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# General News

## Step up and show leadership - Kufuor urges Bagbin amid parliamentary brouhaha

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

Former President Agyekum Kufuor has waded into conversations hovering around the brouhaha in Parliament over the Majority position in the House following the removal of four legislators following their decision to contest as independent candidates in the upcoming polls.

Speaking in an interview with Asempa FM, the former President elucidated the role of Speaker of Parliament, Kingsford Sumana Bagbin and how his leadership can resolve the impasse in Parliament which is affecting the running of the country and tarnishing the reputation of Ghana's democracy. "I will plead with the Speaker of Parliament to step up and show leadership. What's happening in parliament is embarrassing. It can destroy his illustrious record," he said.

The Speaker's vacant seat ruling that affected Cynthia Morrison (Agona West), Kojo Asante (Suhum), Andrew Asiamah (Fomena), and Peter Kwakye Ackah (Amenfi Central), based on his interpretation of Article 97(1)(g) of the Constitution, was contested by the NPP, particularly by the leader of the NPP Members of Parliament Alexander Afenyo-Markin.

Afenyo-Markin argued that Speaker Bagbin had overstepped his constitutional authority by declaring the seats vacant without

judicial oversight, prompting him to seek the intervention of the Supreme Court.

In response to the challenge, the Supreme Court issued an interim injunction halting the Speaker's decision until further judicial review. Speaker Bagbin has filed an application with the Supreme Court to reinstate his declaration of the seats as vacant, arguing that parliamentary decisions fall outside the jurisdiction of the judiciary. However, the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo, dismissed Bagbin's motion.

However, Speaker Bagbin has decided to stand by his earlier ruling and has refused to reverse his declaration made on October 22 when he adjourned parliamentary sitting.

Tensions have escalated since Speaker Alban Bagbin directed members of Parliament to end recess and reconvene at the Accra International Conference Centre on Thursday, November 7, after a petition filed by the New Patriotic Party Members of Parliament in accordance with Article 112(3) of the 1992 Constitution and Order 53 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, underscoring the necessity of reconvening to tackle pressing national matters that demand immediate action.

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) Members of Parliament failed to show up after the National

Democratic Congress (NDC) Members of Parliament occupied the Majority position, prompting the Speaker to adjourn sitting indefinitely once more.

The Speaker explained that the House could not sit for business as the Business Committee chaired by NPP Leader, Alexander Afenyo-Markin, could not sit to have a business that would be deliberated.

"As you know, they prepare report and this report adopted by the House as business agreed by the House to transact during the course of the week. In the absence of that, there is no other authority that can put government before you which you have not adopted to transact. In view of the failure of the Business Committee to sit, as a result of the refusal of those who requested for the recall to show up, we are compelled to once again adjourn the sitting of the House," the Speaker said.

He advised that "knowing the

challenges we are facing, it is not advisable to be adjourning from day to day." On the matter, the Leader of the National Democratic Congress, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, has accused the NPP MPs of causing financial loss to the state.

NPP MP and Trade Minister Kobina Tahir Hammond, on his part, registered his displeasure over the NDC MPs occupying the Majority side of Parliament despite the Supreme Court ruling that bars the Speaker from declaring some four seats vacant. He also announced that his side will cite the Speaker of Parliament for contempt of the court.

It is unknown whether or not the NPP Caucus will petition the Speaker to reconvene Parliament once more. However, the inefficient reconvening of the House cost taxpayers as each session costs Ghana at least GH¢1 million, according to Tamale Central MP Ibrahim Murtala Mohammed.



*John Agyekum Kufuor, Former President of Ghana*

## Upper Dixcove chiefs spent GHS30k on Akufo-Addo's statue - Traditional Council

By **Phoebe Martekie Doku**

A member of the Upper Dixcove Traditional Council, Nana Hima Dekyi XIV, has revealed that funding for President Akufo-Addo's statue at the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Takoradi was generated through voluntary contributions made by the region's chiefs.

In a recent interview with Accra-based TV3, he explained that the statue, erected to honor

the president for his significant contributions to the region's development, cost approximately GH¢30,000.

According to him, upon receiving word about the president's tour, "Nananom actually talked to us about what to do because the chiefs of the Western Region have always been in love with the president for some developmental projects in our region, and when those requests

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*President Akufo-Addo's statue at the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Takoradi*

# General News

## Upper Dixcove chiefs spent GHS30k on Akufo-Addo's statue - Traditional Council

- Continued from page 2

were made to him, he took it upon himself to initiate and execute some of these projects.”

He added, “We decided to appreciate him for what he has done for the region in terms of this project. We met and made a contribution to erect the statue in his honor. We have honored other people aside from the president. The chiefs of Upper Dixcove met and made

contributions to put the statue up, and it was around GH¢30,000.”

Nana Hima Dekyi XIV acknowledged that while some projects initiated by Akufo-Addo remain incomplete, he remains optimistic that they will be completed in due time.

The unveiling of the statue has sparked a wave of criticism, especially on social media, where many Ghanaians have accused the

president of using the monument as a form of self-promotion rather than public service. Among the critics is the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Dramani Mahama, who expressed disapproval, stating that a president should allow others to recognize his efforts rather than engage in self-praise.

“He went to Takoradi to put up his

statue and unveiled it. A president must be humble; you must let others praise you instead of praising yourself,” the former president said. In contrast to the criticism, many Ghanaians have taken to social media to support the monument, lauding President Akufo-Addo for his flagship policies, such as the introduction of free secondary education, which he has described as his “most significant legacy.”

## Four courts closed due to Bawku conflict reopened

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo has authorized the reopening of courts in the Upper East Region, following their temporary closure due to the ongoing Bawku conflict.

The courts had been shut on October 29 after security concerns were raised by judges and court staff in response to escalating violence in Bawku.

The affected courts included the High Court, Circuit Court, and District Court in Bolgatanga, as well as the District Court in Bongo. However, areas such as Bolgatanga, Zuarungu, and Bongo, which were not directly impacted by the conflict, voiced dissatisfaction with the closures.

Local authorities from these districts petitioned the Chief Justice, arguing that they were several kilometers away from the conflict zone and should not have been affected by the

shutdown.

On November 8, a circular signed by Judicial Service Secretary Justice Cyra Pamela Koranteng confirmed the resumption of court operations. The violence in Bawku intensified after the return of Alhaji Seidu Abagre, a rival chief who had been exiled since February 2023. Abagre fled Bawku following an arrest warrant issued due to his controversial installation as chief in Nalerigu.

However, a High Court ruling

in Kumasi on October 17, 2024, annulled the warrant, paving the way for his return. His return on October 26 reignited the chieftaincy conflict, resulting in gunfire that left two dead and several others injured. The community now faces heightened tensions, with a curfew from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. enforced by security forces in an effort to restore peace. As of now, approximately 21 people are believed to have died due to the unrest in the area.



Gertrude Torkornoo, Chief Justice

# General News

## 90% of Ghana's plastic waste improperly disposed - AG report reveals

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

A recent report by the Auditor-General (AG) has shed light on the alarming issue of plastic waste management in Ghana, revealing that approximately 90.5% of the country's plastic waste is improperly disposed of.

The report, commissioned under Section 13(e) of the Audit Service Act, 2000 (Act 584), highlights a growing environmental challenge as Ghana generates around 840,000 tonnes of plastic waste annually.

Despite efforts to manage plastic waste, the report reveals that only about 9.5% of collected plastic waste is recycled, with the remaining waste being carelessly discarded.

In the report, it was noted that "a significant portion of generated used plastics is indiscriminately disposed of through littering, dumping in drains, and uncontrolled burning, contributing to environmental degradation and flooding."

The report also highlights that public awareness on safe and sustainable disposal methods,

such as segregation, recycling, and controlled incineration, remains a major challenge.

The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) has been tasked with implementing measures to address the growing issue of plastic waste. However, the Auditor-General's findings indicate that these measures have been insufficient.

One of the major concerns raised in the report is the lack of a cohesive and streamlined communication strategy from MESTI.

The Auditor-General's report noted that "the Ministry's efforts to educate the public on plastic waste disposal were disjointed, lacking coordination and consistency."

In response, the Auditor-General has recommended that MESTI develop a comprehensive communication strategy. This plan should target specific audiences and outline the frequency and channels of awareness campaigns.

Additionally, MESTI is urged to collaborate with the private

sector and local authorities to integrate awareness efforts into their annual action plans and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the effectiveness of these campaigns.

Another critical issue raised in the report is the lack of proper infrastructure to support the segregation, collection, and recycling of plastic waste. MESTI has failed to establish guidelines for the utilization of the Plastic Waste Fund (PWF), which currently holds GH¢8,593,442.00.

This shortfall has hindered the development of infrastructure, such as waste segregation bins for households and logistics for private sector recycling companies. To address this gap, the report recommends that MESTI develop internal guidelines for the utilization of the Plastic Waste Fund in line with Act 863.

Furthermore, MESTI has been advised to collaborate with local authorities to conduct needs assessments and identify the specific support required by private recycling entities.

The report also suggests that MESTI provides quarterly reports to the Ministry of Finance on the use of the fund to ensure transparency and accountability.

Plastic waste presents a critical environmental and social challenge in Ghana, with a substantial portion of this waste being non-biodegradable and contributing to rapid waste accumulation.

Despite measures launched by the government to mitigate, the issue of proper plastic waste disposal remains a significant challenge, exacerbated by low awareness regarding safe and sustainable disposal practices such as segregation, recycling, and controlled incineration.

The continued improper disposal of plastic waste is not only polluting Ghana's rivers and seas but also putting local communities and wildlife at risk.

This issue undermines the promises made by President Akufo-Addo to make Accra the cleanest city in Africa. "By the end of the four years of my term in office as president, Accra will be the cleanest city in Africa," President Akufo-Addo said in 2017.



File photo

# General News

## Govt constructing 232 solar-powered boreholes to aid farm irrigation - Akufo-Addo

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has announced that the government is constructing 232 solar-powered boreholes across Ghana to enhance farm irrigation and support sustainable agriculture.

The initiative announced last Friday during the 40th National Farmers' Day celebration under the theme "Building Climate-Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Food Security," aims to address the urgent need for water management solutions as climate change threatens food security and agricultural productivity.

The solar-powered boreholes, designed to irrigate an additional 3,144 hectares, will help farmers grow crops year-round, reducing dependency on seasonal rainfall and allowing for crop diversification. "This project not only strengthens our food supply but also provides our farmers with the opportunity to diversify and stabilize their incomes," Akufo-Addo explained.

A central part of this plan is the Programme for Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ 2.0), which focuses on climate-resilient agriculture to stabilize food supply.

This comes at a time when the northern part of the country has

been hit by a dry spell for over two months. Over 12,600 farmers have been affected, prompting government to ban the export of grains to ensure there is enough supply for the domestic demand.

Finance Minister, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam announced that the government has purchased a \$1 million insurance policy to protect smallholder farmers in the northern region against future droughts. The policy will pay out \$5 million in the event of a drought.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the European Union (EU), is rolling out a series of interventions to address food insecurity and support agricultural recovery in six targeted districts: North East Gonja, North Gonja, Central Gonja, Bongo, Kasena

Nankana West, and Bunkpurugu Nakpanduri.

Two Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions on improved grain storage technologies will be conducted to enhance the capacities of value chain actors, focusing on seed and grain producers. These trainings will provide knowledge on post-harvest handling of grains such as maize and millet, aiming to reduce food loss both at the farm and at storage centres.

Meanwhile, President Akufo-Addo has underscored the climate crisis facing Ghana's farmers. "Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is a pressing reality that our farmers confront every day," he stated. The government's response includes a series of proactive measures to equip farmers with the tools, knowledge, and resources

necessary to adapt to extreme weather conditions.

Other key initiatives include the Ghana Agriculture and Agribusiness Platform (GhAAP) for real-time weather and pest updates, soil health programs, climate-resilient crop varieties, and integrated pest management. Through these efforts, Akufo-Addo reiterated the government's commitment to positioning Ghana as a leader in climate-smart agriculture.

"By investing in water management, soil health, climate-resilient crops, and infrastructure, we are positioning Ghana as a model of climate-smart agriculture on the continent," he declared, envisioning a resilient agricultural sector that supports the livelihoods of millions and ensures a secure future for the nation.



Solar-powered borehole

## Flower Pot Interchange to be made accessible to public from Nov 19

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Flower Pot Interchange which has stalled for almost 7 years will finally be commissioned by President Akufo-Addo on November 19.

The Director of Communications at the presidency, Eugene Kofi Bentum Arhin, provided this update in a post on Facebook. Government had provided several dates for the completion of the project, however, none of the timelines provided materialised.

Minister of Roads and Highways, Mr Asenso-Boakye noted that the project stalled for some time due to the Government's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The 800-metre flyover project, which commenced on March 7, 2017, starts from the Palace Mall and ends on the East Legon Boundary Road. The project includes the construction of 802 meters of dual carriageway for the viaduct with asphaltic concrete surfacing, along

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Flower Pot Interchange

# General News

## Flower Pot Interchange to be made accessible to public from Nov 19

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with 140 meters of ramp built from Shiashie onto the viaduct towards Airport Hills and 80 meters of ramp from the viaduct onto the motorway towards Tema.

Additionally, a new road has been created through the old tunnel at East Legon, and 200 meters of road have been added to connect to Cantonments from the Giffard Road Interchange. The Flowerpot

roundabout and its approaches have been redesigned, and pedestrian walkways have been included on both sides of the flyover. The project also features road furniture such as streetlights, road markings, and traffic signals.

When opened, it would improve traffic connectivity between the north and south of the Motorway. It would ease movement from areas,

including Cantonments and Burma Camp to East Legon, Spintex and Tema and improve the general life of the people who ply these areas.

The road network within the Municipality has deteriorated rapidly in recent years because of the reconstruction of the Beach Road, which led to the use of the inner roads to divert the traffic. These roads include Tsui Bleoo,

Fertilizer, King Kotey, A Street, 3rd Avenue, Ford, and Nuumo Maashie Roads.

Government secured funding from AfreximBank and contracted China Railway No. 5 Engineering Gh. Ltd for a 93-month to undertake the project. Deoke Consult Ltd is the consultant for the project.

## GRA tax collectors harassing businesses withdrawn from post - Finance Minister

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam has announced that the government has withdrawn Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) officials allegedly harassing businesses as part of efforts to improve the investment climate in Ghana.

This move follows concerns raised by members of the French business community regarding undue pressure from tax collectors.

Addressing the French Chamber of Commerce at the Annual Cocktail event and the launch of the France-Ghana Economic Report 2023-2024, held at the French Ambassador's residence in Accra, Dr. Amin Adam reassured French businesses of the government's commitment to addressing their concerns and fostering a more favorable business environment.

"I want to appeal to you to continue to stay in Ghana because we are addressing all the issues that you have raised with me," he said, noting that actions had been taken to withdraw GRA officials accused of harassing businesses.

"Issues relating to taxes and harassment of businesses by tax collectors, you will notice, have been resolved. We've had to withdraw all the tax collectors who were allegedly harassing businesses from those centres of operation, and so you won't see them anymore," he added.

The GRA has faced repeated criticism for what some perceive

as aggressive tax collection tactics. In March, New Patriotic Party Flagbearer Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia expressed concern that GRA's high targets for tax officers lead to harassment of businesses.

"They are harassing businesses. That harassment is coming from the sort of targets that are created at their office. They are setting unrealistic targets... so you come up

with all sorts of stuff," Dr. Bawumia said. Echoing similar sentiments, Alhassan Andani, former Chief Executive Officer of Stanbic Bank, recently likened the GRA's approach to "a terrorist organization," claiming the authority's tactics often put undue pressure on businesses.

"I know a number of organizations, when GRA gets into their space, it's as if they deliberately do it to wriggle

people's arms to take money," he remarked.

Businesses in Ghana are currently grappling with high inflation, cedi depreciation, and multiple tax obligations, which continue to strain their operations. The GRA, tasked with ensuring compliance with tax laws, is under pressure to secure a stable revenue flow for the government amid these economic challenges.



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

# General News

## NDC MPs promise to fight attempts by NPP Caucus to recall Parliament

By Amanda Cartey

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) Members of Parliament have expressed their intention to resist any attempt by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Caucus to recall Parliament to discuss government business before the dissolution of the 8th Parliament.

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, on November 7, adjourned sitting again after the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Members of Parliament, who had recalled Parliament pursuant to Article 112(3) of the 1992 Constitution and Order 53 of the Standing Orders, failed to show up after the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Members of Parliament occupied the Majority position.

In a statement signed by Emmanuel Armah Kofi Buah, Deputy Leader of the NDC Caucus, they clarified that Mr. Afenyo-Markin struggled to mobilize fewer than 30 NPP Members of Parliament, thus "could not lead the NPP Minority Caucus into the Chamber to conduct the business of government."

Expressing their displeasure, they cautioned Mr. Afenyo-Markin that should he proceed "to trigger

another recall of Parliament pursuant to Order 53 and Article 112(3) of the Constitution, he should brace himself for resistance," adding that "the NDC Majority Caucus will no longer tolerate his reckless abuse of the parliamentary process."

NDC MP representing the people of Bawku Central, Mahama Ayariga, has stated that it costs the government about GHC 1 million whenever Parliament is recalled. The NPP Caucus has recalled Parliament thrice this year. Following the recent impasse in Parliament, Mr. Afenyo-Markin accused Speaker of Parliament Alban Bagbin of enabling disorder in the House by allowing what he described as "lawlessness" by the NDC MPs.

He further claimed that the NDC, together with Speaker Bagbin, is "setting the country on fire," adding that the Majority had hoped for a more statesmanlike approach from Bagbin. The ruling by the Speaker, declaring the seats of Cynthia Morrison (Agona West), Kojo Asante (Suhum), Andrew Asiamah (Fomena), and Peter Kwakye Ackah (Amenfi Central) vacant, based on his interpretation of Article 97(1) (g) of the Constitution, has been contested by the NPP Caucus, leaving Parliament at an impasse.

Afenyo-Markin argued that Speaker Bagbin had exceeded his constitutional authority by declaring the seats vacant without judicial oversight, prompting him to seek the intervention of the Supreme Court.

In response, the Supreme Court issued an interim injunction, halting the Speaker's decision pending further judicial review. Speaker Bagbin subsequently filed an application to reinstate his declaration, asserting that parliamentary decisions fall outside the jurisdiction of the judiciary. However, the Supreme Court, under

Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo, dismissed Bagbin's motion.

Despite the legal setback, Speaker Bagbin has chosen to stand by his original ruling and has refused to reverse his declaration made on October 22.

The NPP Caucus has noted that it will continue to pursue legal redress, an initiative the Speaker has advised against. Speaker Bagbin asserts that the continuous interference of the Judiciary in parliamentary affairs has an adverse effect on the Legislature's reputation.



Emmanuel Armah Kofi Buah, Deputy Leader of the NDC Caucus

## More than 150,000kg illicit drugs confiscated by NACOC between 2021 and 2024

By Amanda Cartey

Over the past three years, the National Narcotics Control Commission (NACOC) has confiscated more than 150,000 kilograms of illicit drugs as part of its ongoing efforts to eliminate narcotic substances from the country.

A wide range of substances, including cannabis, heroin, speedball, cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA, and codeine, with quantities reaching 46,128 kg, 37 kg, 10 kg, 9 kg, 3 kg, and 105,700 kg, respectively, were recently burnt to ashes at the Bundase Military Camp in the Ningo-Prampram District.

NACOC's Director-General, Dr. Kenneth Adu-Amanfoh, in his interaction with the media, emphasized that the destruction of these substances sends a strong message to drug trafficking networks and individuals that there is no place for drug-related activities in the country.

Dr. Adu-Amanfoh, however, stressed that enforcement and interdiction alone are not sufficient measures to deal with the entry of drugs into the country and their abuse by citizens. "Enforcement and interdiction alone are not a sole solution to addressing this complex issue, and prevention,

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Dr. Kenneth Adu-Amanfoh, NACOC's Director-General

# General News

## More than 150,000kg illicit drugs confiscated by NACOC between 2021 and 2024

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education, and rehabilitation are essential pillars in the broader strategy to address drug abuse in our nation and beyond," he added.

He acknowledged Ghana's progress in breaking down trafficking networks, disrupting supply chains, and safeguarding communities from the harmful effects of illegal drugs.

In 2022, the Narcotics Control Commission, with assistance from the ECOWAS Commission,

developed a revised National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) to tackle drug abuse and trafficking in Ghana.

This updated framework has strengthened and accelerated the country's efforts to combat the ongoing drug crisis that continues to devastate communities and drain vital resources.

Recently, a group of Ghanaian men from southeast England were sentenced for importing 1,500 kilos

of cannabis from Ghana to the UK, hidden in sacks of Gari powder.

An extensive National Crime Agency (NCA) investigation linked the men to the drug haul after it was discovered inside a shipping container at Tilbury Docks, Essex.

Daniel Yeboah, Kristoffen Baidoo, Kwaku Bonsu, all from London, and Edward Adjei, from Grays, were found guilty of importing the Class B drug following a three-week trial at

Southwark Crown Court last month. The container arrived at Tilbury Docks from Ghana on 19th December 2019, and intelligence obtained by the NCA and the Ghanaian Narcotics Control Commission suggested it contained drugs.

NCA and Border Force officers searched the container and found 2,335 packages of herbal cannabis hidden inside white hessian sacks of Gari powder.

## Group petitions IGP to release farmers who destroyed 'galamsey' excavators on Farmers' Day

By Amanda Cartey

Leading environmental advocacy group, Eco-Conscious Citizens, has raised grave concerns over the arrest of four farmers at Atronsu in the Western North Region for setting excavators used by illegal miners ablaze.

Their arrest, which has sparked outrage among residents and environmental advocates, occurred during the Farmers' Day celebration on November 8.

In an open letter addressed to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, Eco-Conscious Citizens highlighted a concerning disparity: while farmers face legal consequences, the illegal miners responsible for contaminating the Atronsu Stream—the community's only drinking water source—are largely left unpunished.

"It is of concern that the illegal miners who have been actively poisoning the only source of drinking water in Atronsu are walking free," the letter stated. Founder and coordinator of Eco-Conscious Citizens, Awula Serwah, pointed out that the farmers have spoken out for months about the pollution of the Atronsu Stream, yet their concerns appear to have been ignored.

Formal complaints were made to the police and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), but illegal miners continued their activities without facing consequences. Although a few miners were

arrested, they were promptly released on bail and quickly resumed mining operations.

The letter also condemns the police's handling of the matter, highlighting how perceptions of "selective justice" are damaging public confidence in law enforcement.

"The optics do not look good," Serwah noted, pointing out the disparity in treatment between the illegal miners and the activists. While the miners were granted bail, anti-galamsey demonstrators have reportedly been denied similar leniency.

Eco-Conscious Citizens believe it's a grave injustice to allow illegal mining to continue without consequences while punishing those who speak

out against it.

"To appear to condone the criminal activities of the illegal miners, whilst wielding the law heavily against the victims of the crimes committed by the miners, would be an extremely unfortunate injustice," the letter concludes.

Weeks ago, three staff members of the Multimedia Group Limited, including Erastus Asare Donkor, were attacked by armed men who claimed to be working for a mining site, Edelmetallum Resources Limited, at Asumenya, near Manso Nkran in the Ashanti Region.

Over ten heavily built men, armed with pump-action guns, attacked them, forcibly drove them to a location, and subjected them to

severe beatings before abandoning them.

Galamsey has caused severe deforestation, water pollution, and soil degradation. Over 60% of Ghana's water bodies have been polluted with mercury and other heavy metals, leading to health issues like kidney failure and respiratory conditions.

Military operations like "Operation Vanguard" and "Operation Halt II" have been employed by the government to remove illegal miners from river bodies and forest reserves. In some instances, the mining machines are destroyed. Some observers believe that this approach, previously used, may not be effective in fully tackling the illegal mining problem.



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# Business

## Cocoa price surges by 3.33%; a bag to be sold at GHC3,100

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The producer price of cocoa for the 2024/2025 crop season has observed a marginal increase by the government to improve the livelihoods and well-being of farmers, who have long bemoaned the monetary value offered for their produce.

The price of a 64kg bag, previously sold for GHC3,000, will now be sold at GHC3,100, while the price per tonne, previously GHC48,000, will now be GHC49,600, reflecting a 3.33 percent increase. President Akufo-Addo announced the change last Friday during his speech commemorating National Farmers' Day.

The president explained that the recent adjustment is based on market conditions and recommendations from the Producer Price Review Committee. He reassured farmers that the government remains

committed to supporting them, particularly through regular price reviews aimed at boosting their incomes amidst ongoing challenges.

In October, reports of a potential price increase led farmers to hoard cocoa beans, a situation that could adversely impact global supplies. Authorities have been working to boost farmers' incomes and curb smuggling, a challenge that resulted in the world's second-largest cocoa producer losing over a third of its cocoa output for the 2023/24 season, according to officials from the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

At the National Farmers' Day celebration, Nana Owusu Achiaw Brempong from the Sekyere Central District in the Ashanti Region was named the National Best Farmer. In honor of his achievements, he was awarded one million Ghana cedis. With 50 years of farming experience, Nana Owusu, who aims to improve food security, manages

North American Farms, which employs 168 workers to cultivate crops such as cocoa and cashew.

In an unrelated development, COCOBOD has announced plans to fund tertiary education for the

children of cocoa farmers. This initiative is set to replace the current Senior High School (SHS) cocoa scholarship program, which has become redundant with the implementation of the Free SHS policy.



Cocoa beans

## BoG suspends Taptap Send partnerships with banks over illegal cedi remittance operation

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Bank of Ghana (BoG) has issued a one-month suspension of all partnerships between Taptap Send and electronic payment service providers (EPSPs) and commercial banks in Ghana, effective November 8, 2024.

The regulatory action comes in response to Taptap Send's operation of a cedi-denominated remittance wallet, which BoG states is in violation of section 3(1) of the Foreign Exchange Act, 2006 (Act 723), as well as sections 7(b), 7(d), and 7(e) of the Updated Guidelines for Inward Remittance Services for Payment Service Providers.

According to the Bank of Ghana, Taptap Send's actions contravene local laws governing foreign exchange and inward remittance operations. Under section 3(1) of the Foreign Exchange Act, 2006 (Act 723), engaging in foreign exchange transactions without the necessary license is prohibited.

In addition to breaching the Foreign Exchange Act, Taptap Send is also accused of disregarding key provisions of the Updated Guidelines for Inward Remittance Services, which are intended to ensure efficient and transparent remittance practices among EPSPs and their partner banks. Specifically, paragraph 7(b) of these guidelines requires partner banks to credit the local settlement accounts of designated electronic money issuers (DEMI) or EPSPs with the cedi equivalent of inward remittances within 24 hours to ensure timely distribution to beneficiaries.

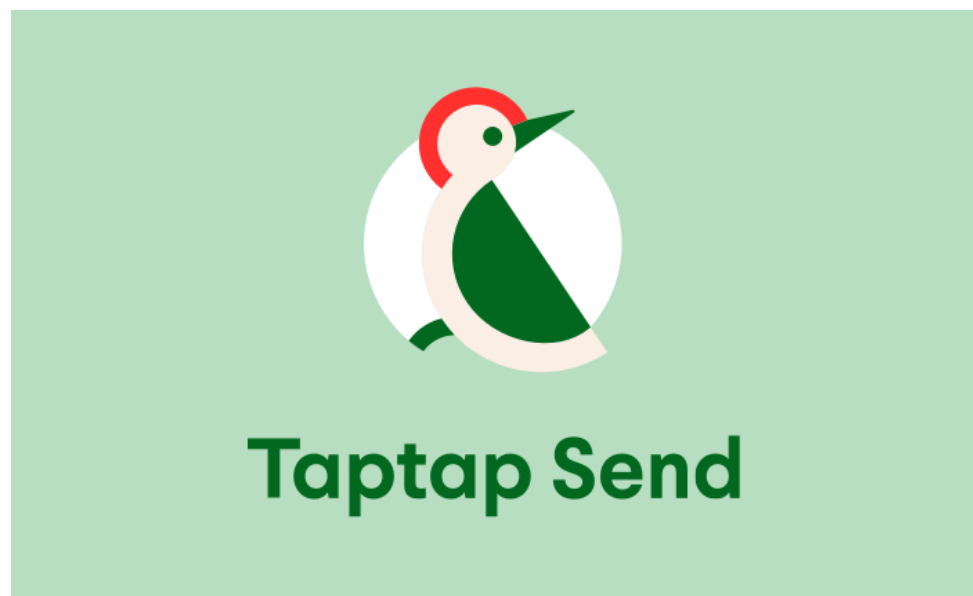
Further violations were noted in paragraphs 7(d) and 7(e) of the guidelines, which direct settlement banks to refrain from processing requests for any other purposes than payments to beneficiaries. Additionally, banks are mandated to notify BoG of any suspected breaches and to maintain stringent anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance protocols. According

to BoG, Taptap Send's practices raised concerns that necessitated immediate intervention.

The suspension comes with a strong warning from BoG to other institutions, indicating that further violations of remittance and foreign exchange regulations will be met with severe sanctions. The central bank emphasized its commitment to safeguarding Ghana's financial

system by strictly enforcing regulatory compliance among financial service providers.

Taptap Send, a prominent digital remittance platform with investors including Reid Hoffman, the Omidyar Network, and Helios is expected to cooperate with regulators to address these issues to restore its operational partnerships in Ghana.



Taptap Send

# International

## Countries pledge to act on childhood violence affecting some 1 billion children

Source: WHO

More than 100 governments have made historic commitments to end childhood violence, including nine pledging to ban corporal punishment – an issue that affects 3 out of every 5 children regularly in their homes. These commitments were made at a landmark event in Bogotá, Colombia, where government delegations are set to agree on a new global declaration aimed at protecting children from all kinds of violence, exploitation and abuse.

Also at the event, which is hosted by the Governments of Colombia and Sweden together with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, several countries committed to improve services for childhood violence survivors or tackle bullying, while others said they would invest in critical parenting support – one of the most effective interventions for reducing violence risks in the home.

“Despite being highly preventable, violence remains a horrific day to day reality for millions of children around the world – leaving scars that span generations,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “Today countries made critical pledges that, once enacted, could finally turn the tide on childhood violence. From establishing lifechanging support for families to making schools safer places or tackling online abuse, these actions will be fundamental to protecting children from lasting harm and ill health.”

Over half of all children globally – some 1 billion – are estimated to suffer some form of violence, such as child maltreatment (including corporal punishment, the most prevalent form of childhood violence), bullying, physical or emotional abuse, as well as sexual violence. Violence against children is often hidden, mostly occurs behind closed doors, and is vastly underreported. WHO estimates that fewer than half of affected children tell anyone they experienced violence and under 10% receive any help.

Such violence not only constitutes a grave violation of children’s rights but also increases the risk of immediate and long-term health issues. For some children, violence results in death or serious injury. Every 13 minutes, a child or adolescent dies as a result of homicide – equating to around 40 000 preventable deaths each year. For others, experiencing violence has devastating and life-long consequences. These include anxiety and depression, risky behaviours like unsafe sex, smoking and substance abuse, and reduced academic achievement.

Evidence shows that violence against children is preventable, with the health sector having a critical role to play. Proven solutions include parenting support to help caregivers avoid violent discipline and build positive relationships with their children; school-based interventions to strengthen life and social skills for children and adolescents, and prevent bullying; child-friendly social and health services for children that experience violence; laws that prohibit violence against children and reduce underlying

risk factors such as access to alcohol and guns, and efforts to ensure safer internet use for children. Research has shown that when countries effectively implement such strategies, they can reduce violence against children by as much as 20-50%.

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the first global targets for ending violence against children were established in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. Progress in reducing overall prevalence of childhood violence has however been slow, despite gains in some individual countries. Around 9 in 10 children still live in countries where prevalent forms of childhood violence such as corporal punishment, or even sexual abuse and exploitation, are not yet prohibited by law.

Over 1000 people are attending this first-ever Ministerial Conference on Violence against Children, including high-level government delegations, children, young people, survivor and civil society allies.

Specific pledges at the event include among others, commitments to end physical punishment, to introduce new digital safety initiatives, increase the legally permitted age of marriage and to invest in parenting education and child protection. WHO provides significant support for efforts to end childhood violence, through technical guidance, guiding effective strategies for prevention and response, and conducting new research and data, including its global status reports.



File photo

## DR Congo opposition, civil society dig in as Tshisekedi plots constitution change

Source: Africa News

Congolese political and civil society leaders Saturday announced an alliance to rally against constitutional changes that are meant to ensure President Felix Tshisekedi keeps power indefinitely.

Named ‘National Awakening’, the coalition will hold its first meeting in mid-December to pay tribute to the 2005 referendum which gave birth to the 2006 constitution.

They called attempts by Tshisekedi’s ruling coalition to change the constitution ‘high treason’.

Opposition leaders Martin Fayulu and Moïse Katumbi are also leading separate initiatives against the constitutional review project.

Tshisekedi has called the current text outdated and ripe for reform. The law limits presidential mandates to two

Members of Tshisekedi’s party say that the current constitution was written from a position of weakness because the country was embroiled in a war.

They say that reforms are needed to protect the country’s sovereignty amid changing political and military dynamics in the region.



Felix Tshisekedi, President of DR Congo

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