizens to protest.

"We must balance our need to maintain law and order with protecting the rights and freedoms of our citizens. Remanding Democracy Hub demonstrators for 2 weeks is high-handed and an abuse of their rights. The youth of Ghana have a right to engage in manifestations to protect their future, especially in respect of key issues like the destruction of the environment through illegal mining," Mahama stated.

He further called for the immediate review of the remand order, urging the authorities to act swiftly. "Draconian judicial decisions such as this won't stop them from speaking out. The authorities must request the judge to review the remand decision and grant them bail immediately," Mahama added. The Democracy Hub protest, aimed at calling for an end to illegal mining activities (galamsey), concluded over the weekend. On Wednesday, eleven demonstrators appeared before the

Accra Circuit Court, where they were remanded into police custody.

They are expected to return for a hearing on Thursday, September 26, 2024. Each of the eleven pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit a crime. This development brings the total number of demonstrators currently remanded by the court to 50.

On the matter, an Associate Professor at the School of Law, University of Ghana, Professor Kwadwo Appiagyei-Tuah has questioned the nature of the offence that would warrant the denial of bail to the arrested protesters.

Ghana's laws on bail and remand are central to these conversations, with the legal framework designed to prevent excessive detention while ensuring that justice is served. Section 96 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1960 Act 30, addresses concerns related to bail.

According to subsection (1), a court may grant bail to any individual brought before it on any process, or after being arrested without a warrant, provided that the individual is prepared at any stage of the proceedings or after conviction, pending an appeal, to give bail. The individual must also enter into a bond, with or without sureties, that ensures their appearance before the court or another court at a specified time and place.

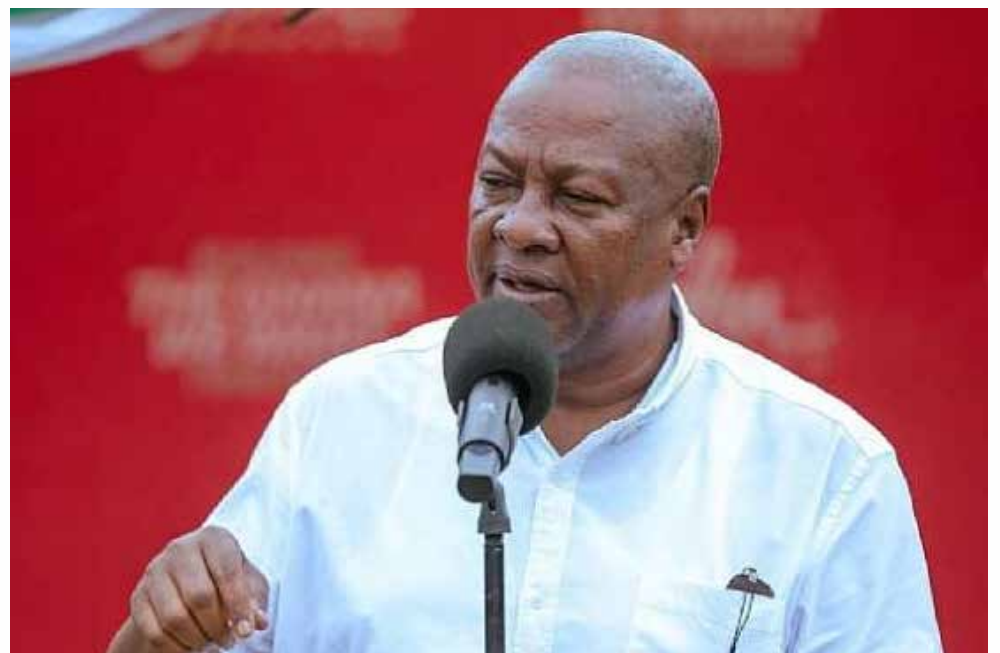
Subsection (2) states that, notwithstanding anything in subsection (1), the High Court or a Circuit Court may direct that any individual be

admitted to bail or that the bail required by a District Court or police officer be reduced. Subsection (3) adds that the amount and conditions of bail must be reasonable, with due regard to the circumstances of the case, and should not be excessive or harsh. Importantly, subsection (4) stipulates that bail shall not be withheld or withdrawn as a form of punishment.

However, subsection (5) outlines specific instances where bail must be refused. A court shall not grant bail if it is satisfied that the defendant may not appear for trial, may interfere with witnesses or evidence, may commit another offence while on bail, or is charged with an offence punishable by imprisonment exceeding six months, committed while on bail.

In subsection (6), the court is required to consider factors such as the nature of the accusation, the evidence supporting the accusation, the severity of the punishment upon conviction, and the defendant's previous compliance with bail conditions. The court should also take into account whether the defendant has a fixed place of abode in Ghana, is gainfully employed, and whether the sureties are independent, of good character, and financially stable.

Finally, subsection (7) specifies that bail shall not be granted in cases of treason, subversion, murder, robbery, hijacking, piracy, or escape from lawful custody. Additionally, bail is not to be granted when a person is being held for extradition to a foreign country.



John Dramani Mahama, NDC Flagbearer

General News

EPA calls for collaboration to combat air pollution in Greater Accra

By Amanda Cartey

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has called for a collaborative effort to curb rising air pollution and protect public health in the Greater Accra Region.

Madina Zongo Junction, Agboghloshie, Makola, Tudu, Oxford Street, Lapaz, and Kaneshie Market are the communities in Accra with the highest levels of air pollution, per reports by the Breathe Accra Project.

Director of the Environmental Quality Unit at the EPA, Ms Selina Amoah, indicated that air pollution continues to contribute to health challenges in the country such as stroke, hypertension, lung cancer, and pneumonia, among others.

“Collaboration is essential to manage air quality effectively and achieve the desired outcomes,” she said at a workshop organised for some Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Accra on September 25, by

PSS Urbania Consult Limited, an environmental and research firm engaged by the Clean Air Fund (CAF) in Ghana, under the Breathe Accra initiative.

The Breathe Accra initiative is a project designed to equip communities in the Greater Accra Region with the tools to tackle air pollution and reduce climate emissions, as well as support 15 MMDAs to develop Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs).

Ms. Amoah pointed out that pollution sources are diverse and come from different sectors, but emphasized that measures must be implemented to manage and improve air quality. She warned the public against practices such as open burning, labelling it illegal and a contributing factor to the worsening air pollution problem.

“Many people, in one way or another, contribute to this menace. We all need to be responsible enough to make sure we are contributing to solutions to curb

this issue, rather than making the situation more unbearable,” she added.

A representative of PSS Urbania Consult Limited, Dr. Fred Out-Larbi, highlighted that Ghana faces significant air quality challenges, exceeding the World Health Organization’s (WHO) interim targets.

The WHO Air Quality Guidelines provide recommended levels and interim targets for common air pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂), which are crucial for Ghana as the country grapples with rising pollution levels, particularly in urban areas like Accra.

Touching on the main goals of the Greater Accra Air Quality Management Plan, Dr. Out-Larbi mentioned that it aims to ensure collaborative governance to promote the effective implementation of the plans, which include conducting a

preliminary scan of generic air pollution hotspots in the respective assemblies.

Cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Accra are fast increasing, with cardiovascular ailments being a major killer of the aged and middle-aged residents of the capital city, according to the Metropolitan Director of Health Services, Dr. Abena Okoh.

Dr. Okoh stated that hypertension was the fifth-highest cause of death in Accra for three consecutive years - from 2021 through 2023. In total, about 38,826 hypertension cases were recorded in health facilities in Accra. The record has 12,451 in 2021, 12,671 in 2022 and 13,704 in 2023.

On fatalities caused by the environmental pollution-engendered NCDs, the Health Director told the media that about 200 Accra residents died from cardiovascular diseases during the three years under review.



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) participants in the meeting

General News

State of emergency won't work; politicians are engaging 'galamseyers' for favour - Allotey Jacobs

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

Former Central Regional Chairman of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Bernard Allotey Jacobs, has opposed calls encouraging the government to declare a state of emergency to tackle the issue of illegal mining in the country.

Major rivers in Ghana such as Pra and Ankobra have been severely polluted with toxic chemicals such as mercury, due to illegal mining, popularly known as galamsey.

Given the worsening effects of menace such as birth defects and developmental issues in children, several individuals and organisations, including Trade Unions, have called on the government to declare a state of emergency.

During a media appearance on September 26, 2024, Mr Allotey Jacobs vehemently disapproved of this move, stating that it would not make any significant impact in the fight against galamsey since such activities are deeply rooted in various communities.

"You want him [President Akufo-Addo] to declare a state of emergency? President Akufo-Addo, don't do it. See, if a state of emergency is declared in galamsey areas, it won't work. I want to repeat this—any declaration of a state of emergency in galamsey areas will not work. Galamsey has been deeply entrenched for a long time," he noted.

Some Members of Parliament (MPs), the Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin and the general public have advocated against galamsey, urging the ruling government to take stringent actions against the perpetrators.

But Mr. Allotey believes that these calls from politicians are mere lip service, accusing them of seeking favour and votes from those involved in illegal mining ahead of the 2024 elections.

"Politicians are talking about galamsey because they want favours; they want votes from those working in the galamsey pits across the country," Allotey Jacobs remarked.

He also urged the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and others planning to protest against galamsey to focus their efforts on areas most affected by illegal mining activities. He suggested that an effective way to halt galamsey would be for protesters to demonstrate in those regions where illegal mining is rampant.

"When I heard that Organised Labour wanted to go on a demonstration against galamsey, I wondered why. There is no galamsey in Accra, no galamsey pits in Accra. Go to the galamsey pits and demonstrate to those working there. That will shake the foundations of this country and show that all Ghanaians want galamsey to stop."

"We shouldn't wait until it's two months until the elections. Both NPP and NDC members involved in illegal mining will eventually go scot-free. That's what is happening in this country," he concluded.

Meanwhile, 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, 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.



Bernard Allotey Jacobs, Former Central Regional Chairman of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)

General News

Sam George, Katanga Fellowood to embark on naked demo against galamsey

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Ningo-Prampram Member of Parliament, Sam Nartey George, has thrown his support behind a planned naked demonstration in Accra, to be organised by a group identified as Katanga Fellowood, to protest against the illegal mining activities, commonly known as galamsey.

Sam George, in a post dated September 26, on the X platform, declared his willingness to join the protest, stating, "Count me in. Citizens, no matter how uncomfortable, must be allowed to have a voice. I'd put my money where my heart and mouth is. Let's go!"

Katanga Fellowood has called on tertiary institutions and the general public to join the fight against galamsey, stressing that "Twitter boys can't win this galamsey battle alone."

They are preparing to mobilise Fellows from all 16 regions of Ghana to participate in the naked

protest and are seeking financial support to cover logistics and transportation. Some netizens have already started contributing funds to aid their travel from Kumasi to Accra. As of September 26, the Fellowood had received donations worth GHC7,000.

Amidst the momentum, the Katanga Alumni Association has distanced itself from the demonstration, clarifying that they have no affiliation with Katanga Fellowood or the planned protest.

"The Katanga Alumni Association does not recognise Katanga Fellowood and is not affiliated with any demonstrations or contributions related to it. Participation is voluntary and at your own risk. Katanga Alumni is not responsible for any actions or outcomes," the association posted on X.

However, Katanga Fellowood has pushed back against claims by the Katanga Alumni Association that it is not a legitimate group.

This development follows a recent 3-day protest led by Democracy Hub against illegal mining, which resulted in the arrest of several protesters. Those arrested face charges including conspiracy to commit a crime, unlawful assembly, causing damage, offensive conduct, and assaulting a public officer. So far, 50 individuals have been remanded by the Accra Circuit Court.

While the mining sector plays a crucial role in the economy, environmentalists and health professionals have raised alarms over the significant damage caused by illegal mining. Rivers such as the Bonsa and Pra have been heavily polluted, while forest reserves like the Tano Nimiri and Draw River have also suffered from the destructive effects of galamsey.



Sam Nartey George, Ningo-Prampram Member of Parliament

Small Arms Commission to embark on firearms survey after 10 years

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NACSA) has announced plans to conduct a nationwide firearms survey before the end of the year.

Speaking to The Independent Ghana, the Deputy Director in charge of Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, Gyebi Asante, explained that this will be the third research of its kind since NACSA's inception.

He noted that the survey aims to gather vital data on firearm ownership, usage, and proliferation across the country. Mr. Asante stressed that the unchecked spread of small arms and light weapons is a serious

threat to public safety, as it fuels criminal activities, and armed conflicts, and undermines efforts to maintain peace and security.

"The first survey was conducted in 2004 as the baseline and 10 years later, in 2014 we conducted our 2nd survey on small arms circulation in the country. Kofi Annan Peace Training Centre did the survey in 2014. It is difficult to determine the number of illicit arms. We are about to start our 3rd survey," Mr. Asante disclosed. He also revealed that police records show fewer than 100,000 of the 1.2 million registered firearms are renewed annually.

Established by an Act of Parliament in 2007, NACSA's mandate

- Continue on page 7



Gyebi Asante, Deputy Director in charge of Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

General News

Small Arms Commission to embark on firearms survey after 10 years

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includes regulating the possession and control of small arms and light weapons, with a particular focus on curbing illegal production, trade, transfer, and cross-border movement of such weapons that contribute to crime and insecurity. NACSA's first survey was conducted in 2004, shortly

after its establishment, and the second in 2014 by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). A 2019 KAIPTC report revealed that 2.3 million small arms are in civilian hands, with over 1.1 million unaccounted for.

In response to the alarming number of untracked weapons, Mr. Asante affirmed that efforts are underway to address the issue of unlicensed arms and enhance security measures.

The Deputy Director in charge of Policy Planning, Monitoring,

and Evaluation emphasised the Commission's dedication to working with relevant stakeholders to reduce the illegal import, export, manufacturing, trade, and circulation of small arms, as well as curb their misuse in the country.

G/R: ECG begins 3-day Clou Prepayment Server maintenance work

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

September 2024, at 11:00 pm.

The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) will begin its planned emergency maintenance exercise on the Clou Prepayment Server, affecting customers using such meters today. This maintenance work is scheduled to begin at 11:00 pm and be completed by Sunday, 29th

During this period, customers in several districts within the Greater Accra Region, including Afenya, Nungua, Tema North, Tema South, Ablekuma, Bortianor, Korle-Bu, Nsawam, Ashaiman, Amasaman, Kaneshie, and Dansoman, will experience a downtime in their prepayment systems.

ECG has urged affected customers to purchase sufficient credits ahead of the maintenance to cover their electricity needs during the exercise.

The company registered its regret for any inconvenience caused and assured the public of a swift and smooth restoration of services once the maintenance is

completed.

A week ago, the ECG executed its 3-day maintenance exercise on its MBH meters from September 20 to 22, 2024, which affected customers in Tema, Accra West, and parts of the Eastern Region.



File photo

General News

Number one spot on ballot paper is God's doing - Bawumia

By: Sebastian Akaho-Tay

Flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, has attributed securing the top spot on the ballot for the 2024 presidential election to God Almighty.

Dr. Bawumia made this submission during a recent visit to the Church of Pentecost in Breman Asikuma, Central Region, saying "we gathered to determine the order of the ballot, and through our prayers, we trust that God heard us. The result was the number

one position, for which we are profoundly thankful."

Reflecting on the ballot process and beyond, he shared, "There are countless things beyond human control, but we have faith that God can accomplish anything. With faith in God, we can achieve our goals."

The balloting for the 2024 presidential election which took place on September 20, 2024, was not devoid of controversy as the opposition National Democratic Congress challenged the picking of

the number one spot by the NPP's Elections Director, Evans Nimako. Despite the NDC's objections, the NPP representative stood firm, and after some heated discussions, the process resumed, resulting in the NPP once again drawing the number one spot, which has since ignited a wave of social media commentary regarding its seemingly miraculous nature.

A total of 13 candidates have successfully gone through the nomination process and are now eligible to contest in the upcoming election.

The order of candidates on

the ballot paper is as follows: Mahamudu Bawumia (NPP), Daniel Augustus Lartey (GCPP), Akua Donkor (GFP), Christian Kwabena Andrews (GUM), Kofi Akpaloo (LPG), Mohammed Frimpong (NDP), Nana Akosua Frimpomaa Kumankuma (CPP), John Dramani Mahama (NDC), Hassan Ayariga (APC), Kofi Koranteng (Independent), George Twum-Barima-Adu (Independent), Nana Kwame Bediako (Independent), and Alan John Kwadwo Kyeremateng (Independent).



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP)



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Business

Cocoa beans export value plummets by 26.9% in second quarter of 2024 - GSS

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

Recent data from the Ghana Statistical Service reveals a sharp decline in the monetary value of the exportation of cocoa beans for the second quarter of 2024.

Exports dropped from GHS1.57 billion in the second quarter of 2023 to GHS1.15 billion in the second quarter of 2024, representing a significant 26.9% decrease.

This marks the fifth consecutive quarterly drop, with the first quarter of 2024 also seeing a 24.7% fall compared to the same period in 2023. The reduction recorded in the first half of 2024 plunged by 80%, amounting to a GHS4 billion loss.

The lower export values coincide with a challenging cocoa production season, with only 429,323 metric

tons produced by June 2024, far below average levels. This year's total output is anticipated to be the lowest in over 20 years due to the activities of illegal smuggling, and unlawful mining activities, among others.

Globally, poor harvests in key cocoa-producing countries like Ghana and Ivory Coast have resulted in a four-year supply deficit, driving prices up. However, Ghana has not fully benefited from these higher prices, largely due to widespread smuggling. Low local cocoa prices and delayed payments have pushed many farmers to sell to smuggling networks, leading to the loss of over a third of Ghana's 2023/24 cocoa crop, estimated at 160,000 metric tons.

In an effort to combat smuggling, Ghana's COCOBOD has raised the farm gate price by 45% for the 2024/25 season, bringing it to GHS

3,000 per 64-kilogram bag. This increase makes Ghana's price GHS 440 higher than Côte d'Ivoire's, which had previously offered better rates, encouraging smuggling.

While the price hike is aimed at keeping more cocoa in Ghana, its success will depend on how Côte d'Ivoire adjusts its pricing in the coming season.



Cocoa beans

Be fair to oil and gas investors, commit to contract sanctity – US Ambassador to gov't

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

United States Ambassador to Ghana, Virginia Palmer, has called on the government and key stakeholders in the oil and gas sector to honour the terms of contracts signed with industry partners.

She stressed that doing so would ensure a stable and conducive business environment, which, in turn, would foster economic growth for the West African country.

Speaking at the 2024 Ghana Oil and Gas Conference organised by the Ghana Upstream Petroleum Chamber and held at the Accra Marriott Hotel, Ambassador Palmer further highlighted the importance of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) adopting more investor-friendly tax policies to attract and retain investment in the sector.

"Improving Ghana's business climate will be an important next step and one it must tackle. This means a commitment to contract sanctity, including provisions on international arbitration. It means clear, consistent, and fair treatment by the Ghana

Revenue Authority. It means speedy dispute resolution," she remarked.

The U.S. Ambassador added, "It means real consultations on changes to localization requirements and timely payments, as well as proper application of VAT exemptions in this key sector," she emphasised.

The Ghana Oil and Gas Conference is held annually to evaluate the performance of Ghana's upstream oil and gas industry and to share ideas on how to further develop and invigorate the sector. The conference includes presentations on critical issues such as monetizing natural gas resources, deepening local content, and securing financing for Ghanaian service companies. The event typically lasts two days and is held annually.

The oil and gas industry in Ghana is subjected to a variety of taxes and levies, which include a 35% corporate income tax, a surface rental fee, and a royalty rate ranging from 5% to 12.5% depending on the field's production level.

From 2018 to 2023, exploration activities in Ghana have reduced

by over 40%, according to reports. Investment in the oil sector dropped from \$3 billion in 2015 to around \$1 billion in 2022. The government's revenue from the oil sector has fluctuated, with a notable decline from \$980 million in 2019 to approximately \$830 million in 2022, reports have shown.

The upstream oil and gas sector in Ghana contributed 3.7 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020 and recorded a growth rate of -4.6 per cent (at constant 2013 prices), according to the Ministry of Finance.

The 2023 annual report by the Public

Interest Accountability Committee (PIAC) revealed that Ghana produced 48,247,036.61 barrels of oil in 2023, down from 51,756,481 barrels in 2022. This decline continues a trend from the peak production year of 2019 when 71,439,585 barrels were produced.

Production fell to 66,926,806 barrels in 2020, representing a 6.32% decline. This downward trend continued with 55,050,391 barrels in 2021, a 17.75% decline; 51,756,481 barrels in 2022, a 5.98% decline; and 48,247,036.61 barrels in 2023, a 6.78% decline.



Virginia Palmer, United States Ambassador to Ghana



International

Sudan army launches major attack on capital Khartoum

By BBC

Sudan's army has launched a major offensive against the powerful paramilitary group it is fighting in the country's civil war, targeting areas in the capital it lost at the start of the conflict. In dawn strikes on Thursday, government forces shelled Rapid Support Forces (RSF) bases in the capital Khartoum, and Bahri to its north.

Sudan has been embroiled in a war since the army and the RSF began a vicious struggle for power in April 2023, leading to what the UN has called one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Up to 150,000 people have been killed in the conflict while more than 10 million people - about a fifth of the population - have been forced from their homes. The military escalation comes despite US-led efforts to broker a ceasefire, which is being discussed on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly this week.

Residents of the capital said the artillery and air strikes started overnight and intensified at dawn. Numerous accounts said the army crossed key bridges over the River Nile - which had separated government-controlled areas in Omdurman from the regions controlled by the RSF.

The RSF claimed to have repelled the attempts, but sounds of clashes and

plumes of smoke were reported coming from locations in central Khartoum.

Since early in the war, the paramilitaries have been in control of nearly all of the capital.

Thursday's advances appear to be the government's first significant push in months to regain some territory.

Speaking later at the UN General Assembly in New York, Sudan's de facto leader, Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, said that he supported efforts to bring an end to the war, but only if they brought an end to the RSF's occupation of Sudanese territory.

He questioned why the international community had not stepped in to help counter the group, and accused states in the region of "providing funding and mercenaries for their own political and economic benefit, in flagrant violation of law and international will".

The UN has called for "immediate" action to protect civilians and end the fighting.

It says that, since the start of September, it has documented at least 78 civilian deaths as a result of artillery shelling and air strikes in the greater Khartoum area.

Much of the worst and most intense fighting has taken place in heavily

populated regions. Both sides have accused each other of indiscriminately bombing civilian areas.

"Relentless hostilities across the country have brought misery to millions of civilians, triggering the world's fastest-growing displacement crisis," warned the UN on Wednesday.

It noted that half of the 10 million people who had fled their homes were children, while at least two million have sought protection in neighbouring countries.

It also called Sudan "the world's largest hunger crisis". There are fears of

widespread famine as people have not been able to grow any crops.

There have also been warnings of a possible genocide against non-Arabs in the western region of Darfur.

A cholera epidemic is also raging throughout the country - more than 430 people have died from the easily-treatable disease in the past month, the health ministry said on Wednesday.

But getting treatment to those affected areas is hugely complicated by the conflict.



Khartoum

Oil prices slide 3% on prospect of more OPEC+ oil

By Reuters

Oil prices fell more than 3% on Thursday on a Financial Times report that Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, will give up its \$100 price target in preparation for raising output, along with OPEC members and allies in December.

Brent crude futures were down \$1.73, or 2.36%, to \$71.73 a barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude fell \$1.83, or 2.61%, to \$67.86 per barrel as of 10:19 a.m. CDT1323 GMT.

Saudi Arabia is preparing to abandon its unofficial price target of \$100 a barrel for crude as it gets ready to increase output, the Financial Times reported on Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter.

Meanwhile, two OPEC+ sources told Reuters on Thursday that the producer group is set to go ahead with a December oil output increase because its impact will be small should a plan for some members to make larger cuts to compensate for overproduction

be delivered in September and later months.

"They are over-reacting to the story from FT," said Phil Flynn, senior analyst for Price Futures Group.

The Saudi government's communications office and OPEC did not immediately return a request for comment.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, along with the group's allies including Russia, together known as OPEC+, have been cutting oil output to support prices.

However, prices are down nearly 6% so far this year, amid increasing supply from other producers, especially the U.S., as well as weak demand growth in China.

"The prospect of additional supply from Libya and Saudi Arabia has been the main driver behind the latest weakness," said Ole Hansen, an analyst at Saxo Bank.

A United Nations statement on Wednesday said delegates from Libya's

divided east and west regions agreed on the process of appointing a central bank governor, a step which could help resolve the crisis over control of the country's oil revenue that has disrupted exports.

Libya's crude exports have averaged about 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) in September, down from more than 1 million bpd in August, shipping data show. News of a new Chinese stimulus

package, however, limited further losses.

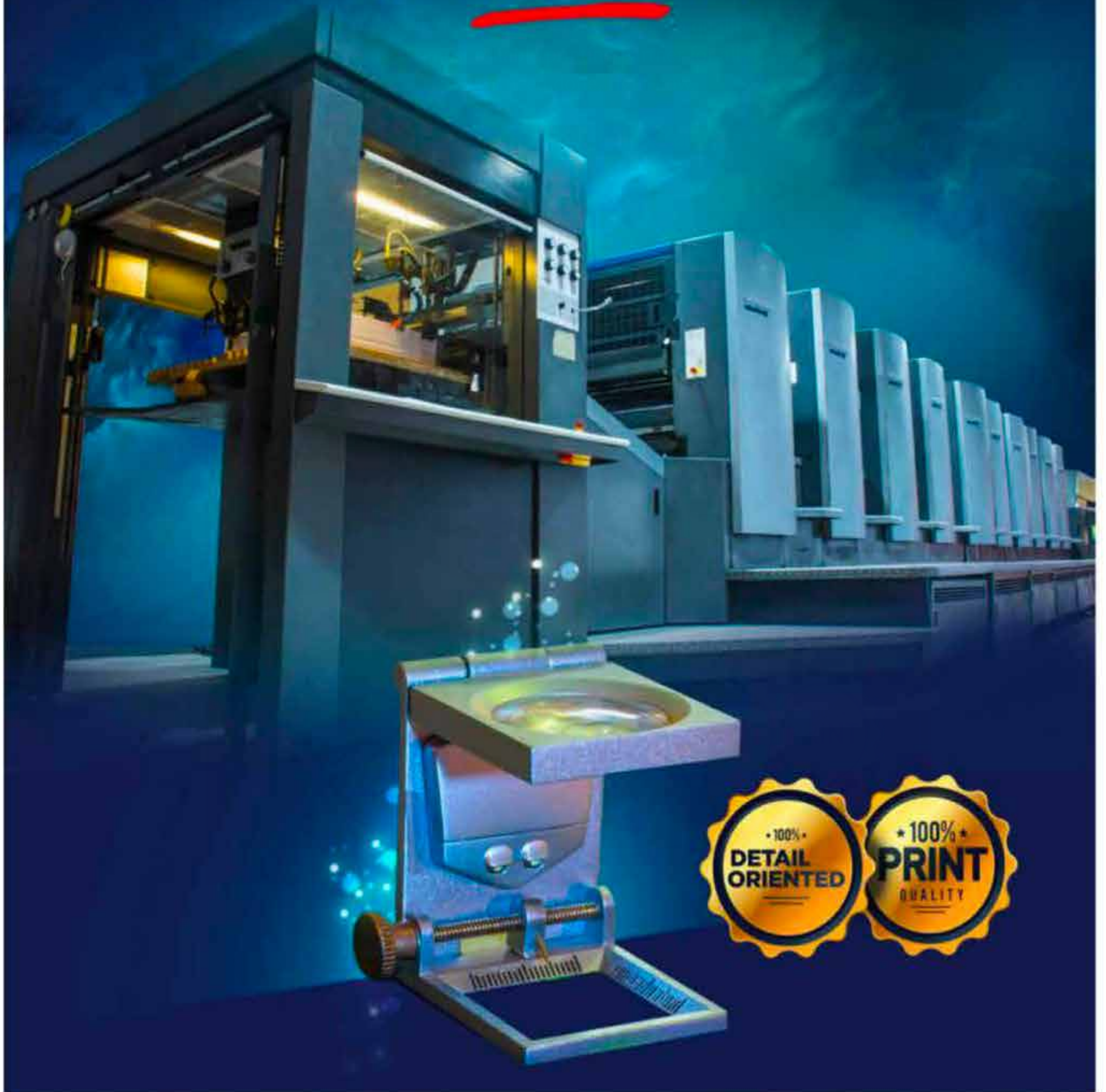
Top government officials in China, the world's largest crude oil importer, pledged on Thursday to deploy "necessary fiscal spending" to meet this year's economic growth target of roughly 5%, acknowledging new problems and raising market expectations for fresh stimulus in addition to measures announced this week.



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