



State drops charges against seven Democracy Hub protesters

Page 2

Parliament adjourned indefinitely

Page 4



Ghana targets \$25.3 billion from coconut exports by 2029

Page 9



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General News

Bagbin hasn't met Akufo-Addo to negotiate settlement on fate of 4 MPs - Parliament

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Parliament has firmly denied claims circulating on social media that the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, met with President Nana Akufo-Addo to negotiate a settlement regarding the declaration of four parliamentary seats vacant.

This follows a social media video suggesting that such a meeting took place after the Speaker's ruling on October 17, 2024, which declared the seats of four Members of Parliament vacant.

In a statement released by Parliament, it was clarified that the video in circulation is misleading. The footage, according to the official response, is from July 4, 2024, when Speaker Bagbin led a delegation to present the

maiden Democracy Cup to the President.

Parliament described the video as being "wrongly labelled and twisted" to create false narratives about the Speaker's integrity.

"Parliament states without any equivocation that there is no iota of truth in the insinuation in the circulated video," the statement said.

The controversy began when Speaker Bagbin ruled on a call by the Minority Leader to declare the seats of four MPs vacant, leading to a leadership crisis in the House. However, Parliament is now urging the public to disregard the video, branding it as an "attempt to hoodwink" people into believing a false story.

"The attempt to wrongly label the

video and twist facts to impugn the integrity of the Rt. Hon. Speaker and Parliament is not only disingenuous but unfortunate," the statement continued.

Parliament has therefore urged the public to "treat the narrative with the contempt it deserves" and to disregard any attempts to mislead them about the Speaker's actions

or any supposed negotiations with the President.

This denial comes amidst ongoing political tension in Parliament following Speaker Bagbin's controversial ruling, which has sparked debate over the balance of power between the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).



Alban Kingsford Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

State drops charges against seven Democracy Hub protesters

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The State has dropped charges against seven protesters from the Democracy Hub group, who were previously accused of participating in unlawful demonstrations. This decision was announced by a Circuit Court in Accra on Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

During the court session, State Attorney Amanda Awadey informed His Honour Kwabena Kodua Obiri Yeboah that the state had chosen to discontinue the case against Kingsley Asiedu, Seth Cofie, Vera Gloria Louis, Nii Quaye Hammond, Manuel Biney, Dorsese Joseph, and Ernest Acheampong.

However, two other defendants, businessman Dela Quarshie and Agbevi Matthias, a teacher and National Service personnel at Parliament, will face new charges in an ongoing case.

The prosecution also revealed that additional disclosures and witness statements had been filed, leading the court to adjourn proceedings

to November 21, 2024. All nine individuals had pleaded not guilty to charges, including conspiracy, unlawful assembly, causing unlawful damage, offensive conduct, and assaulting a public officer.

The charges stem from a protest organised by the Democracy Hub, dubbed the #Wetaya#ReoccupyJulorbihouse Demonstration. On July 9, 2024, the group notified the police of their intention to hold the demonstration near Revolutionary Square, across from Jubilee House, requesting police protection for the event.

However, after discussions between the police and the group, the police advised the organisers to change the location since Revolutionary Square is classified as a security zone. A High Court order on September 19, 2024, prohibited the protest from taking place at that location.

Despite police recommendations for seven alternative venues, the protesters rejected these

suggestions and insisted on holding the demonstration at the 37 Roundabout. Law enforcement denied this request as well.

On September 21, 2024, the protesters gathered at the 37 Roundabout, determined to march towards Revolutionary Square. The police set up barricades to control the situation and maintain security. However, the situation escalated when some protesters allegedly blocked major roads, causing traffic disruptions near El Wak Stadium, Liberation Road, and other surrounding areas.

According to the prosecution, the protesters damaged billboards, set fire to political posters and flags, and dismantled police barricades, which led to confrontations with law enforcement.

While the charges against seven of the protesters have been dropped, the case against the remaining two defendants will proceed with fresh charges. The outcome of the next court hearing on November 21 will determine the next steps for the accused and whether further legal action will be taken.



File Photo

General News

Govt businesses to be affected by adjournment of parliamentary sitting

By Amanda Cartey

The adjournment of parliamentary sittings announced by Speaker Alban Bagbin yesterday is expected to impact several government businesses that were before the House for deliberation and approval.

Speaker Alban Bagbin indefinitely adjourned sitting amid a controversy over vacant seats, leaving several key parliamentary businesses such as the approval of two Supreme Court Judge nominees appointed by President Akufo-Addo and tax waivers over \$350 million, in limbo.

In July this year, President Akufo-Addo nominated two new judges to the Supreme Court bench following their approval by the Judicial Council.

These two professors Richard Frimpong Oppong, a legal academic and fellow of the Ghana Academy of Sciences, and Justice Sophia Rosetta Bernasko Essah, a justice of the Court of Appeal were to be

approved by Parliament following a vetting by the Appointments Committee. But they never met the Appointments Committee due to chaos, emanating from unconstitutional appointment claims by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) members on the committee.

The government in the second quarter of the year presented a \$350 million tax waiver request for some 42 companies under the One District One Fund (1D1F) initiative. However, this request was never granted on the floor of parliament during an emergency sitting, where the leader of the National Democratic Congress Caucus, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, questioned the basis for such waivers when the government is in dire need of funds as a result of the economic crisis.

On the matter, the Member of Parliament for Effutu and leader of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Alexander Afenyo-Markin accused

the NDC MPs of stifling the progress of local companies and Ghanaian businesses with their action.

Additionally, pending bills before Parliament include the Architects Registration Bill 2024, the Economic and Organised Crime Office (Amendment) Bill 2024, the Vaccines Development and Manufacturing Bill 2024, and

the Environmental Protection Agency Bill 2024. Parliament concluded consideration of the Environmental Protection Agency Bill 2024 on October 16, during the 5th meeting of the 4th session of the 8th Parliament. The Bill establishes an Environmental Protection Authority, provides for climate change, and consolidates other related laws.



Alban Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

We are prepared for any election-related dispute - Judiciary on 2024 polls

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Ghana's Judiciary has declared its preparedness to efficiently address any election-related disputes arising from the upcoming 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

Chief Justice, Her Ladyship Justice Gertrude Sackey Torkornoo, during a meeting with the Christian Council of Ghana in Accra on October 22, 2024, emphasised the Judiciary's commitment to promptly and fairly resolving election-related cases, both before and after the polls.

"The Judiciary is fully prepared to handle election-related cases promptly and fairly, guided by the principles of justice and the rule of law," Chief Justice Torkornoo stated.

Justice Gertrude Sackey Torkornoo emphasised the judiciary's commitment to resolving any disputes arising before, during,

or after the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections swiftly and fairly.

Joined by the Judiciary's Elections Management Committee, led by His Lordship Paul Baffoe Bonnie, and the Judicial Secretary, Her Ladyship Justice Cyra Pamela C.A. Koranteng, the Chief Justice, highlighted that their efforts will be guided by the soon-to-be-released 5th edition of the Manual on Election Adjudication.

The Elections Management Committee has been actively engaging key stakeholders like the National Peace Council, Electoral Commission, and political parties to ensure a seamless election process.

In preparation, judges across the country have undergone specialised training to efficiently handle election-related cases.

Through these efforts, including enhanced public awareness and collaboration with stakeholders,

the judiciary is determined to uphold a fair and credible electoral process.

Ghana's courts have a significant history of handling electoral disputes, particularly during and after elections.

In the 2000 presidential elections, the opposition NDC contested the

results.

The Supreme Court was called upon to adjudicate the disputes. Also another major election which saw parties run to court was the 2008 and 2012 elections, with various cases brought before the courts regarding the validity of the results.



Supreme Court

General News

Poor animal care in Ghana driving spread of zoonotic diseases - VEMTAG

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The neglect of animal welfare is becoming a significant driver of zoonotic diseases in Ghana, according to the President of the Veterinary Medical Technologies Association of Ghana (VEMTAG), Emmanuel Eshun.

During an interview with The Independent Ghana, Mr. Eshun, a veterinary technologist at the Veterinary Services Department, pointed out that the lack of proper animal care, coupled with economic and cultural challenges, is escalating the risk of diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that are transmitted from animals to humans, often through direct contact with animals or through vectors like ticks and fleas. According to Mr Eshun, the careless treatment of animals—particularly the lack of vaccination, proper housing, and health care—creates an environment ripe for the transmission of zoonotic diseases.

“The inability of some Ghanaians to access their own basic needs prevents them from prioritizing the welfare of animals,” he noted, adding that wild animals kept as pets are also a growing concern in terms of disease transmission.

Mr Eshun explained that ectoparasites—external parasites like ticks, fleas, and mites—play a significant role in the transmission of zoonotic diseases. These parasites, which thrive in environments where animals are poorly cared for, can carry

dangerous pathogens that affect both animals and humans.

A lack of regular animal grooming and hygiene contributes to the spread of ectoparasites, increasing the risk of diseases such as Lyme disease, scabies, and flea-borne illnesses.

“A lot of people cannot bathe their animals. If you cannot bathe your animal, it means that the tendency for the animal to have a lot of ectoparasites is higher,” Mr Eshun stated. Poor grooming and hygiene, combined with a lack of regular health checks, leave many animals vulnerable to infections, which can eventually spill over into human populations.

Cultural and attitudinal barriers to animal welfare

While laws such as the Diseases of Animals Act exist to regulate animal health and welfare, Mr Eshun argued that the root of the problem lies in cultural attitudes.

“People own these animals based on economy, culture, and security,” he said, noting that many Ghanaians see animals—especially dogs—as mere tools for hunting or guarding property, rather than as beings deserving of care and attention.

This cultural neglect extends to basic health care for animals, with many pet owners failing to provide vaccinations, routine deworming, and proper nutrition.

“They don’t really regard them—giving them the welfare, housing, food, and shelter that they deserve,” Eshun lamented.

He added, “We have had instances

where people have practised as veterinarians but aren’t veterinarians, and we’ve sent them to court. Even the police, their attitude towards that case is not encouraging for you to even go to the next level where a judge will say, ‘I will sit and punish somebody.’”

This, he stressed, is a societal issue that requires a collective understanding of the consequences of poor animal care.

Rabies vaccination and the challenges

One of the most prevalent zoonotic diseases in Ghana is rabies, a viral disease that is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. The disease is commonly spread through the bite or scratch of an infected animal, primarily dogs.

In Ghana, over 2.5 million dogs are currently unvaccinated or under-vaccinated, a major factor contributing to the spread of rabies. According to the Veterinary Services Department, there have been 31 confirmed rabies cases in animals across nine regions in Ghana as of September 2024, with 26 human fatalities.

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service and development partners, launched the National Rabies Prevention Campaign in 2023. The campaign, themed “Prevent the Bite or Scratch! Vaccinate your Dog! Stop Rabies Now!” seeks to vaccinate 70% of Ghana’s dog population over a 3 to 5-year period, which is necessary to achieve herd immunity and significantly reduce

the spread of rabies.

However, as Mr. Eshun explained, the vaccination campaign faces several challenges. One major issue is the inability of pet owners to control or restrain their dogs during vaccination campaigns.

“The Service is faced with challenges because owners of the animals cannot hold them,” he noted. Additionally, the vaccination efforts are underfunded. He highlighted additional costs such as publicity for vaccination campaigns, staff transportation, and motivation for those administering the vaccines.

“The percentage of treated rabies cases is still low because you need a lot of funding. The vaccination is not just about the vaccine itself; the activities surrounding the vaccination should also be costed. That is where we always get it wrong,” Mr Eshun said.

Mr. Eshun stressed the need for greater government commitment to addressing the challenges surrounding animal care in Ghana, adding that without sustained investment in animal health, the risk of zoonotic disease outbreaks will remain high.



File Photo

Parliament adjourned indefinitely

By Persis Aba Roberts

Speaker Alban Bagbin has adjourned Parliament indefinitely. This decision follows the ongoing controversy surrounding his ruling on the vacant seats in Parliament.

In his address, Speaker Bagbin noted a recent Supreme Court ruling concerning the status of four Members of Parliament, allowing

them to retain their seats pending a final decision on the matter.

“Honorable members, as you may recall, on Thursday, I informed the house pursuant to Standing Order 18 of the Standing Orders of Parliament on the occurrence of vacancies in the house in relation to four honourable members. Yesterday, I received a process from the Supreme Court, which

is a ruling from the Supreme Court pursuant to an ex parte application directing Parliament to recognize and allow the four affected Members of Parliament to duly represent their constituents and conduct the full scope of duties of their offices as members of Parliament, pending a final determination of a suit filed by Honorable Alexander Afenyo-

Markin,” he told the house.

Citing Articles 102 and 104 of the Constitution, further explained the constitutional requirements for a quorum and decision-making in Parliament.

“By Article 102 of the Constitution, 1992, and Order 64 (1) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, I note that we currently have a

Continued on page 5

General News

Parliament adjourned indefinitely

Continued from page 4

quorum to transact business, but not to take decisions. Article 102 reads, 'A quorum of Parliament, apart from the person presiding, shall be one-third of all the members of Parliament.' As presently constituted, the numbers are definitely far above one-third of the members of Parliament. But by Article 104, the numbers are not sufficient for us to take decisions. Article 104 (1) says, 'Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, matters in Parliament shall be determined by the vote of the majority of members present and voting, with at least half of all the members of Parliament present.' Honourable members, we don't have at least half of all the members of Parliament present."

Given the current circumstances and the question on the composition and constitution of Parliament, Speaker Bagbin decided to adjourn the house indefinitely.

He cited Standing Orders 59, which allows the Speaker, in consultation with leadership, to suspend a meeting of the house indefinitely or for a period determined by the Speaker, considering the public interest and the exigencies of the state of affairs in the country.

"The house is accordingly adjourned sine die," Speaker Bagbin concluded.

This indefinite adjournment raises significant questions about the legislative process and governance in Ghana, as key decisions and legislative activities are now on hold until further notice.

Background and Reactions

The controversy began when Speaker Bagbin declared the seats of four Members of Parliament vacant on October 17, 2024. The affected MPs are: Andrew Asiamah Amoako (Independent, Fomena Constituency), Cynthia Morrison (NPP, Agona West Constituency), Peter Yaw Kwakye-Ackah (NDC, Amenfi Central Constituency), Kwadjo Asante (NPP, Suhum

Constituency).

The Supreme Court intervened, issuing a ruling to stay the Speaker's decision and allowing the MPs to retain their seats until a final determination is made.

The court emphasised that the Speaker's declaration deprived the affected constituencies of representation and could disrupt government business.

Reactions to the Supreme Court's ruling have been mixed. Legal experts have stressed the importance of adhering to court rulings to maintain order and prevent chaos. The Ghana Center for Democratic Development

(CDD-Ghana) has urged Parliament to comply with the Supreme Court's decision to avoid further instability.

Meanwhile, the NDC Caucus in Parliament has challenged the ruling, arguing that parliamentary proceedings should not be subject to judicial interference and has gone ahead to assume majority status.

The speaker has also reportedly instructed his legal team to pursue legal action aimed at temporarily suspending the Supreme Court's recent ruling that declared four parliamentary seats as not vacant.



Parliament, Ghana

Suspend Edelmetallum Mining Resources Limited over assault on journalists - GJA

By Amanda Cartey

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has called for the suspension of Edelmetallum Mining Resources Limited following the brutal assault on journalist Erastus Asare Donkor and his crew by armed thugs whilst covering environmental destruction caused by mining activities in Asumenya.

The GJA is demanding that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minerals Commission suspend the company's permit and license to allow for investigations into both the assault and the adverse environmental impact of the mining operations.

"The GJA calls on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minerals Commission (MC) to suspend the permit and license of Edelmetallum Mining Resources Limited to allow for investigations

into the operations of the mining company, particularly the adverse impact of the mining operations on the environment," a statement signed by the GJA General Secretary read.

Whilst commending the police for arresting three suspects in connection with the matter, the GJA encouraged the police to "demonstrate, in all circumstances, that they are in control of internal security, including the protection of the environment."

In a separate issue, the GJA also condemned the assault on EIB Network court correspondent Murtala Inusah by supporters of Bishop Elisha Salifu Amoako.

Mr Inusah was attacked at the Accra High Court on Wednesday, 16 October 2024, whilst reporting on the case involving Bishop Amoako's 16-year-old son, Elrad Amoako, who was implicated in a fatal car accident at East Legon that claimed two lives.

The GJA labelled the attack as "evil" and called on the police to act swiftly in apprehending and prosecuting those responsible.

According to a statement released by the GJA on Thursday, the unprovoked assault left Inusah with finger injuries and severe bodily pain. A court warrant officer who tried to assist him was

also attacked.

The GJA demanded urgent intervention from the Ghana Police Service, insisting that the attackers be arrested and prosecuted. The Association further urged the Judiciary to impose strict penalties on the perpetrators if found guilty.



Erastus Asare Donkor, Journalist

General News

Water supply in parts of Kumasi to be disrupted for two days due to maintenance work

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Residents of Kumasi are set to experience a two-day disruption in water supply as the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) undertakes essential maintenance at the Barekese water treatment plant. The disruption, scheduled from October 23 to October 24, 2024, is expected to affect large parts of the Kumasi metropolis.

The GWCL has explained that the temporary shutdown is necessary to carry out critical repairs on the main transmission line, which serves as a lifeline for water supply in the region. According to a statement by the company, this maintenance is part of ongoing efforts to ensure a reliable and uninterrupted flow of water to residents in the future.

"The maintenance work is essential to ensure the continued supply of water to the Kumasi metropolis," GWCL stated.

While the repairs are expected to cause temporary inconvenience, the GWCL emphasised its commitment to minimising the impact on the community. Residents are advised to store adequate amounts of water ahead of the disruption to meet their needs during the maintenance period.

In response to the expected challenges, the GWCL has urged households to practise water conservation and proper management during the period of reduced supply. The company has assured the public that water services will be restored as soon as the repairs are completed.

"Management regrets the inconvenience this may cause and assures customers that supply will be restored immediately after the work is completed," the GWCL added in its statement.

The maintenance is seen as a proactive measure to enhance the capacity and resilience of Kumasi's water infrastructure, ensuring that the growing population continues to receive consistent water services in the long term.



File Photo

No military officer was deployed to interfere with Tuesday Parliamentary proceedings - GAF

By Amanda Cartey

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has denied claims circulating in the media that military personnel were sent to the Grand Arena of the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC) to disrupt parliamentary proceedings during the Fifth Meeting of the Fourth Session on Tuesday, 22 October 2024.

In a statement released by the Director-General of Public Relations, GAF firmly labelled these reports as "false" and called on the public to regard them with significant scepticism.

"Such misinformation, among other things, tarnishes the reputation of GAF," part of the statement read.

This follows the sighting of military personnel at the AICC premises on Tuesday morning during Parliament's Fifth Meeting. An earlier announcement from Parliament noted that the security forces were present at the request of the Speaker, Alban Bagbin, following comments he made on the floor on Thursday, 17 October 2024, where the Minority Leader called for four parliamentary seats

to be declared vacant.

However, the Supreme Court issued a stay of execution on the Speaker's announcement, permitting the affected MPs to keep their seats and engage in parliamentary activities until a final decision is reached.

This situation has led to a leadership crisis within Parliament, unsettling the existing power dynamics.

In response to this controversy, the Speaker officially asked GAF to conduct specialised security checks, including canine units and bomb sweeps, prior to the start of each Tuesday's sessions.

"On Monday, 21 October 2024, the Speaker of Parliament, Right Honourable Alban Kingsford Sumana Bagbin, through the Clerk of Parliament, formally requested security assistance from GAF for routine canine and bomb sweeps of the Chamber. This standard procedure is conducted on the first sitting day of the week—typically Tuesdays—whenever Members of Parliament convene outside the traditional Parliament House," GAF stated.

GAF clarified that the military personnel stationed at the Grand Arena were not present to disrupt parliamentary proceedings but were there exclusively to carry out security sweeps to guarantee the venue's safety.

"Their role was exclusively to perform these routine checks, ensuring the safety and security of the facility by searching for any explosive devices or harmful substances," the statement

continued.

GAF reaffirmed its dedication to protecting the welfare of all citizens and assured the public that it will persist in undertaking missions focused on ensuring security and safety.

"We also urge media outlets to refrain from disseminating false information and to report responsibly on matters of public interest," GAF added.



Armed Force

General News

Women in leadership, essential for global peace - IMF boss

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ms Kristalina Georgieva, has emphasised the critical role of women in leadership positions to foster global peace and development.

Speaking at a side event during the 2024 IMF/World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Washington, D.C., she stated, “When we look at the high corridors of power, we still see more men than women; yet if we want to live in a peaceful world,

at least bring the women up.” Ms Georgieva highlighted that women approach power differently than men, often utilising it in ways that can benefit society as a whole. She remarked, “Women don’t seek power the same way men do, and when they have power, they use it differently. So, we must understand and define it well for the benefit of all—both women and men.”

Despite progress in recent years, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership roles globally. As of 2023, women held approximately 32.2% of senior

leadership positions worldwide, nearly 10 percentage points lower than their overall workforce representation of 41.9%.

In 2021, the proportion of women in senior management roles globally grew to 31%, the highest number ever recorded.

Advocating for increased female representation in leadership, Ms Georgieva urged against opposing initiatives aimed at empowering women and called for greater support to enable women to excel in leadership positions and make

meaningful contributions.

“The world was at a time that was experiencing some pushback on equality, on the role of women in societies, and this tremendous progress we’ve achieved cannot be given away,” she noted.

The IMF/World Bank Group Annual Meetings, taking place from October 21 to 26, 2024, in Washington, D.C., have convened global financial leaders to discuss pressing economic issues and development challenges.



Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, IMF



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Business

Govt records about 42% increase in revenue from Q1 to Q2 - Finance Ministry

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The government recorded about a 42% increase in total revenue from the first quarter (Q1) to the second quarter (Q2), according to data from the Finance Ministry.

The revenue figures reveal a notable surge, from GHS 7,836,251,007 in Q1 to GHS 11,125,051,450 in Q2, resulting in a quarterly difference of GHS 3,288,800,443.

The key drivers of this growth were taxes on domestic goods and services, which jumped by GHS 1.5 billion, and income and property taxes, which increased by nearly GHS 1.8 billion.

Furthermore, the first quarter demonstrated stable growth in revenue generation, with a gradual month-on-month improvement.

Month-to-month analysis for Q1

In January, government revenues were strongest in taxes on income and property (GHS 4,639,261,614), with significant contributions from PAYE, self-employed income taxes, and company taxes. Taxes on domestic goods & services raked in GHS 3,031,051,950 whereas taxes on international trade generated GHS 1,503,257,362 for the government.

February saw a slight increase in overall revenue, with steady growth in taxes on income and property as well as domestic goods and services. However, taxes on international trade decreased slightly compared to January. Taxes on Income & Property raked in GHS 4,672,893,801, taxes on domestic goods & services: GHS 3,060,740,761 and taxes on international trade: GHS 1,236,317,580

March ended the first quarter with the highest revenue for Q1, driven by a boost in taxes on domestic goods and services. The consistent performance of income and property taxes and the recovery of international trade taxes also contributed to this outcome. Taxes on income & property generated GHS 4,625,177,585 for the government, taxes on domestic goods & services: GHS 3,311,670,761 and taxes on international trade: GHS 1,248,347,916.

Month-to-month analysis for Q2

April kicked off Q2 with a moderate increase in revenue compared to March, largely driven by growth in domestic goods and services taxes, as well as improvements in international trade duties. Taxes on income & property brought

in GHS 4,518,853,471, taxes on domestic goods & services: GHS 3,611,670,761 and taxes on international trade: GHS 1,436,513,358.

May recorded a substantial increase in total tax revenue. This rise was primarily driven by taxes on income and property, which jumped by GHS 1.5 billion, as well as taxes on domestic goods and services, which also surged. The government generated GHS 6,010,186,166 from taxes on income & property, taxes on domestic goods & services raked in GHS 4,519,182,419 and taxes on international trade: GHS 1,557,350,000.

June saw a slight levelling off in total revenue compared to May, though income and property taxes (GHS 5,051,322,928), along with domestic goods and services (GHS 4,013,743,300), continued to drive the bulk of collections. International trade taxes (GHS

1,505,350,000) remained stable.

The government has set an ambitious target to mobilise a total revenue of GHS 176.4 billion, which is about 22% higher than the 2023 target. From the 2024 budget, tax revenue will comprise 81.1% of the total government revenue.

Ghana's revenue-to-Gross Domestic Product ratio is expected to exceed 17% year-on-year for the next six years. According to the International Monetary Fund's April 2024 Fiscal Monitor, the revenue-to-GDP ratio will increase steadily from 2024 to 2029.

In 2024, it is projecting a government revenue-to-GDP ratio of 16.7%, a slight increase from the 15.7% recorded in 2023.

Part of the conditions of the \$3 billion Extended Credit Facility by the IMF is an increase in revenue generation by the government.



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

Ghana targets \$25.3 billion from coconut exports by 2029

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) has set an ambitious goal to generate \$25.3 billion in export revenue from the coconut industry by 2029. This initiative aims to diversify the nation's export portfolio and reduce reliance on traditional commodities like cocoa, which has recently experienced a decline in export earnings.

In the first quarter of 2024, Ghana's total export revenue was approximately \$5.1 billion. However, the cocoa sector faced challenges, with export revenues dropping by 32.8% compared to

the same period in 2023, resulting in a \$233.6 million shortfall. To counteract this, GEPA is focusing on the coconut industry, often referred to as "green gold" due to its vast economic potential.

During the opening ceremony of the fourth International Coconut Festival in Accra on October 21, 2024, GEPA's Chief Executive Officer, Osafohene Dr. Afua Asabea Asare, emphasised the importance of adopting modern farming techniques and advanced processing technologies to enhance the coconut industry's productivity and global competitiveness.

Ghana currently leads Africa in coconut exports and ranks 12th globally, producing over 500,000 metric tonnes annually. The versatility of coconut, with applications spanning food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, positions it as a significant contributor to the nation's economic growth.

The three-day International Coconut Festival, themed "Empowering Lives through Coconut: Innovation, Employment, and Sustainable Livelihoods," aims to attract investment into the coconut sector and offers mentorship and networking

opportunities, particularly for women and youth.

By capitalising on the coconut industry's potential, Ghana seeks to bolster its export revenues, promote sustainable economic development, and lessen its dependence on traditional export commodities.



Coconut

International

A community's battle against Cholera in Simiyu

Source: WHO

In the Simiyu region of Tanzania, the resurgence of Cholera outbreaks posed a dire threat to public health. Since January 2024, the region has reported 1691 Cholera cases, thus 28.7% of all cases reported in the country. With a new wave that started in August, 338 cases and 5 deaths were recorded, averaging daily new cases in the double digits.

To swiftly mitigate the spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the Tanzanian government in controlling and preventing waterborne diseases. Through the deployment of WASH and RCCE experts, local leaders and health workers received intensive training in water quality monitoring, sanitation practices, and community engagement techniques. Thanks to this timely support, by the end of September, the region saw a decline in new cases to between 3 and 7 per day.

Driven by his experience, one of the trainees, Amani Challos, a respected community elder who had survived a severe bout of cholera, mobilized his community, organizing meetings in the village square to share his story. "I've seen what this disease can do," he said. "If I can help my neighbours avoid the same fate, I must. Cholera is not a curse; it's a preventable disease." His powerful message urged the community to treat their water and construct proper latrines.

With WHO's support, extensive water testing revealed that 71% of local sources were contaminated. Armed with this data, community leaders quickly coordinated efforts to decontaminate wells and educate families about safe water storage. Community health workers across Simiyu distributed 100 water purification sachets and demonstrated simple water treatment methods. Families that had once relied on unsafe water

sources began to embrace these new practices.

Dr. Charles Sagoe-Moses, WHO's Country Representative, emphasized the impact of these collective efforts: "Our intense community engagement and proactive interventions have sparked real change! We've seen cholera cases drop from 20 at the start of September to just three by mid-October. This success shows

that when we come together and invest in health, we can turn the tide against outbreaks."

As the outbreak subsided, the community initiated regular health workshops to teach families about hygiene practices and the importance of sanitation. They engaged local schools and faith leaders, ensuring that vital knowledge spread throughout every corner of Simiyu.



File Photo

Sudan: 31 killed in Mosque air strike in Wad Madani

Source: AfricaNews

A military air strike on a mosque in Sudan's central city of Wad Madani killed 31 people, according to local activists.

The attack took place on Sunday evening, after prayers, in the city, which is the capital of Al-Jazira state, located just south of Khartoum.

The Wad Madani Resistance Committee, one of many volunteer groups providing aid across the war-torn country, shared the details in a statement on Tuesday.

The committee accused the army of using "barrel bombs" in the attack. They also reported that more than half of the victims have yet to be identified, as rescue teams continue to search through the remains of "dozens of charred and mutilated bodies."

Since April 2023, Sudan has been devastated by conflict between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The fighting has led to tens of thousands of deaths and created one of the world's worst displacement and humanitarian

crises.

The two sides are battling for control of Al-Jazira state, a key agricultural area, which has been under RSF control since late last year. Both forces have been accused of war crimes, including

attacking civilians and looting aid supplies.

The RSF has also faced allegations of widespread looting, besieging villages, and committing sexual violence in Al-Jazira and other regions of Sudan.



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