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General News

Kasoa-Buduburam road project resumes after deadly rock-blasting incident

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Work on the Buduburam road project has resumed, ten days after a catastrophic rock-blasting incident on October 14, 2024, claimed the lives of three individuals and left over 30 others critically injured.

The blast, part of the Kasoa-Winneba road dualization project, also caused extensive property damage, destroying over 550 buildings and several vehicles in the Gomoa East District.

The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) confirmed the extent of the destruction, while Gomoa East's NADMO Director, Robert Hackman, stated that the damage was unprecedented in the area.

According to reports, the blast occurred earlier than scheduled, catching many off guard. Flying debris from the explosion struck people in their homes and in a nearby market, exacerbating the tragedy.

In response, project supervisors have committed to stricter safety protocols to avoid future incidents. One supervisor, speaking

anonymously, revealed that workers have undergone additional safety training, and new monitoring systems have been installed at the site. Local police have also ramped up patrols to secure the area.

Although the rock-blasting

phase has now been completed, authorities insist that enhanced safety measures will remain in place to protect both workers and nearby residents.

The Central Regional Minister, Justina Marigold Assan, has established a five-member

committee to assess the full extent of the damage and provide support to affected individuals. The Ministry of Roads and Highways has also initiated an investigation into the cause of the blast to ensure accountability and prevent such a disaster from recurring.



Buduburam road project

Life imprisonment for adult murderer in brutal killing of 10-year-old Kasoa boy

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty

The High Court, presided over by Justice Lydia Osei Marfo, has sentenced to life in prison, one of the two people convicted of murdering 10-year-old Ishmael Mensah Abdalla, in Kasoa three years ago.

Second accused, Nicholas Kini - aged 21, and the first accused, who was 15 years old when they committed the crime, were both found guilty of murder and conspiracy to commit murder. The minor (who still can't be named) has been referred to the juvenile court for sentencing.

During the hearing, the first accused pleaded guilty to conspiracy but not guilty to murder. However, Kini pleaded not guilty to both charges, stating that he was not at the crime scene and provided being with his grandfather as an alibi. But there was no evidence to support his claim.

During interrogation, the first accused revealed that their motive to murder Ishmael was for a money ritual. The culprits sought to trade the life of Ishmael and GHC5,000 for unlimited wealth from a spiritualist after discussing the matter between themselves.

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File photo

General News

Life imprisonment for adult murderer in brutal killing of 10-year-old Kasoa boy

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Following their agreement with the spiritualist, the duo conspired to lure the deceased to an uncompleted building under the guise of playing a game. After successfully luring him, they struck his head with a stick and a block, despite Ishmael pleading for his life, investigators told the

court.

In court, a pathologist, who was one of seven witnesses—including the victim's family and police officers—confirmed that Ishmael died of suffocation after being buried alive.

According to the victim's father, his wife discovered their son's lifeless body, prompting the family to rush to the scene after hearing her intense screams.

The father of the first accused testified in court that his son confessed to killing Ishmael and

identified Kini as his accomplice.

Based on the accounts and evidence presented in court, a seven-member jury delivered a unanimous guilty verdict on both charges. The fate of the first accused is yet to be determined by the juvenile court.

President Akufo-Addo to commission “historic” third-largest mine in Ghana - Lands Minister

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Cardinal Namdini Mining Project, Ghana's third-largest gold mining company, is set to be commissioned by President Akufo-Addo in the first week of November 2024, according to the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel Abu Jinapor.

According to the Minister, the mine located in the Talensi District of the Upper East Region, is also set to be one of the largest gold mines in Africa.

“This is the first large-scale gold mine in the North, which is really historic. It is going to be the third-largest mine in our country and one of the largest mines in Africa. This is momentous and exciting,” Mr Jinapor said during the tour of the site on Thursday, October 24.

Highlighting the economic importance of the mine, the Minister emphasised that it would significantly boost Ghana's economy, create employment opportunities, and foster development in the Talensi area.

He praised the management and staff of the company for their dedication as well as the Ministry of Lands and the Minerals Commission for their pivotal roles in bringing the project to fruition.

“It is a big project which is going to contribute hugely to the national economy of our country,” he stressed.

Mr Jinapor also explained that the mine represents Ghana's first greenfield gold mining project

in nearly a decade, built from the ground up with world-class equipment and modern safety protocols. This aligns with the country's reputation as the mining hub of Africa.

He expressed his appreciation to the project's leadership, especially Steve Ofori, Project Manager of Cardinal Namdini, for ensuring the highest environmental standards are met.

Steve Ofori confirmed that the company has invested in cutting-edge mining technology and equipment, receiving all necessary approvals from regulatory bodies,

including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This, he said, ensures the mine will operate responsibly, safeguarding the environment while adhering to safety protocols.

Ghana's mining industry is poised to see a significant boost, further cementing the country's place among the world's top gold producers.

The country is set to surpass \$10 billion in gold exports by the end of this year, according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Mr. Martin Ayisi.

This forecast, made last August, is driven by record-breaking gold prices and increased production across both small- and large-scale mining operations.

For the first half of 2024, gold exports contributed a substantial 54% to the total export value of \$9.2 billion, amounting to \$5 billion.

This surge is attributed to an average gold price of \$2,338 per ounce in the second quarter, marking an 18% increase year-on-year and a 13% rise quarter-on-quarter.



Lands Minister Samuel Abu Jinapor (in the centre)

General News

More Ghanaians opting for charcoal as LPG prices soar, threatening climate goals

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty**

As Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) prices continue to soar in the country, many households are turning to charcoal as a more affordable cooking alternative, increasing fears of worsening climate and environmental degradation.

LPG prices have been gradually increasing in recent months, affecting various cylinder sizes. A 6kg cylinder which used to cost GHC60, is now selling for GHC100, while the price for a 15kg cylinder has risen from GHC200 to more than GHC245.

In a hotline documentary dubbed "Gas to Charcoal" by JoyNews, residents of Dromankese in the Nkronza North District indicated that it is more economical to use charcoal than LPG.

However, this shift to more charcoal use poses a serious threat to the country's fight against climate change and damage.

But commenting on the issue, Evans Ohenegyan, a presiding member of the district, emphasised that it all boiled down to affordability, noting that while GHC50 worth of charcoal can last a month, the cost of LPG for the same period, would cost GHC220.

"The LPG I use, anytime I go and fill, I spend GHC220 before I am able to fill it. But the charcoal, right now, is GHC 50 here. I can use it for three weeks or sometimes one month. So you compare the two, and you will see that the gas is very expensive."

The situation is similar among most vendors in Tamale, who are also alternating between charcoal and gas usage to cut down costs.

"Every day, it (LPG) is increasing. When we bought GHC200 last year, we could use it for one week, but currently, you can fill it for GHC300, and in three days, it will get finished. So that forces us to use firewood and charcoal," one vendor bemoaned.

Some reports indicate that the price of LPG is skyrocketing due to a fall in the supply of the product. However, the National Petroleum Authority (NPA) has reassured households that there is adequate LPG available to meet national demand.

In recent weeks, the Western and parts of the Central Region have experienced disruptions in LPG supply due to a power challenge at the Ghana National Gas Processing Plant in Atuabo. This issue impacted the processing of natural gas, which is the primary source of LPG in the country. Consequently, the NPA directed LPG Marketing Companies (LPGMCs) to source LPG from Tema to serve their retail outlets in the affected areas.

As of October 9, the NPA confirmed that the opening stock of LPG was sufficient to last nearly two weeks of national consumption. Additionally, the Sentuo Oil Refinery has been consistently producing LPG to support the market's daily needs. The NPA assured further that Ghana will receive more than 20,000 metric tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) between October 21 and 27.

However, the shift from LPG to more charcoal usage poses significant challenges to the country's climate goals, as the increased reliance on charcoal exacerbates

deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions. Burning charcoal and firewood releases significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, contributing to climate change. Inhaling smoke from burning charcoal and firewood can cause respiratory diseases, including asthma, bronchitis, and other chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD).

The Centre for Environmental Management and Sustainable Energy (CEMSE) has sounded the alarm over a recent surge in liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices, warning it could undermine progress in adopting cleaner energy within the transport sector.

Ghana is actively pursuing a transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy sources. The country is already engaged in significant initiatives aimed at achieving this transition, which includes a target of integrating 10% of renewable energy into its energy mix by 2030 and the development of an energy transition framework.

The government has supported the distribution of over 1.5 million improved biomass cookstoves since 2021 and is currently supporting the distribution of another 500,000 biomass-improved cookstoves.

In September, parliament approved a \$250 million loan agreement to fund Ghana's Energy Sector Recovery Programme (ESRP). The loan, secured from the International Development Association of the World Bank Group, aims to reduce electricity purchase costs, boost revenue collection for distribution utilities, and enhance the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG)'s financial management.

It will also support the National Liquefied Petroleum Gas Promotion Programme (LPGPP), which aims to achieve a 50% LPG access goal by 2030. The agreement, initially rejected on July 30 due to concerns that \$90 million was allocated for consultancy, was revisited after further scrutiny. Speaker of Parliament Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin referred the matter to the Finance Committee for additional review.

In African countries such as Mozambique, Uganda, Mali, Zambia and Congo DRC, charcoal usage is more common than gas. The United Nations under its Sustainable Development Goal 7 seeks to ensure that by 2030, there is universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.



File photo

General News

Court orders OSP to release Dapaah's caution statements to ex-house help

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

A court in Accra has ordered the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) to provide key investigation documents to Patience Botwe, the first accused in the ongoing trial involving the alleged theft of substantial funds from the home of former Sanitation Minister, Cecilia Dapaah.

Botwe, a former house help at Dapaah's residence, requested access to investigation, caution, and charge statements from the OSP, asserting that they are essential for her defence, particularly for cross-examining Dapaah and her husband, who are central witnesses in the trial.

Her legal team had earlier sought these documents under the Right to Information (RTI) Act but was denied by the OSP, which cited legal exemptions.

After being denied access, Botwe's defence turned to the court for assistance. The OSP opposed this application, arguing that the

defence's request was premature and that the court had no jurisdiction over the matter.

However, Justice Marie-Louis Simmons rejected these arguments and ruled in favour of Botwe, underscoring the importance of a fair trial. She pointed to Article 19(2)(e)(g) of the 1992 Constitution, which guarantees the right of an accused person to access all relevant materials for their defence.

The judge also emphasised the inconsistencies in testimonies provided by Dapaah and her husband regarding the origin of the stolen funds, highlighting that access to the OSP's statements would enable a more thorough cross-examination.

While the court approved Botwe's request for the investigation and caution statements, it denied access to the recordings and transcripts of interviews with Dapaah and her husband, ruling that these materials were not critical at this stage of the trial.

The OSP has been directed to hand over the documents within a week, giving Botwe's legal team adequate time to prepare for cross-examination.

This ruling comes amid growing

public interest in the case, particularly given the significant sums of money involved and the high-profile status of the individuals at the centre of the investigation.



Kissi Agyebeng, Special Prosecutor

NPP Caucus petitions Speaker to reconvene Parliament

By Amanda Cartey

The Majority Caucus in Parliament has submitted a formal memo to the Speaker, Alban Bagbin, requesting him to urgently recall the House.

The Speaker, announced an indefinite adjournment of parliamentary proceedings on Tuesday, October 22, after a tumultuous day in the Chamber, characterised by heated disputes between Members of Parliament (MPs) from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC, over the question of which caucus holds the Majority.

In the memo issued in accordance with Article 112(3) of the 1992

Constitution and Order 53 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, the Caucus highlighted the need to reconvening the House, so that it can tackle pressing national matters that demand its immediate action.

Citing Article 112(3) the letter the memo stated: "Respectfully, on behalf of myself (Habib Iddrisu) and the requisite number of Members of Parliament from the Majority Caucus, I have the honour to address you on a matter of utmost national importance...notwithstanding any other provision of this article, fifteen percent of Members of Parliament may request a meeting of Parliament; and the Speaker shall, within seven days after the

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Alexander Afenyo-Markin, Majority Leader

General News

NPP Caucus petitions Speaker to reconvene Parliament as a matter of “national importance”

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receipt of the request, summon Parliament. Despite any other provision, 15% of the Members of Parliament may request a meeting of Parliament, and the Speaker shall, within seven days after the receipt of the request, summon Parliament.”

The Caucus outlined three

key matters to be addressed, prompting them to invoke Article 112(3):

“We respectfully request that, upon the House’s recall, the following urgent government business be discussed and acted upon, including any other matters that may arise... including tax exemptions for

eligible beneficiaries under the One District, One Factory Programme and the approval of the Ghana Financial Stability Fund, a \$250 million facility from the International Development Association.

Additionally, the Caucus outlined several bills for deliberation,

such as the Environmental Protection Agency Bill, 2024, the Social Protection Bill, 2023, the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Budget Bill, 2023, the Ghana Boundary Commission Bill, 2023, and the Intestate Succession Bill, 2022.

UTAG to call off strike on Oct 29, says it’s satisfied with protest outcomes

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) will call off its indefinite strike on October 29, they announced in a statement yesterday.

The strike, which began on October 10, was a call to action against what the institution perceived as the government’s inaction on illegal mining, popularly known as galamsey.

The UTAG statement read in

part: “NEC, after thorough deliberations, has directed the suspension of the strike action effective Tuesday, 29th October 2024, and is seeking members’ affirmation or otherwise of this directive.” Initially, the strike had no end date set.

Despite calling off the strike action, the union expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of their protest, particularly the public support it garnered.

“Our strike action has demonstrated significantly

throughout the country our commitment to protecting and sustaining the environment for present and future generations.

We have won the admiration and confidence of the Ghanaian people in us to always stand up for the welfare of our country,” the statement affirmed.

In response to criticism from some UTAG members, who alleged that the leadership acted without broader consultation and suggested the strike was politically influenced, the Association

clarified its stance.

“Our non-political advocacy approach was evident through a hashtag campaign, leveraging media platforms for support, and engaging constructively to push our demands.”

UTAG also expressed gratitude to its members and other stakeholders for their cooperation during the strike, urging them “to remain vigilant and united in the pursuit of a sustainable future for Ghana.”



File photo

General News

PIAC calls for urgent attention to dip in crude oil production

By Amanda Cartey

The Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) says there is an urgent need for Ghana to address the steady decline in the country's crude oil production, which the institution believes has been going down by an average of 9.2 per cent annually since 2020, largely due to technical and operational challenges in mature fields.

To address this, PIAC member Mr Constantine K. M. Kudzedi said the government should adopt a multi-pronged strategy focused on economic diversification, sustainable exploitation of petroleum resources, and the promotion of renewable energy.

"We need urgent action from all stakeholders in terms of innovation and collaboration. Ghana's oil production began in 2010, with the Jubilee field being a major contributor to the country's oil output. However, after 14 years of production, Jubilee is now showing signs of natural

decline; production peaked in the first nine years but has since been on a downward trend," he explained.

He was speaking in Accra yesterday, on the theme Overview of Crude Oil Production in Ghana: The Journey So Far, at PIAC's Technical Consultative Workshop dubbed Addressing the Declining Crude Oil Production in Ghana.

Mr Kudzedi, who is also a law lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, noted that the Tweneboa-Enyenra-Ntomme (TEN) and Sankofa fields, which previously contributed significantly to overall production, are now experiencing similar declines.

He attributed this decrease in output primarily to technical problems such as equipment failures and maintenance delays, along with infrastructure issues.

He emphasised that deficiencies in infrastructure, especially in oil and gas processing, transportation, and storage, have restricted the country's production capabilities.

He also highlighted stalled projects, including the expansion of gas processing facilities, as contributing factors to the production slowdown. Furtherance to this, he mentioned that global energy transition trends are shifting focus from fossil fuels to renewable energy, creating uncertainty regarding the future demand for crude oil.

As a result, he indicated that investors have become more reluctant to engage in long-term oil exploration projects

in Ghana, which has had a ripple effect on the economy, considering that oil is a significant driver of the country's economic growth.

"With total production consistently declining, investor confidence in Ghana's upstream oil sector is weakening, and this could lead to the risk of 'stranded assets,' where oil reserves and infrastructure become less valuable as the world moves towards renewable energy," he stated.



Mr Constantine K.M Kudzedi, PIAC member

Policy Think-Tank Fiscal Recklessness Index Report calls out glaring financial irregularities in state institutions

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Policy think-tank IMANI Africa has called for the establishment of an independent council to address fiscal recklessness in public sector financial management, as a report cites the Finance Ministry as the worst culprit.

This follows the release of IMANI Africa's collaborative report with Oxfam Ghana, which evaluated financial irregularities among Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in its third edition of Fiscal Recklessness Index.

The report ranked the Finance Ministry as the most reckless institution in Ghana, attributing over GH¢ 4.9 billion in financial losses in 2023 to various irregularities.

Speaking at a media briefing, Senior Research Associate at IMANI Africa, Dennis Asare, criticized the Finance Ministry for its incompetence, stating: "The Ministry of Finance is considered the most fiscally reckless institution

because nearly 90% of the identified irregularities can be traced back to it."

Mr. Asare added that these significant financial losses could have been redirected to essential social intervention programmes such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) initiative and the Ghana School Feeding Programme.

He called for the creation of a legally backed, independent fiscal authority to provide critical oversight of the country's financial system.

"We need a stronger fiscal council, not just a committee. All political parties agree on the importance of such an institution. Now is the time to formalise it with legal backing and ensure it has the authority to perform its critical oversight functions effectively," he urged.

However, former Auditor-General Daniel Yaw Domelevo opposed the idea of establishing a Fiscal Council as a solution to fiscal mismanagement in

the public sector.

His view is that: "the Attorney-General, the Auditor-General, the

Director-General of the Internal Audit Agency, and the Public Accounts Committee—these institutions, we should wake them up."



Dennis Asare, Senior Research Associate at IMANI Africa

General News

Coconut sector applauded for boosting employment as export demand rises

By Amanda Cartey

Ghana's coconut sector has been praised for its significant contributions to raising employment, with over 350,000 jobs created in the past seven and a half years as global demand for coconut products continues to rise.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ghana Exports Promotion Authority (GEPA), Dr Afua Asabea Asare says the government, through the GEPA, has so far distributed over one million seedlings covering 15,625 acres to farmers, generating approximately 350,000 jobs within the value chain.

Speaking at the 4th International Coconut Festival Ghana, held at the Accra International Conference

Centre Dr Asabea indicated that these employment opportunities were created through a focused effort to revitalise the coconut sub-sector.

The initiative was primarily carried out by distributing disease-tolerant coconut seedlings to farmers across major coconut-growing regions, including Volta, Eastern, Western, Central, and Ashanti.

"GEPA has made a modest but quite significant investment in the sector since 2017 by procuring and distributing disease-tolerant coconut seedlings to coconut farmers across the major coconut-growing regions of Volta, Eastern, Western, Central, and Ashanti. So far, we have distributed over a million seedlings covering fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-

five acres, generating about three hundred and fifty thousand (350,000) jobs within the coconut value chain," the Dr Asabea explained.

She further clarified that the coconut revitalisation initiative was introduced to revive the struggling coconut industry, with the aim of enhancing the supply capacity within the value chain in response to the increasing global demand for coconut products.

The International Coconut Festival Ghana is an annual festival that brings together stakeholders in the coconut value chain, including growers, exporters, and researchers, primarily from academia, to discuss issues that can support the development of the industry.

The event, held under the theme - Empowering Lives Through Coconut — Innovation, Employment, and Sustainable Livelihoods - hosted speakers and panellists, including the Country Director of Solidaridad, Eric Agyare; the CEO of the Tree Crop Development Authority (TCDA), William A. Quaitoo; the President of the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), Dr Joseph Obeng; and the Chief Director of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Paul Siameh.

Dr Afua Asabea Asare also said she is committed to fostering the innovative spirit by providing platforms for capacity building, research, and technological advancement to ensure that Ghanaian coconut products remain competitive and sustainable.



Coconut



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Business

Hope for Ghana as IMF projects 4.2% economic growth for Sub-Saharan Africa

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2025 forecast for Sub-Saharan Africa is promising, as the lending institution predicts a 4.2% economic growth for the region, raising hope for a brighter outlook for Ghana.

According to the IMF's October 2024 World Economic Outlook, released during its ongoing Annual Meetings taking place in Washington, the region's growth is expected to rise from a steady 3.6% in 2023 to 4.2% by the end of 2025.

"The Sub-Saharan African region is one that is seeing growth rates that are fairly steady this year, compared to last year, at about 3.6 per cent, and then expected to increase to about 4.2 per cent next year," IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas states.

He added: "We're seeing some pickup in growth from this year to next year.

But now, this is certainly a region that's been adversely impacted by weather shocks and, in some cases, conflict. So, the growth remains subdued and somewhat uneven, and that's certainly something that we are concerned about".

However, he also highlighted that some ongoing challenges, such as weather-related disruptions and conflicts, could hinder more robust growth.

Division Chief of the IMF's Research Department, Jean-Marc Natal, also echoed these sentiments, noting that while there has been some progress, growth remains "uneven and too low."

He pointed out that while inflation is stabilising in some areas, it continues to pose challenges for many countries.

"Inflation [is] stabilising in some countries... and reaching levels close to the target, but half of them are still at a large distance from the target, and a third of them are still having

double digit inflation," he said.

Additionally, high debt levels in the region were flagged, with Natal urging countries to adopt tighter monetary policies and pursue fiscal consolidation, particularly where inflation remains elevated.

The IMF emphasised the need for targeted support for vulnerable populations during these consolidations.

On a global scale, the IMF forecasts steady economic growth of 3.2% for 2024 and 2025, with advanced economies showing signs of recovery while emerging markets, including Sub-Saharan Africa, slowly rebound from previous shocks.

As Ghana aligns itself with these regional trends, the IMF's optimistic growth projection could herald a period of economic recovery and development in the years ahead.



IMF

Finance Minister says Ghana saved \$12bn with DDEP, hails it a great success

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Government's implementation of the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP), saved Ghana a whopping \$12 billion, Finance Minister, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam has revealed.

The Minister, who is attending the 2024 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, in Washington, disclosed this on Wednesday, when he spoke on a panel discussion discussing the challenges low-income countries face in managing debt.

Launched by the government in December 2022, the primary goal of the DDEP was to restructure the country's domestic debt by encouraging bondholders to exchange their existing bonds for new ones with revised terms.

This initiative aimed to reduce the government's debt servicing obligations and create a more sustainable fiscal environment.

was part of broader efforts to manage the country's debt and restore macroeconomic stability.

Despite the criticism the government faced over the programme's implementation, the Minister hailed its success, stating:

"The DDEP was a great success. The benefits we have derived from this so far include an outright debt cancellation of about \$5 billion and another debt service relief of about \$4.3 billion. So, between the bilateral creditors and the Eurobonds, we are talking about savings of about \$12 billion, and we think this is a great success..."

He further explained that the programme required domestic bondholders to exchange their existing bonds for new ones with revised terms, a critical measure to reduce the government's debt service obligations.

Dr. Amin Adam further disclosed that the government is currently working to restructure approximately \$2.7 billion with its commercial creditors.

"[] We are still having an outstanding restructuring with our commercial creditors involving about \$2.7 billion, and we are working very hard to conclude that," he explained, noting that the restructuring of bilateral debt, which followed, was also successful, leading to significant savings of about \$2.8 billion.

He further highlighted the

restructuring of the Eurobonds, amounting to \$13 billion, which was concluded in the first week of October, marking another major achievement.

Bondholders participating in the DDEP were required to exchange their old bonds for new ones under different terms, which included changes to maturity periods and coupon rates.



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

International

Zimbabwe establishes Local Laboratory for Polio Surveillance

Source: WHO

In a significant step towards strengthening its public health infrastructure, Zimbabwe established a dedicated laboratory for the analysis of polio samples collected through environmental surveillance (ES). Previously, these samples were sent to South Africa for testing, resulting in a turnaround time of approximately 21 days.

With financial and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO), the newly renovated laboratory is equipped with state-of-the-art technology testing equipment and staffed by highly trained personnel. WHO further provided training to 10 laboratory scientists to run the new laboratory and locally carry out environmental samples testing. This local capability will significantly reduce the time required to detect and respond to potential outbreaks of polio.

Three experts from the African Polio Laboratory network, proficient in WHO ES testing methods for poliovirus, were identified by the WHO Regional Officer for Africa (AFRO) to provide the training needs to the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) where the laboratory is situated. The team includes Shelina Moonsamy

as the Team Lead (Head of Polio Laboratory, NICD, Johannesburg, South Africa), James Peter Eliku (ES Technical Expert, Uganda Virus Research Institute, Entebbe, Uganda) and Thabo Mashupye (ES Technical Expert, NICD).

“The establishment of this laboratory is a major milestone in our efforts to safeguard the health of Zimbabweans,” said Mr Paradzayi Chibukira, Technical Supervisor at the Zimbabwe National Virology Polio Laboratory at UZ. “By reducing the turnaround time for laboratory results, we can more effectively implement prevention and control measures to prevent the reintroduction of polio into our country.” Environmental surveillance for polio is a critical component of global efforts to monitor and eradicate polio. It involves collecting and analyzing sewage and other environmental samples to detect the presence of the poliovirus, which can indicate the circulation of the virus in the community. This method complements traditional surveillance through the Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system and provides a broader view of potential outbreaks.

Polio is a highly contagious viral disease that can cause paralysis, especially in children. While Zimbabwe has been polio-free for

many years, the risk of reintroduction remains, particularly due to the ongoing global efforts to eradicate the disease.

With support from WHO, Zimbabwe launched its environmental surveillance programme in 2023, beginning with sites in Harare and Chitungwiza. This initiative was part of a broader strategy to strengthen disease monitoring and improve response capabilities. The introduction of environmental surveillance in these initial sites marked a key step in the country’s commitment to enhancing its public health infrastructure. Additional sites were established in other major cities,

including Bulawayo, Gweru, and Victoria Falls in 2024. This expansion reflects Zimbabwe’s proactive approach to disease monitoring and its determination to safeguard public health.

“We applaud and fully support Zimbabwe’s decision to set up the laboratory for polio surveillance and this development not only enhances the country’s capacity for timely and accurate detection of poliovirus in the environment but also strengthens the overall public health infrastructure,” said Mr Kenneth Chindedza, WHO Zimbabwe Technical Officer for Logistics and Supply Chain.



Zimbabwe Polio laboratory

Ruling party’s Daniel Chapo wins Mozambican presidential election

Daniel Chapo of the ruling party Frelimo has emerged victorious in Mozambique’s presidential election, extending the party’s 49-year grip on power.

Chapo, relatively unknown prior to the election, received 71% of the vote, making history as the first president born after the country’s independence in 1975. He will replace two-term President Filipe Nyusi.

The election, however, has been overshadowed by violent protests and allegations of rigging. Following the announcement of the results, unrest erupted in several towns, leading to casualties and prompting a heavy police presence.

The elections were marred by

accusations of misconduct, including the killing of opposition supporters, which fueled public outrage.

Chapo’s closest rival, Venancio Mondlane of the opposition Podemos party, garnered 20% of the votes, while Ossufo Momade from the former rebel group Renamo came in third with 6%. Political analysts noted that Renamo has struggled to maintain its historical influence, particularly among younger voters.

With a reported voter turnout of 43% from over 17 million registered voters, Frelimo also won a substantial majority in the parliamentary elections, securing 195 of the 250 seats.

Mondlane has called for a national strike in response to alleged electoral

fraud and organized demonstrations, which were met with police violence.

The European Union’s election observers criticized the electoral process, citing irregularities and

possible alterations of results. As Chapo prepares to take office in January, the political climate in Mozambique remains fraught with tension amid these developments.



Daniel Chapo, newly elected President of Mozambique

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www.universalcrystalprint.com
info@universalcrystalprint.com