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General News

Turmeric powder sold in Accra markets laced with chalk and toxic dye - KNUST study reveals

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

A recent study by researchers at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) has found that turmeric powder sold in Greater Accra markets is of poor quality.

The research, conducted by the Biochemistry and Biotechnology Department, identified chalk and Metanil yellow, an unapproved food colourant, in turmeric samples collected from ten different markets, including Agbogboloshie and Malata.

The study highlights a concerning trend of food adulteration, as all twenty turmeric products examined contained Metanil yellow, while two samples contained chalk. Prolonged exposure to these substances poses serious health risks, including liver cancer, cardiovascular diseases, peptic ulcers, and kidney problems.

Turmeric, commonly used in Ghanaian households as a spice, food preservative, and colourant, is known for its health benefits. It is effective in treating diabetic wounds, liver disorders, rheumatism, and coughs. Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, is responsible for its vibrant yellow colour and its nutritional properties.

Professor Christopher Larbie, an Associate Professor of Biochemistry

who led the study, explained that vendors add chalk to increase the quantity and enhance the yellow colour of the turmeric powder.

“What we gathered was that they add the chalk to increase the quantity of the turmeric and also enhance the yellow colouration of the vegetable,” he stated.

The research, published in the European Journal of Nutrition & Food Safety, found that fresh turmeric powders are typically rich in B vitamins and Vitamin C, which are essential for metabolism and carbohydrate digestion.

However, the study revealed a significant reduction in these nutrients, with curcumin content decreasing by approximately 72%. Vitamins B1 and B2 declined by about 90% and 92%, respectively, and some samples contained no Vitamin C.

“The Vitamins B1 and B2 had decreased about 90% and 92% respectively. Vitamin C was zero. When you buy such products, you are not getting the actual nutrients you need for disease prevention and healing,” Professor Larbie added.

The researchers noted that the loss of vitamins is due to prolonged exposure to air, which alters their chemical composition, especially since these vitamins are heat-

sensitive. While the study did not quantify the levels of contaminants, it underscored the need for greater public awareness regarding food safety.

Food adulteration poses significant health risks, potentially causing symptoms such as diarrhoea, dysentery, and vomiting. Metanil yellow, in particular, is toxic and can affect the liver, brain, and reproductive systems, yet it has not been approved for use in food products in Ghana.

To address this issue, the researchers recommend regular

food surveillance. They advise consumers to check for turmeric adulteration by dissolving the powder in water; if it dissolves slowly, it may contain chalk. Additionally, if the powder leaves a yellow stain on the tongue, it could indicate contamination with Metanil yellow.

“Metanil yellow is toxic to the liver, brain, and reproductive systems. It has negative effects on some of the brain hormones. Metanil yellow hasn't been approved as a food colour in Ghana,” Professor Larbie concluded.



Turmeric powder

Higher utility bills loom as PURC announces electricity and water tariff hikes effective October 1, 2024

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) has announced new tariff increases for electricity and water services, effective October 1, 2024.

The adjustments include a 3.02% rise in electricity tariffs and a 1.86% hike in water charges. These changes come after the PURC's quarterly review, aimed at addressing fluctuations in key economic factors such as the exchange rate, inflation, and the

cost of natural gas.

According to the Commission, these adjustments are necessary to maintain the “financial viability and ability of utility service providers to deliver on their mandate,” ensuring uninterrupted utility services.

Specifically, the depreciation of the Ghana Cedi against the US Dollar by 4.96% between the second and third quarters of 2024 contributed significantly to the rise in electricity tariffs.

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File photo



General News

Higher utility bills loom as PURC announces electricity and water tariff hikes effective October 1, 2024

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The exchange rate effect, combined with the Weighted Average Cost of Gas (WACOG), which declined slightly from US\$/MMBtu 8.0422 to US\$/MMBtu 7.8368, resulted in a total under-recovery of GHS 173.98 million in the electricity sector.

In its statement, the PURC detailed that the “projected inflation rate for the period declined marginally from 24.38% to 22.27%,” but this was not enough to counterbalance

other cost-driving factors. The hydro-thermal generation mix, with hydro sources contributing 34.81% and thermal sources 65.19%, remained unchanged for the period under review.

On the waterfront, the PURC attributed the 1.86% increase in tariffs to a revenue gap of GHS 12.01 million. “Cost recovery remains essential for the provision of reliable utility services,” the Commission noted.

It also pointed out that, despite marginal improvements in inflation rates - declining from 24.38% to 22.27% - other factors, including fuel costs, continue to drive up utility expenses.

In addition to adjusting the tariffs, the PURC has set a revenue collection benchmark of 98% for utility providers, warning that failure to meet this target could threaten the sustainability of the electricity and water sectors. For the third quarter, projected

revenues are set at GHS 2,024.5 million for ECG, GHS 243.20 million for Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDCo), and GHS 227.40 million for GWL.

According to the Bank of Ghana, the Ghana cedi has depreciated by 24.3% against the US dollar on the interbank forex market as of September 2024. This marks a slower depreciation compared to the 22.9% decline recorded during the same period last year.

Akufo-Addo's daughters not illegal miners - Lands ministry debunks rumours

By Amanda Cartey

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has rejected allegations made by North Tongu MP Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa that the daughters of President Nana Akufo-Addo are involved in illegal mining, commonly known as galamsey.

In a statement issued on September 28, 2024, the Ministry described the claims as “entirely false and misleading,” asserting that the President's daughters have no ties to illegal mining activities.

“The attention of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has been drawn to certain comments by the Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, alleging that the daughters of the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, are either associated with a certain company and/or involved in illegal mining,” the statement said.

The Ministry clarified that the company named in the allegations, Elite Minerals Company Limited, was established on July 25, 2008, and confirmed that none of the President's daughters are shareholders or directors of the company.

Additionally, the Ministry stated that Elite Minerals' mining lease, originally granted in 2012 during

former President John Mahama's administration, does not fall within a forest reserve, countering Ablakwa's claims.

“For the avoidance of doubt, Elite Minerals Company Limited's Mining Lease dated 22nd March, 2024, is a renewal of an earlier mining lease dated 23rd July, 2012, and the said Lease does not fall in any Forest Reserve as alleged by Hon. Ablakwa,” the Ministry emphasised.

The Ministry further dismissed Ablakwa's allegations about Elite

Minerals' supposed application for a 'restricted mining lease,' stating that such a lease does not confer exclusive rights as claimed.

Moreover, the Ministry highlighted that companies like Seven Seas Salt Limited have been mining in the Volta Region for years and that Seven Seas holds the largest salt concession since 2011.

The Ministry urged the public to disregard the allegations, labelling them as politically motivated, and reiterated its commitment to transparency in combating illegal

mining.

“The Ministry wishes to assure the people of Ghana of its unwavering commitment to the fight against illegal mining, and doing so with the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and candour, in the public interest,” it stated.

It also called on political figures and the public to make accurate statements regarding galamsey, emphasising the importance of factual discourse on this national issue.



The three daughters of President Akufo-Addo

General News

Publish full 2020 audit report on National Cathedral amid 2021-24 probe - Ablakwa to Deloitte

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has called for the full publication of the 2020 audit report related to the National Cathedral project. His demand follows claims made by the National Cathedral Secretariat that the audit firm Deloitte cleared them for the period ending December 31, 2020.

In a post on X, Ablakwa expressed concerns about the reliability of the information provided, stating, "I have observed quite a number of hirelings engage in a premature frenzy over a statement from the National Cathedral Secretariat claiming that audit firm Deloitte has purportedly cleared them for the period ending December 31, 2020. First of all, let me point out that Ghanaians demand a full publication of the said 2020 audit to draw our own informed conclusions. We shall not rely on the interpretations of an interested party."

He cautioned against assuming that the 2020 audit, which covers only one year, implies a lack of adverse findings for the entire project. "I stress that it is grossly misleading to conclude that because of a 2020 audit report—a report covering only one year—then it means no adverse findings have been made for the entire project," he asserted. Ablakwa also noted that, the statement from National Cathedral Board Chairman, Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah, acknowledged that audits for 2021, 2022, and 2023 remain outstanding.

According to documents submitted to Parliament by former Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta, as of November 21, 2022, only 0.13% of financial releases for the project had been made by 2020.

Ablakwa detailed this by stating, "Specifically, on 7th June, 2019, GHS445,000 (US\$89,000) was released for the National Cathedral project. The remaining over 99% of releases happened after 2020."

He provided a detailed list of post-2020 financial releases

from the Finance Ministry, including GHS80,525,461.84 (US\$13,972,594.93) on March 5, 2021; GHS32,070,103.02 (US\$5,564,827.84) on February 10, 2021; GHS142,762,500.00 (US\$25,000,000.00) on October 29, 2021; GHS58,200,000.00 (US\$10,000,000.00) on August 19, 2021; and GHS25,000,000.00 (US\$3,515,086.75) on March 31, 2022.

He concluded that these releases totaled GHS339,003,064.86 (US\$58,141,509.52), meaning the 2020 audit covered only a fraction of the actual financial activities related to the National Cathedral project.

"As we await a full publication of the 2020 audit, we also eagerly await the completion of the 2021, 2022, and 2023 audits which will cover more than 99% of the releases made," he stated.

Ablakwa further remarked, "It would be interesting to see how any credible audit can conclude that the world's most expensive

pit which has now been upgraded to a National Cathedral Swimming Pool truly cost US\$58.1 million. It would also be interesting to see how the litany of corrupt practices, diversions to Cary Summers and others, inflationary pricing, multiple legal breaches, demolishings, avoidable compensations, and criminal double identity payments will be cleaned up by any credible audit. The real comprehensive audit shall be conducted soon."

Meanwhile, the National Cathedral project is set to resume following the completion of the first audit report. Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah confirmed this development in a statement, stating that the audit conducted by Deloitte reviewed the project's financial activities up to December 31, 2020. He emphasized that the audit was initiated to address public concerns over allegations of corruption and questionable expenditures.

"The need for an audit was a key demand by church leadership and Ghanaians to establish the credibility

of the project's implementation. With the completion of this first report, preparations are underway for construction to resume," he said, calling for renewed financial and prayer support for the project from the public.

Construction had been suspended in 2022 due to financial constraints, but optimism remains regarding fundraising initiatives. Dr. Paul Opoku-Mensah, the Executive Director of the National Cathedral Secretariat, noted, "We are hoping that within the next couple of weeks, as part of our fundraising and other initiatives, we can begin work again."

Despite ongoing public debate about the necessity and transparency of the project, the government estimates that completion will require \$450 million, with previous contributions from various church denominations amounting to GH¢2.21 million (\$164,000), significantly less than needed.



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of Parliament for North Tongu

General News

We are not against protests - IGP clarifies police's stance amid rising tensions

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) George Akuffo Dampare has reiterated that the Ghana Police Service is not against public demonstrations, in light of recent clashes between protesters and the police.

Speaking at a media briefing on September 27, 2024, the IGP emphasised that protesting is a constitutional right and clarified misconceptions about the police's role in managing such events.

"We want to say there's a misconception that the police don't want people to demonstrate. Who are we that we can stop anybody from demonstrating?" Dampare stated, urging citizens to understand that the police do not oppose protests but seek to ensure

public safety during such events. Tensions between protesters and law enforcement have escalated recently, particularly following a demonstration organised by the civil society group, Democracy Hub.

The protest, held to address issues such as socio-economic inequality and corruption, was cut short after confrontations with the police on September 22. Forty-two protesters were arrested for alleged public disturbances, with some demonstrators accusing the police of using excessive force.

Video footage circulating on social media showed a heated standoff between protesters and police officers, with demonstrators chanting slogans and carrying placards demanding an end to illegal mining (galamsey).

According to police reports, 54 protesters are currently detained, nine of whom are incarcerated, while the rest remain in police custody.

The police have faced criticism for their handling of the situation, with allegations of mistreatment from the detained protesters. However, the prosecution has denied these claims, maintaining that the detainees are receiving proper care, including meals from a popular local restaurant.

Former President John Dramani Mahama has condemned the detention of protesters, calling it a violation of their rights. He criticised the court's decision to remand the demonstrators until October 8, following the prosecution's objection to granting bail.

In his remarks, IGP Dampare explained that while the police support the right to protest, demonstrators are required to inform the police ahead of time for safety reasons. "If you want to demonstrate, inform the police. It doesn't say seek permission from the police; it's informed," he noted, stressing that the police are responsible for assessing the information to ensure public safety.

This clarification by the IGP comes at a critical moment, as public debates continue over the balance between the right to protest and maintaining order in the country. The situation remains tense, with civil society groups calling for the release of the protesters and a more collaborative approach between law enforcement and demonstrators moving forward.



Dr. Akuffo Dampare, Inspector General of Police (IGP)

General News

EC to meet political parties on Sep 30 over voter register integrity concerns

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Electoral Commission (EC) has called an urgent meeting of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) for today, September 30, 2024, to discuss concerns surrounding the electoral register. Representatives from various political parties will gather to address ongoing issues related to the integrity of the voter roll ahead of the 2024 general elections.

This meeting comes in response to a demand from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for a forensic audit of the Provisional Voters' Register (PVR), which the party claims contains discrepancies. The NDC's request was part of a petition submitted following a demonstration on September 17, 2024.

EC Chairperson Jean Mensa has dismissed the need for an audit, stating that existing legal and administrative mechanisms for addressing issues with the register have not been fully utilised. In a

letter to NDC Chairman Johnson Asiedu Nketia, the EC stated, "As a Commission, we are of the view that the existing legal and administrative processes for cleaning the PVR have not been fully exhausted to justify the call for a forensic audit."

The EC has reassured both the NDC and the public that it is actively working to resolve the discrepancies identified in the PVR, similar to efforts made during the 2020 general elections. The Commission has also invited the NDC to participate in discussions and observe the measures being implemented to address any voter register issues.

In response to concerns about illegal vote transfers, the EC revealed that a District Officer in Pusiga, Upper East Region, was dismissed for facilitating 38 unauthorised transfers, which have now been rectified.

Although the NDC requested a re-exhibition of the voter register, the EC explained that time constraints

would not allow for this. However, an online version of the register will remain accessible to voters until election day.

The Commission has emphasised

its commitment to transparency and urged the public to trust the electoral process, reaffirming its dedication to conducting a fair and credible election in 2024.



Dr. Bossman Asare, Deputy Chairman of the EC

Ghana's first-ever Creative Arts Hall of Fame unveiled in Sekondi

By Amanda Cartey

Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Andrew Egyapa Mercer, has launched the first Creative Arts Hall of Fame in Sekondi, Western Region.

This celebration honours Sekondi's strong musical heritage and the talented individuals who have influenced Ghana's creative scene.

Thus the minister honoured Ghana's most famous figures in the creative arts, including Paapa Yankson, AB Crentsil, Felicia Abban, Ebo Taylor, Kwaw Ansah, Jewel Ackah, Joris Watenburg, Mike Eghan, Ray Allen, Gyedu Blay Ambolley, CK Mann, and Nana Bosompra for their lifetime achievements that has paved way in the industry.

"These legends, the first list of inductees have enriched our

cultural heritage and elevated Ghana's presence on the global stage," the Minister said.

Egyapa Mercer also shared plans to add the Hall of Fame to the ongoing renovations at the Centre for National Culture (CNC) in Sekondi. He hopes to spread this idea across the country so that every region can celebrate its own creative talents.

To keep recognizing these talents, the Minister announced that new inductees will be added each year during the World Tourism Day celebrations.

This will help ensure that Ghana's artists, musicians, filmmakers, and cultural figures are always recognized for their contributions. "These halls of fame stand as

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Creative Arts Hall of Fame unveiled by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture



General News

Ghana's first-ever Creative Arts Hall of Fame unveiled in Sekondi

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testaments to the power of creativity in shaping our world and driving economic growth," stated Minister Egyapa Mercer during the unveiling.

CEO of the Ghana Tourism

Authority, Akwasi Agyeman, thanked everyone who helped make this project successful. He also expressed gratitude for the strong support from the Sekondi community.

"Together, let us celebrate our national heroes and continue to promote the arts and culture that make Ghana truly unique," He said. The event was attended by industry

leaders, traditional chiefs, religious leaders, and youth groups. An official induction ceremony is set for October 22, 2024.

Govt doubles CPD allowance for teachers to GHC2,400

By Amanda Cartey

The Ministry of Education has announced a significant increase in the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) allowance for teachers and non-teaching staff in pre-tertiary schools across Ghana.

In a Facebook post, spokesperson Kwasi Kwarteng revealed that the annual CPD allowance for professional teachers will rise to

GHC2,400, doubling the previous amount of GH¢1,200. Non-professional teachers will also see their allowances increase from GH¢800 to GH¢1,800.

"The NPP Government has increased Teacher's Professional Development Allowance (PDA) by 100%. It has been increased from GHC 1200 yearly to GHC 2400. All teaching and Non-Teaching staff with PSL 14 and above have all been paid GHC 2400 this month,"

the post stated.

These adjustments are part of the government's commitment to support teachers in enhancing their skills and professional growth.

The CPD allowance, which was introduced in 2020, aims to improve the quality of education by providing financial assistance for ongoing training and the acquisition of new teaching methods.

In 2020, the government allocated GH¢354 million to cover CPD allowances for more than 300,000 teachers under the Ghana Education Service (GES).

The CPD allowance is regularly reviewed to meet the changing needs of educators. This latest increase demonstrates the government's responsiveness to the concerns of the teaching community and its dedication to improving educational standards.



Kwasi Kwarteng, Spokeperson for Ministry of Education

General News

Edward Adeti crowned Journalist of the Year at 28th GJA Awards

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The 28th Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) Media Awards was held on Saturday, September 28, celebrating media professionals for their contributions to shaping the nation.

The top award, P.V. Ansah Journalist of the Year, went to Edward Adeti of Media Without Borders for his investigative reporting, which has consistently exposed corruption in both public and private sectors.

In his acceptance speech, Adeti expressed gratitude to the GJA, his colleagues, and his audience. He dedicated the award to journalists fighting for truth and justice despite challenges, reaffirming his commitment to holding power accountable and advocating for

transparency in governance.

Other awardees included Godwin Asediba (Health Journalist of the Year), Clinton Yeboah (Student Journalist of the Year), Fred Duhoe (Best TV News Reporter), Bill Eshun (Disability Reporter of the Year), and Castro Senyallah (Court and Crime Journalist of the Year).

GJA President Albert Kwabena Dwumfour thanked journalists for their hard work and addressed national concerns. He urged President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to fulfill his promise to end illegal mining (galamsey), suggesting the declaration of a state of emergency to combat the crisis.

"We are aware that some time ago, Mr. President, the father of the nation made a promise to stop

galamsey, but regrettably, that promise has not been fulfilled. You are barely three months until the end of your administration, and we are hopeful you will deal with the situation before you leave office," Dwumfour said.

He also called on the government, judiciary, and police to release the remanded protesters from the Democracy Hub group. These 54 protesters, including 9 in prison custody, were detained after clashes during a recent protest against galamsey.

"I commend the Ghana Police Service for exhibiting professionalism and restraint during the recent three-day protest against galamsey. However, remanding the protesters for two weeks is too extreme and does not send positive signals regarding

human rights," Dwumfour added.

In response, President Akufo-Addo urged journalists to avoid spreading misinformation, emphasizing the importance of integrity, fairness, and accuracy ahead of the 2024 general elections.

He described journalists as "gatekeepers of truth," warning of the dangers posed by fake news and sensationalism, which could distort the electoral process.

"I remain deeply committed to ensuring that the media in Ghana remains free, vibrant, and independent. Your work is essential to the strength of our democracy, the integrity of our elections, and the progress of our nation," the president added.



President Akufo-Addo present Journalist of the Year Award to Edward Adeti of Media Without Borders



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Business

Interest rates drop as BoG lowers Monetary Policy Rate to 27%

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Bank of Ghana (BoG) has announced a 200 basis point reduction in its Monetary Policy Rate, bringing it down to 27%.

This marks the second rate cut since 2021 and is aimed at easing inflationary pressures while providing relief to borrowers.

The latest reduction follows a sustained period where the rate held steady at 29% after a previous cut from 30% in January 2024.

The decision, made during the 120th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) briefing on Friday, September 27, 2024, reflects the BoG's confidence in recent positive economic developments.

According to BoG Governor, Dr. Ernest Addison, the rate adjustment aligns with ongoing efforts to curb inflation and stimulate economic growth.

Dr. Addison highlighted key improvements in the macroeconomic environment, noting that inflation has eased significantly, and the nation's economic growth trajectory is gaining momentum.

The BoG's focus has been on tightening monetary conditions to support the

disinflation process, which has yielded tangible results over recent months.

"In the assessment of the Committee, preliminary data since the last MPC meeting held in July 2024 indicates that macroeconomic conditions have generally improved. Headline inflation has eased, and growth has picked up.

"Fiscal policy implementation has been robust, providing impulse that is supportive of growth, while monetary conditions have remained tight and supportive of the disinflation process."

"Headline inflation, since the first quarter, has declined for five consecutive months by 5.4 percentage points. Core inflation has also declined sharply over the same comparative period by 6.9 percentage points. These trends suggest that the disinflation process is on course."

The BoG's latest forecasts predict further easing of inflation, with the headline inflation rate expected to fall within the target range of 13-17% by the end of the year.

The medium-term goal is to bring inflation back to the 6-10% target range by the close of 2025, provided no unexpected shocks disrupt the economy.

In making this rate cut, the MPC also considered the balance of risks to the

inflation outlook. Given the improved economic conditions and robust fiscal policy implementation, the Committee deemed it appropriate to lower the policy rate to 27%, a move that should provide some relief to borrowers in the coming months.

The BoG's proactive measures aim to support growth while maintaining a steady path toward economic stability and inflation control.

According to the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, the central bank will maintain close oversight of macroeconomic indicators and make necessary policy adjustments

to ensure continued economic progress as the country moves forward.

"The latest forecasts show that inflation will continue to ease towards the range target of 13-17 per cent for the year and steadily track back towards the medium-term target of 6-10 per cent by the end of 2025, barring unanticipated shocks. At the current juncture, the committee judged the risks to the inflation outlook as fairly balanced."

"Given these considerations, the Committee decided to lower the Monetary Policy Rate by 200 basis points to 27.0 per cent."



Dr. Ernest Addison, Governor of the Bank of Ghana

Finance Ministry to seek parliament's approval for early use of 2025 budget funds

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Finance Ministry of Ghana has announced its intention to present the "Expenditure in Advance of Appropriation" for the first quarter of 2025 to Parliament by November 15, 2024.

Expenditure in Advance of Appropriation is a financial practice where a government or public institution spends money before the formal approval of a budget by the legislative body. This is typically done in situations where the fiscal year has started, but the annual budget (appropriation bill) has not yet been passed.

This submission is in accordance with Article 179(1) of the 1992 Constitution, Section 20(1) of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921), and Regulation 20(3) of the Public Financial Management Regulations, 2019 (L. I. 2378).

As 2024 marks an election year, the Ministry is also preparing a draft Budget Statement and Economic Policy for 2025, alongside the three-month Expenditure in Advance of Appropriation, known

as a "Vote on Account." The full Budget Statement and Economic Policy Statement for the 2025 financial year will be presented to Parliament in the first quarter of 2025.

The 2025-2028 Budget Preparation Guidelines are currently being circulated to Heads of Covered Entities and members of Budget Committees for compliance. These guidelines outline the processes and procedures necessary for the preparation of the 2025 budget, including policy priorities for the medium term, such as the IMF-Supported Post COVID-19 Programme for Economic Growth (PC-PEG), expenditure ceilings for 2025, and standardized templates for budget preparation.

Covered Entities have been reminded to align their expenditure ceilings with the Medium-Term Development Policy Framework, the IMF-Supported PC-PEG, and other governmental priorities. Heads of Covered Entities are encouraged to prioritize ongoing programs and projects in their budget proposals while adhering strictly to the communicated provisional ceilings.

In addition, the Ministry has indicated

that budget hearings will be organized to support the development of the 2025-2028 budget, as detailed in the Appendix of the Guidelines. Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) are urged to comply with the established timelines and ensure participation in these engagements alongside their respective Statutory Fund Managers, State-Owned Enterprises, and Agencies.

Chief Directors are also encouraged to follow the directives set out in the guidelines and ensure timely submission of relevant budget documents to bdru@mofep.gov.gh, three working days prior to their scheduled hearings.

The Finance Ministry is counting on the cooperation of all stakeholders in this crucial budgetary process as it prepares for the upcoming financial year.



Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister



International

Marburg virus outbreak kills six in Rwanda

By BBC

Six people have died from an outbreak of Marburg virus in Rwanda, the health minister has announced.

Sabin Nsanzimana said most of the victims were healthcare workers in the intensive care unit. Twenty cases have been identified since the outbreak was confirmed on Friday.

Marburg, with a fatality rate of up to 88%, is from the same virus family as Ebola. It spreads to humans from fruit bats and then through contact with bodily fluids of infected individuals.

Symptoms include fever, muscle pains, diarrhoea, vomiting and,

in some cases, death through extreme blood loss.

There are no specific treatments or a vaccine for the virus but a range of blood products, drug and immune therapies are being developed, according to the World Health Organization.

Rwanda says it is intensifying contact tracing, surveillance and testing to help contain the spread.

Authorities are urging the public to stay vigilant, wash their hands with clean water and soap or sanitiser and report all suspected cases. Neighbouring Tanzania reported an outbreak in 2023, while three people died in Uganda in 2017.



Marburg virus outbreak kills six in Rwanda

Tanzania orders gold dealers to reserve 20% for purchase by c.bank

By Reuters

Tanzania's mining regulator has ordered all mining firms and traders exporting gold to allocate at least 20% of the commodity for sale to the central bank to bolster the bank's move to diversify its foreign reserves.

The central Bank of Tanzania (BoT) began buying gold from local traders and miners in the last financial year that ended in June to boost its reserves amid depreciation pressure on the local currency, the shilling.

In the 12 months to June, the central bank bought 418 kg of gold to beef up its reserves and in the current financial year it intends to buy 6 metric tons of gold.

The regulator, the Tanzania Mining Commission, said late on Friday in a statement that the directive will take effect effectively on Oct. 1 as part of a newly enacted mining law.

Miners and traders, according to the statement, will be required to

submit the reserved gold to two major mineral refineries, Eye of Africa Ltd in the capital Dodoma and Mwanza Precious Metals Refinery Ltd, located in the lake city of Mwanza in the north of the

East African country.

"All payments will be done according to the Bank of Tanzania arrangements," the statement said, without providing details on rates.

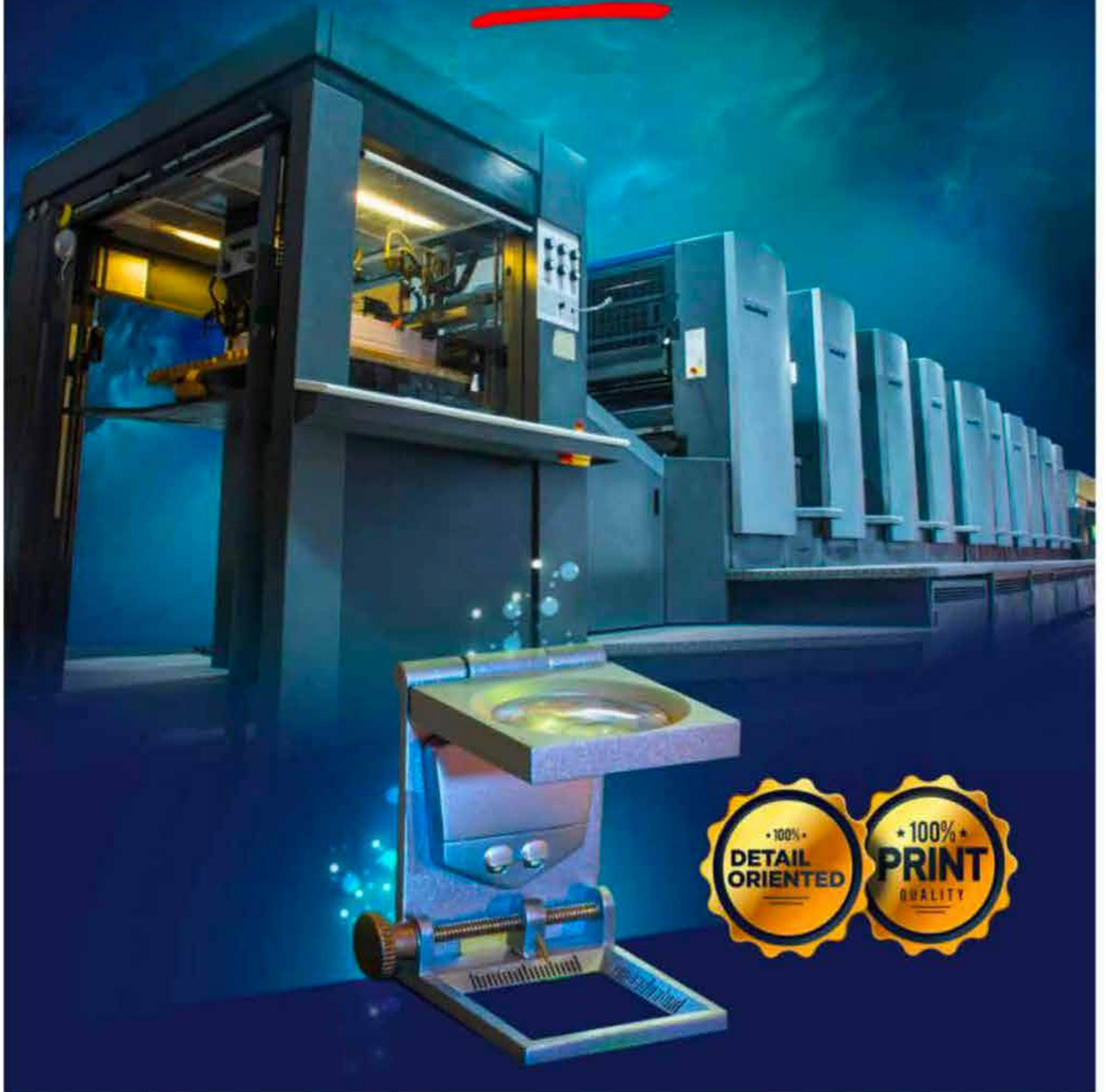
Tanzania's foreign exchange reserves stood at \$5.29 billion at the end of July, sufficient to cover 4.3 months of projected imports of goods and services.



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