



Revised voters register would be accessible within 2 weeks or earlier - EC clarifies timeline

Page 2

## Hundreds hit the streets in protest over delayed ruling on Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill

Page 5



## GMA withdraws from Organised Labour's galamsey strike

Page 3



Best Western **PLUS**

Accra Beach Hotel, Nungua

For business or leisure, there's always a little something extra.

Reservations: 233 (0) 54 83 25 18 4 [bestwesternplusaccra.com](http://bestwesternplusaccra.com)

# General News

## Localisation of small-scale miners can end galamsey – Minerals Commission

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Mr. Martin Kwaku Ayisi, has proposed a localized approach to address the growing issue of illegal mining, commonly known as “galamsey.”

Speaking before Parliament's Assurance Committee, he argued that without designated legal areas for small-scale miners, efforts to regulate the industry would remain ineffective..

Mr. Ayisi stressed that small-scale mining, by law, is reserved exclusively for Ghanaians, and any foreign participation is illegal under Acts 900 and 995. He added that facilitating the legal operations of miners could mitigate the environmental damage caused by galamsey, which has already spread to nearly all of Ghana's regions.

He further noted that suspending mining licenses and delaying license approvals were

counterproductive to controlling illegal mining. He believes that reinstating previously revoked licenses and effectively regulating licensed miners are necessary to protect Ghana's water bodies and environment.

The illegal small-scale mining industry has expanded significantly over the years, from five regions—Ashanti, Central, Eastern, Western, and Upper East—when Mr. Ayisi first joined the commission, to now affecting about 12 to 13 regions across the country.

“The small-scale mining is open to Ghanaians only so any foreigner who is involved in small-scale mining is illegal. If you look at Act 900 and 995, it is even so strange that they go ahead to say that anybody who solicits a foreigner to engage in small-scale mining is also participating in illegal mining,” Mr. Ayisi said.

The expansion of galamsey reflects the failure to implement

laws such as the Small Scale Gold Law of 1989 and the Mercury Law, which were intended to regulate the industry. Mr. Ayisi emphasized that while laws exist, their proper enforcement has been lacking for decades.

He highlighted the historical roots of the problem, dating back to the sale of state-owned mines in the late 1980s under Kwasi Botchwey. According to Mr. Ayisi, successive governments have failed to create designated areas for small-scale miners to operate legally, contributing to the proliferation of illegal activities.

“For 30 years, three decades, government after government did not do it,” Mr. Ayisi stated, citing the lack of exploration and formalized legal mining spaces for small-scale miners as the fundamental cause of galamsey.

In his remarks, Mr. Ayisi suggested that partnerships with large-scale mining firms, such as AngloGold Ashanti, Newmont, and Gold

Fields, could provide temporary solutions by allocating unused areas to small-scale miners. He explained that certain mining areas surrendered by large firms after exploration could be reallocated for small-scale operations.

The Minerals Commission has established regional offices in Dunkwa, Bibiani, Tarkwa, and Bolgatanga to facilitate these regulatory efforts, though Mr. Ayisi acknowledged that significant challenges remain.



Mr. Martin K. Ayisi, Mineral Commission CEO

## Revised voters register would be accessible within 2 weeks or earlier - EC clarifies timeline

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Electoral Commission (EC) has clarified reports regarding the release of the revised 2024 Provisional Voters Register (PVR), following claims by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) that the register would be available within a week.

In a statement dated October 8 and signed by Samuel Tettey, Deputy Chairperson in charge of Operations, the EC denied making any such commitment.

The EC emphasized, “For the records, the Chairperson of the EC indicated during the televised IPAC meeting that the Commission would provide the political parties with the revised PVR and upload it online within two (2) weeks or earlier.”

This clarification comes after the NDC issued a statement indicating that it had accepted the EC's alleged promise to release the corrected

version of the 2024 Provisional Voters Register to political parties within one week.

The NDC's statement followed the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) meeting held on Tuesday, October 1, where the party claimed, “The Functional Executive Committee of the NDC has deliberated and decided to accept the EC's promise to release to political parties the corrected/updated version of the 2024 Provisional Voters Register for scrutiny within one week.”

In its response, the EC reiterated that its Chairperson, Jean Mensa, had actually informed political parties during the IPAC meeting that the Commission would provide the revised PVR and make it available online within two weeks or earlier.

The EC emphasized, “Nowhere in her statement did the Chairperson

indicate that the revised PVR would be made available within a week.”

Meanwhile, Chairperson Jean Mensa reported that significant progress has been made in addressing issues identified in the voter register. She noted that while the register is still a work in progress and contains some minor inaccuracies, such issues are to be expected in any large-scale registration exercise.

The NDC's examination of the register identified five key anomalies. The party discovered that names of registered voters were missing from the list, which could potentially disenfranchise eligible voters; qualified voters were incorrectly placed on the Exception List or the Multiple List, which could prevent them from voting on election day.

Also, some individuals who were

disqualified due to multiple registrations or successful challenges were still found on the Main Provisional Voters Register (PVR), raising questions about the accuracy of the register. Additionally, voters were transferred from one polling station to another without their knowledge, and old transfers that should have been resolved were still appearing on the register.

Lastly, some voters were moved from one polling station to another without their consent, causing confusion and potential voter suppression. The EC has admitted to errors in the transfer of votes.



Jean Mensa, EC Chairperson

# General News

## GMA withdraws from Organised Labour's galamsey strike

By Amanda Cartey

The Ghana Medical Association (GMA) has announced that it will not join the nationwide strike organized by Organised Labour, scheduled for October 10, despite supporting the ongoing fight against illegal small-scale mining, also known as galamsey.

In a statement issued on October 8, GMA President Dr. Frank Serebour emphasized that while the association stands with Organised Labour's concerns about the environmental and societal damage caused by galamsey, its members will not participate in the strike.

"The Ghana Medical Association (GMA) has not declared a roadmap for industrial action. Therefore, all members are expected to continue providing full services without interruption," the statement read.

The GMA's decision follows an internal meeting, where the association highlighted the importance of uninterrupted medical care, especially given the challenges facing the healthcare system. However, it affirmed its full support for efforts to address the harmful effects of galamsey on the environment and livelihoods across the country.

The statement also noted that the National Executive Council (NEC) of the GMA would provide further updates if necessary.

This comes after a high-level meeting between President Nana Akufo-Addo and Organised Labour at Jubilee House, where both sides agreed on steps to tackle illegal mining.

The key points of the discussion included stronger enforcement of laws banning mining in water

bodies and forest reserves, the repeal of the Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations, 2023 (L.I. 2462), and enhanced collaboration between the government, labour unions, and stakeholders to combat galamsey.

There was also a commitment from law enforcement agencies to intensify efforts to clear illegal miners from protected areas, alongside cooperation between the Attorney-General and the judiciary to fast-track the prosecution of illegal mining cases. Despite these initiatives, Organised Labour remains unsatisfied with the government's actions and will proceed with its planned strike, calling for more aggressive measures against illegal mining. Meanwhile, Archbishop Bonaventure Kwofie, the Metropolitan Archbishop of

Accra, has spoken out against the strike. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive, non-partisan approach to solving the galamsey crisis.

While acknowledging the legitimacy of Organised Labour's concerns, Archbishop Kwofie called for greater dialogue to ensure that both the illegal mining issue and labor grievances are addressed constructively.



Dr. Frank Serebour, GMA President

## State Attorneys block bail for 20 democracy hub protestors

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Twenty protestors from the Democracy Hub remain on remand as State Attorneys opposed their bail application once again, submitting fresh affidavits to contest their release.

During a court session on Tuesday, October 8, the State Attorneys argued that they had not been informed in advance about the bail applications.

Despite this, they reiterated their strong opposition to granting bail to the twenty protestors involved in the anti-galamsey protests.

In contrast, Ama Governor and eight other protestors were granted bail, set at GHC70,000 each, while twelve additional protestors, including Felicity Nelson, received bail under distinct sureties. The bail granted on Monday came with varying terms, complicating the ongoing legal battle that carries significant implications for civil rights and environmental activism in Ghana.

In a related development, activist and Democracy Hub convener Oliver Barker-Vormawor was once again denied bail by the Accra High

Court yesterday. The court asserts that releasing Barker-Vormawor could lead to public unrest, citing concerns about his prior charges and ongoing investigations.

The government has faced significant criticism following the arrests and the subsequent denial of bail for the protestors.

When asked if he played a role in the detention of the

protestors, President Akufo-Addo disassociated himself from such claims, citing the unlawful behaviour of the protestors as the reason for their arrest and detention.



File Photo

# General News

## Small Arms Commission calls for tougher penalties for illegal gun possession

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NACSA) has urged the judiciary to impose harsher punishments on individuals found possessing unlicensed firearms.

This push comes as concerns grow over the increasing threat of illegal arms in the country. Gyebi Asante, Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation at NACSA, highlighted the pressing need for a comprehensive review of existing firearms legislation to reflect the current security landscape.

Speaking to The Independent Ghana, Mr. Asante pointed out flaws in the current penal system, which he said does not provide sufficient deterrence.

"We are advocating for the law to be reviewed to suit the current

situation and also be able to align with our current dispensation," he said. He further explained that the existing penalties are not strict enough to prevent illegal arms purchases, citing the need for a stronger legal framework.

Under current law, individuals found in possession of unlicensed firearms may face a maximum jail term of five years or a fine of up to 12,000 Ghana Cedis (equivalent to 1,000 penalty units).

However, Mr. Asante highlighted the absence of a minimum penalty, which allows judges discretion in sentencing. This loophole has resulted in cases where offenders pay as little as 100 Ghana Cedis or serve just two weeks in jail for illegal possession of firearms.

"For example, it says you can be jailed for not more than five years and fined not more than 1,000

penalty units, but it doesn't give a minimum," Mr. Asante said. He added, "We see that as a serious challenge and a gap in the law that must be addressed."

The Commission has submitted a proposed bill, the National Arms Bill, to the Ministry of Interior. The bill seeks to close these legal gaps and ensure a more stringent control of firearms, which NACSA

believes is essential for addressing rising crime and insecurity.

Established by Parliament in 2007, NACSA's role is to regulate the possession of small arms and light weapons. Its broader mandate includes curbing the illegal production and trade of weapons, particularly across borders, which contributes to instability and crime in the country.



Guns

## Police ignoring our reports on galamsey - Minerals Commission CEO laments

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Martin Ayisi, has expressed frustration over the lack of response from the police regarding numerous reports submitted about illegal mining activities, commonly known as galamsey.

Mr Martin Ayisi lamented that despite the Commission's ongoing efforts to combat the rampant issue threatening Ghana's natural resources and water bodies, law enforcement has consistently failed to act on the documented instances of illegal mining.

In a public hearing before Parliament's Assurance Committee on October 7, he indicated that officers at the Anyinam Police Station have time without number been informed of mining activities happening behind their edifice, however, no step has been taken by the security officers to address the issue.

He remarked, "We have reported severally that behind Anyinam Police Station people are doing some there which we have not

permitted. So how come the Police is not taking action? So it's like we have told you galamsey is happening...respectfully, the Minerals Commission has done its work."

"I am not saying we have also not let the government down or we are hundred percent right. I have told you that there are instances that people have the licenses and have made mistakes. That is why there are inspectors Once the Minerals Commission makes it known to the appropriate institution that this person, people are working here in the night, our job ends there," Mr Ayisi added.

Mr. Ayisi stated that seeking additional authority to bear arms would necessitate changes in government policies, which would be excessive for the Commission. He pointed out the numerous water bodies in the country and questioned how individuals without licenses are still accessing forests, despite the Forestry Commission already having the power to bear arms.

"If we have to seek for more

powers to bear arms and all those things, then government policies would have to change and that would be too much for us. Look at the number of water bodies in this country, respectively Forestry Commission bears arms so how are people entering the forests to do what they are doing when they don't have licenses. I will not ask government to give us powers to go and bear arms. If anything, Minerals Commission needs resources, which I am getting anyway. No one can say it is enough," he said.

The Minerals Commission Act of 1993, Act 450, outlines the essential functions of the Commission. Among its primary responsibilities is the formulation of recommendations for national policy concerning the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources, emphasizing the establishment of national priorities while considering the national economy. The Commission is also tasked with advising the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources on various mineral-related matters and

monitoring the implementation of government policies on minerals, providing reports to the Minister as necessary.

Additionally, the Commission monitors the operations of all entities responsible for minerals and is responsible for receiving and assessing public agreements related to mineral resources, reporting these findings to Parliament. It aims to establish a solid foundation for comprehensive data collection on the nation's mineral resources and the technologies involved in their exploration and exploitation, which is crucial for informed national decision-making. The Commission may also perform other functions as assigned by the Minister.

To fulfil these responsibilities, the Commission engages in several activities. These include investigating the background of mineral rights applications, processing these applications, and recommending their approval or denial to the Minister responsible for Mines. The Commission

Continued on page 5

# General News

## Police ignoring our reports on galamsey - Minerals Commission CEO laments

Continued from page 4

reviews agreements concerning minerals and collects, collates, and analyzes data related to the operations of mining companies to aid in decision-making and dissemination.

The Ghana Police Service has several key functions that are crucial to maintaining peace and security within the country. Primarily, the Service is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime, ensuring that potential criminal activities are thwarted before they occur and that existing crimes are investigated effectively.

Additionally, the apprehension and prosecution of offenders form a vital part of the Service's responsibilities, as it works to bring individuals who violate the law to justice.

Another critical function of the Ghana Police Service is the maintenance of law and order. This involves managing public gatherings, controlling riots or disturbances, and ensuring that citizens can exercise their rights peacefully. Furthermore, the Service is dedicated to the protection of life and property, working to create a safe environment for all citizens.

The overarching mandate of the Ghana Police Service is to protect and preserve the internal security of the country through effective law enforcement. By

fulfilling its functions, the Service aims to foster a sense of safety and security, contributing to the overall stability and well-being of Ghanaian society.



Mr. Martin Ayisi, Minerals Commission, CEO

## Hundreds hit the streets in protest over delayed ruling on Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets on Tuesday, October 8, demanding swift judicial action on the anti-LGBTQ+ bill, officially known as the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Act, 2024.

The demonstration, organised by supporters of the controversial legislation, included a mix of activists, community leaders, and concerned citizens calling for the quick approval of the bill, which Parliament passed on February 28, 2024. However, it remains unsigned by President Nana Akufo-Addo.

The delay has been compounded by a Supreme Court ruling in July, which postponed decisions on related legal challenges until all ongoing legal matters are resolved.

"We are urging the Chief Justice to make a ruling on the injunction against the bill's passage. As Ghanaians, we do not support LGBTQ+," said Rita Naa Odoley Sowah, Member of Parliament for La Dade Kotopon and a vocal supporter at the protest.

Papa Wuli, Chairman of the Concerned Drivers Association of Ghana, echoed this sentiment, expressing strong opposition to LGBTQ+ activities, which he

described as taboo in Ghanaian society. "We call on President Akufo-Addo to assent to the bill without delay," he stated, reflecting the views of many demonstrators.

Samuel Nartey George, Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram and a leading advocate of the bill, criticised the judicial delays, arguing that the Chief Justice should expedite the resolution of legal challenges. He asserted, "Justice delayed is justice denied," and called for urgent action to finalise the bill.

The proposed law criminalises LGBTQ+ activities, as well as the promotion and financial support of such actions, and has sparked significant national debate. If enacted, individuals found guilty could face imprisonment for six months to five years, depending on the offence.

While the bill has passed Parliament, it faces legal challenges from activists, including lawsuits filed by private lawyer Richard Dela Sky, gender activist Dr. Amanda Odoi, and law lecturer Prince Obiri-Korang, complicating its future.

The Judicial Service of Ghana has addressed the delays in two Supreme Court cases regarding

the Anti-LGBTQ Bill, stating that essential procedural requirements have not been met by the involved parties.

In a statement on September 13, 2024, the Judicial Service noted that both cases—one initiated by journalist Richard Sky and the other by Dr. Odoi—have been stalled due to incomplete legal filings from key defendants, including Parliament and the Attorney General.

The service explained that these filings are essential for the next steps in the court proceedings, particularly the submission of a Memorandum of Issues, which must occur before the Supreme Court can schedule a hearing.

For Richard Sky's case, filed on March 5, 2024, the Judicial Service confirmed that as of July 31, 2024, both Parliament and the Attorney General had not submitted their Statements of Case. Similarly, in Dr. Odoi's case, while Parliament has provided its statement, the Attorney General has yet to submit the required documentation, further contributing to the delay.

The Judicial Service emphasised that the cases cannot proceed until all necessary documents are filed. It reassured the public that the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Court registries remain open during the legal vacation and are ready to hear any prepared matters.



File Photo

# General News

## 44 out of 76 mentally ill persons reintegrated into society this year - Pantang Hospital

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

**P**antang Hospital has successfully reintegrated 44 out of 76 mentally ill individuals back into society this year as part of its 'Operation Set the Captives Free Initiative.' This program is aimed at facilitating the recovery and reintegration of individuals with mental health challenges by addressing their medical needs, reconnecting them with families, and linking them to sustainable livelihoods.

According to Dr. Alex Owusu Ansah, who leads the initiative, all individuals in the program have been registered under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The hospital's efforts include providing ongoing treatment for 24 individuals who remain under care at various stages of their recovery.

During the 2024 Durbar celebrating World Mental Health

Day on October 7, Dr. Owusu Ansah highlighted the hospital's ongoing struggle with insufficient financial resources, stating that the initiative heavily relies on support from corporate partners and individuals.

"This project has touched the lives of quite a number of people... We've registered them on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). We've traced their families and linked them to sustainable sources of livelihoods," he stated.

The hospital is actively seeking additional support from corporate Ghana, religious organizations, and individuals to continue the program.

Dr. Owusu Ansah expressed gratitude for contributions from companies such as LIC and Afriwave, but he emphasized the need for further assistance, particularly for vehicles to facilitate the tracing of families, and for

renovations to the hospital's occupational therapy department and Ward Five, which provides maternal and child healthcare services.

This initiative underscores the broader challenge of addressing mental health issues in Ghana, particularly the resources needed to rehabilitate those living with mental illness on the streets.

Pantang Operation Set the

Captives Free program serves as a model for addressing mental health challenges holistically, with a focus on healthcare access and social reintegration.

As Dr. Owusu Ansah noted, "We believe that everyone out there deserves access to the healthcare that they need and not just those of us without mental health challenges."



Pantang Hospital

## Shortlisted police recruits to take exams on October 12

By Amanda Cartey

**T**he Ghana Police Service has announced that candidates shortlisted in its 2024 recruitment process will sit for an examination on Saturday, October 12, 2024.

This marks a critical stage in the recruitment, following an earlier invitation for qualified Ghanaians to apply for positions in General Duty Recruits and Graduate General Duties categories.

In a press release, the Police advised candidates to check their emails and SMS messages for detailed information about the examination, including their assigned centres. The exams will be conducted across all sixteen regional capitals, ensuring that all shortlisted candidates can access the testing locations.

The exam venues are as follows:

Accra: University of Professional Studies, Accra

Ashanti: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Upper East: Bolgatanga Technical

University, Bolgatanga

Central: University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast

Savannah: Ndwura Jakpa Senior Technical School, Damango

Oti: Dambai College of Education, Dambai

Ahafo: Goaso Nursing Training School, Goaso

Volta: University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho

Eastern: Koforidua Technical University, Koforidua

North East: College of Nursing and Midwifery, Nalerigu

Western North: Wiawso College of Education, Wiawso

Bono: University of Energy and Natural Resources, Sunyani

Western: St. John's Senior High School, Takoradi

Northern: University of Development Studies, Tamale

Bono East: Krobo Nursing Training School, Techiman

Upper West: Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Studies (SDD-UBIDS),

Wa. The Police Service also reiterated its stance against any financial transactions during the recruitment process. Candidates were encouraged to report any instances of bribery or monetary requests to the authorities.

This recruitment drive, first announced in August 2024, is part of the Ghana Police Service's

efforts to fill various positions within the force. Applicants were required to meet specific criteria, including being Ghanaian citizens of good character with no criminal record, as well as fulfilling category-specific requirements such as age limits and educational qualifications. The deadline for applications was August 13, 2024.



File Photo

# General News

## Cocoa Carriers suspend sit-down strike after crucial talks with CMC and COCOBOD

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Cocoa Carriers Association has called off its indefinite sit-down strike, which began on October 7, following a productive meeting with the management of the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) and representatives from the Ghana Cocoa Board.

The decision to halt the strike comes after National Chairman Raymond Atanga Abobiga initially directed members to participate in the strike during a media interview

on October 6.

However, in a subsequent media engagement, he announced that CMC management requested workers to return to their posts, promising to address concerns regarding their working conditions within seven days.

“We negotiated with our directors and COCOBOD and we concluded that we have to continue working while they sit down and reconsider our increment. So we decided to work today [Tuesday, October 8]

and also expect something good from them,” Abobiga stated.

Workers at CMC depots in Tema, Takoradi, and Kumasi have resumed their duties, optimistic that their issues will be resolved within the agreed timeframe.

“But then, when we reported for work today, the information came that I was not supposed to work but my colleagues in Kumasi persisted that if I was not working, then they were also not working so a call came from the

top management, and they said, I should work. So right now, Tema is working, Takoradi is working, and Kumasi, we are also working. That is the current situation of the strike now,” Abobiga explained the dynamics on the ground.

This development follows a similar strike by the association in 2022, during which thousands of bags of cocoa beans remained unprocessed in CMC warehouses across the country as workers pushed for higher wages and improved working conditions.



Cocoa Beans



## For business or leisure, there's always a little something extra.

### Amenities:

- Delicious Breakfast
- 24 Hour Parking
- Complimentary continental breakfast
- Pool with waterfall
- Refrigerators in all rooms
- WiFi Internet
- 37 min from the airport

### Accra Beach Hotel

51 Beach Drive, Nungua P: 233 (0) 302 71 11 11 - 8  
Reservations: 233 (0) 54 83 25 18 4 [bestwesternplusaccra.com](http://bestwesternplusaccra.com)

**Wherever Life Takes You, Best Western Is There.®**

Each Best Western® branded hotel is independently owned and operated.



# Business

## Govt to revoke mining in forest reserves regulations - Information Ministry

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The government has announced its intention to revoke the Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations, 2023 (L.I. 2462), in a decisive move to address the environmental damage caused by illegal mining, or galamsey.

This decision, communicated by the Information Ministry, follows a high-level meeting between President Akufo-Addo and Organised Labour at Jubilee House on October 3, aimed at tackling the destruction of forest reserves and water bodies.

During the meeting, both the government and Organised Labour acknowledged the severe damage that illegal mining has inflicted on Ghana's water bodies, forest reserves, and communities.

Several key agreements such as

strengthening law enforcement agencies to effectively tackle galamsey were reached as part of renewed efforts to combat the menace. But one of the significant outcomes of the meeting was the government's commitment to repeal the Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations, 2023 (L.I. 2462).

This law, which provided legal grounds for mining in forest reserves under certain conditions, will be revoked once Parliament resumes its next session on October 15. The regulation has allowed mining licenses to be granted in forest reserves, with exceptions for certain protected areas such as globally significant biodiversity zones and cultural sites.

Forest reserves like the Draw River, Neung South, Boin Tano,

and Oda River Forest Reserves were granted mining licenses under the regulation. Presently, environmentalists and health professionals continue to raise alarms about the irreversible damage being caused by galamsey activities.

Government has reiterated its commitment to empower law enforcement agencies to intensify their crackdown on illegal mining operations in these protected

zones.

Those caught engaging in galamsey activities will face full prosecution under the law, with Attorney-General Godfred Dame and Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo pledging to expedite the adjudication of galamsey-related cases. Judges have been issued a month ultimatum by the Attorney General to conclude galamsey-related cases before them.



File Photo

## Ghana's Non-Traditional Exports near \$4bn with 11.75% growth in 2023 - GEPA

By Amanda Cartey

Ghana's Non-Traditional Exports (NTEs) reached nearly \$4 billion in 2023, marking an 11.75% growth compared to the previous year, according to the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA). The figure, an increase from the \$3.5 billion recorded in 2022, reflects the country's continued export expansion despite global economic challenges.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Ministry of Information in Accra, GEPA CEO, Dr. Afua Asabea Asare, highlighted the positive growth trend of NTEs.

"Ghana's Non-Traditional Export growth has been on a positive trajectory, even during COVID-19 when other countries were experiencing declines. We managed a 4% increase, though previously we had achieved 10% growth. During COVID-19, we dropped to 6%. But as I speak to you now, we have moved

our exports to 11.75%. Despite everything happening globally, Ghana's exports are growing," she said.

The NTE sector, which includes Agriculture, Manufactured goods, and Semi-processed and Industrial Art and Craft products, saw significant contributions from iron and steel exports, which generated \$447.8 million, cocoa paste at \$340.6 million, cashew nuts at \$263.5 million, and cocoa butter at \$241.3 million.

Manufactured and semi-processed goods remained the largest sub-sector, accounting for \$2.94 billion in export earnings. The agricultural sub-sector saw a 4.61% increase, reaching \$509.9 million, driven by cashew nuts, which remained a strong performer.

Dr. Asabea Asare also pointed to the role of Ghana's membership in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in driving NTE growth. Exports to AfCFTA

member countries brought in \$1.78 billion in 2023, showcasing the benefits of regional trade integration.

The Industrial Art and Craft sub-sector also saw a notable rise, with earnings increasing by 79.73% to \$81.2 million in 2022. This sub-sector, while smaller in

contribution, has shown rapid growth potential.

With the NTE sector continuing to perform strongly, Ghana's export outlook remains positive, bolstered by strategic trade partnerships and diversification of export products.



Dr. Afua Asabea Asare, GEPA CEO

# International

## Burden of hearing loss in Africa could rise to 54 million by 2030: WHO report

Source WHO

About 40 million people live with hearing loss in the African region, but the figure could rise to 54 million by 2030 if urgent measures are not taken to address the problem, according to a new World Health Organization (WHO) report.

Hearing loss has profound impact on human lives and economies, costing Africa US\$ 27 billion annually, according to the Status Report on ear and hearing care in the WHO African Region, launched today during the African Summit on Hearing Impairment in Nairobi, Kenya.

Without urgent interventions, widespread hearing loss, which disproportionately affects poor and vulnerable populations, will continue to escalate, amplifying existing inequalities in health services access across Africa.

For children, the far-reaching consequences of hearing loss include delays in language development, raising the risk of poor educational outcomes and limited future career prospects. Adults with untreated hearing loss often face isolation, loneliness and an increased risk for depression and dementia.

The report identifies multiple factors driving the surge in

prevalence of hearing loss in the African region. Primary among these is an acute shortage of ear and hearing care (EHC) specialists, as well as maldistribution of available workforce to the advantage of urban areas. More than 56% of African countries, for example, have only a single ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist for every million people. In comparison, the European region has about 50 for every million people.

More than three-quarters of African countries, meanwhile, have fewer than one audiologist and one speech and language therapist for every one million people. In addition, although 33 million Africans could benefit from a hearing aid, only about 10% have access due to lack of EHC financing, and consequent high costs.

Data from 43 African countries show that while 36 countries provide EHC services at the tertiary level, similar services are not offered at primary care level. This is despite the fact that the common causes of hearing loss are mostly preventable through simple public health interventions, or measures to mitigate the risk factors.

Among children living in low- and middle-income countries, the report said, up to 75% of hearing

loss is due to preventable causes such as infections and common ear diseases as well as birth complications. Yet, the analysis found that most countries do not routinely conduct hearing screening of newborns.

Even in countries with EHC programmes, EHC interventions are not integrated into such priority health programmes as school health programme, and occupational health or healthy ageing programme. This challenge, the authors said, was compounded by the lack of national policies and plans for strengthening delivery of EHC, and low implementation levels even where these plans exist. In addition, 35% of countries do not have a budget allocated to EHC activities, with patients having to

bear the entire cost of any related treatment and care.

Among other things, the report recommends that countries leverage the report to galvanize action at the highest level, including advocating for policies focused on EHC and related activities. EHC should also be urgently integrated into existing programmes to optimize use of scarce resources. public-private partnerships should be explored by governments towards strengthening EHC services.

The report also highlighted the need for dedicated financing for EHC, to equip facilities and deliver products and technologies, and to optimize EHC research and development and health workforce capacity strengthening.



File Photo

## Zambia signs deal with China for its first cholera vaccine plant

Source AfricaNews

Zambia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China to establish the country's first cholera vaccine manufacturing facility.

The project, announced on Monday, aims to strengthen Zambia's fight against cholera, a disease that has severely impacted public health and productivity.

The initial phase of the plant, costing \$37 million, will be developed through a partnership between Zambia's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and China's Jijia International Medical Technology Corporation.

The facility is expected to produce around three million doses annually.

Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema, speaking at the signing ceremony in Lusaka, emphasized the importance of the project in eradicating cholera in the country. He highlighted that Zambia could become a key manufacturing hub for Africa as the continent's population continues to grow rapidly.

"This partnership sends a message that Zambia, Africa, and the world can collaborate effectively. We aim to make Zambia a center for manufacturing to serve larger markets," Hichilema said.

The president also stressed that the project must avoid bureaucratic delays due to its critical, life-saving purpose. As part of the agreement, China will donate three million cholera vaccine doses to Zambia before production begins.

Zambia faced a severe cholera outbreak earlier this year, which claimed over 400 lives and infected more than 10,000 people. Cholera remains a persistent threat in the country, particularly during the rainy season, despite being a curable disease.



File Photo

Our excellent customer service and high quality printing  
make us the most reliable printing partner for all the projects  
you need done, right now.

## Your Print Solutions Partner



**Universal**  
CRYSTAL PRINT GHANA LTD.

No. 13 St. John's Road, Achimota  
P.O. Box AN 19472 Accra North

+233 (0) 302 409 210  
+233 (0) 302 409 211

[www.universalcystalprint.com](http://www.universalcystalprint.com)  
[info@universalcystalprint.com](mailto:info@universalcystalprint.com)