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General News

Ghana's judiciary now a political playground - Franklin Cudjoe

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

President of IMANI Africa, Franklin Cudjoe has strongly criticised Ghana's judiciary, describing it as a "playground for politicians."

His remarks come amidst a controversial Supreme Court decision overturning a parliamentary directive to declare four seats vacant, a move originally enforced by Speaker of Parliament Alban Bagbin.

In an recent interview, Mr. Cudjoe expressed disappointment in the judiciary's handling of politically sensitive cases, accusing it of bias and undermining its credibility.

"The judiciary has become a bully playground for politicians," he alleged, further describing the court's recent ruling as a form of "judicial terrorism."

The Supreme Court's decision, delivered by a seven-member panel led by Chief Justice Gertrude

Torkornoo, was passed with a 5-2 majority. The ruling supported the case brought by Majority Leader Alexander Afenyo-Markin, who challenged Speaker Bagbin's declaration. The Court determined that a parliamentary seat could only be considered vacant if an MP formally switched parties while retaining their seat.

Two dissenting justices argued that the Court lacked jurisdiction in the matter, raising questions about the judiciary's scope of authority in parliamentary affairs.

Mr. Cudjoe, however, questioned the motivations behind the ruling, describing the majority decision as a calculated move to create a façade of impartiality.

"The 5-2 decision... was just to make us feel as if there is some division among them. For me, it was a joke," he stated. He also highlighted perceived inconsistencies, pointing to the

lack of resolution in other cases, such as the ongoing concerns regarding representation for the SALL constituency.

The IMANI Africa President called for reforms, urging Chief Justice Torkornoo to address growing concerns over the judiciary's perceived partiality.

"Frankly speaking, it is not right to

have almost 70% of the populace say you are biased. It's not fair," he said.

The ruling and subsequent backlash have reignited debates about judicial independence and the separation of powers in Ghana. As dissent grows, questions about the judiciary's role in fostering trust and impartiality remain central to national discourse.



Franklin Cudjoe, President, IMANI Africa

61,796 animals vaccinated against rabies; 91 cases recorded so far - Veterinary Service Directorate

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Veterinary Service Directorate of Ghana has indicated that in the fight against rabies, a total of 61,796 animals—comprising 57,439 dogs and 4,357 cats were vaccinated between January and September 2024.

Among the regions, Greater Accra recorded the highest number of animals vaccinated, with 11,929 dogs and 1,672 cats, totaling 13,601 animals.

The Upper East Region followed with 7,653 animals vaccinated, including 6,910 dogs and 743 cats, while the Ashanti Region recorded 7,141 animals vaccinated, comprising 6,820 dogs and 321 cats. The Eastern Region and Bono Region also reported significant numbers, vaccinating 6,159 and 5,281 animals respectively.

In contrast, the North East Region reported the lowest vaccination figures, with only 1,020 dogs and 1

cat vaccinated, amounting to 1,021 animals. Similarly, the Oti Region had low numbers, with 651 dogs and 6 cats vaccinated.

Other regions with relatively low vaccination numbers include the Savannah Region, which vaccinated 707 animals (611 dogs and 96 cats), and the Western North Region, which vaccinated 1,122 animals (1,102 dogs and 20 cats).

However, the challenge remains as 91 positive cases of rabies have been recorded nationwide within the same period.

Greater Accra recorded the highest number of dog rabies cases, with 34 cases reported. The Bono Region followed with 18 cases, while the North East Region recorded 14 cases. The Western Region reported 11 cases, and the Ashanti Region had 8 cases. On the other hand, the Upper West Region reported the lowest number of cases, with only 2 cases recorded.

As of September, 26 human fatalities were recorded due to rabies. One of the most prevalent zoonotic diseases (illnesses that are transmitted from animals to humans, often through direct contact with animals or through vectors like ticks and fleas) 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.

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.

Veterinary technologist at the Directorate, Mr. Eshun in an engagement with The Independent Ghana 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

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General News

61,796 animals vaccinated against rabies; 91 cases recorded so far - Veterinary Service Directorate

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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.

Among other matters, Emmanuel Eshun has expressed concern over the poor animal care practices in Ghana, warning that they are contributing to the spread of zoonotic diseases.

He stressed that 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.



File Photo

Illegal miners preparing to invade the Neung South Forest Reserve

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

A group of unidentified illegal miners are planning to enter the Neung South Forest Reserve in the Tarkwa District, Western Region, to carry out mining activities according to reports. Eyewitnesses from nearby communities have reported spotting several excavators and a washing plant positioned approximately 700 metres from the reserve.

The miners are said to have set up barricades to prevent Forestry Commission (FC) personnel from accessing the area.

The illegal miners have accused the FC staff of being complicit in the death of one of their own, who was allegedly shot by security personnel from Kapsord Mining Limited.

Before Kapsord Mining's arrival, the illegal miners were said to have controlled the area, but the company has since established a security post with guards to protect their designated concession.

The security post was reportedly set on fire by unknown individuals following the violent clash between the illegal miners and the concession guards.

Additionally, eyewitnesses claim to have seen heavily armed men, wearing camouflage military uniforms and travelling in a Toyota Pickup, speeding near the barricades, heading towards the reserve.

The escalating tensions have raised concerns about the safety of the forest reserve and the ongoing conflict between the illegal miners and the company's security forces.

Illegal mining and its deteriorating impact is a huge menace Ghana is currently grappling with.

In recent times, calls for a halt to it have heightened, leaving a huge pressure on the government on the need to take appropriate measures to check these illegal activities.

Heavy metal contamination used in illegal mining finds their way into the food chain and water

supply; they contaminate water sources used for drinking, cooking, and irrigation.

Prolonged exposure to polluted water has resulted in a surge in waterborne diseases like diarrhoea, skin infections, and even cancers. For nursing mothers, the ingestion of heavy metals from contaminated water has been linked to severe birth defects in newborns.

Government on the other hand over the years has implemented several measures to combat illegal mining,

including the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM) and the deployment of Operation Vanguard, a military task force.

Some excavators and other equipment used by these illegal miners are sometimes seized and set ablaze as part of measures by the government to deal with the challenge.

However, these efforts, enforcement remains a challenge due to limited resources and alleged acts of corruption.



File Photo

General News

Ghana to roll out disaster early warning system in a month ahead of UN deadline

By *Persis Roberts*

Ghana is set to launch a comprehensive Early Warning System (EWS) to mitigate disasters and improve climate response, according to the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet). Director-General of GMet, Dr Eric Asuman, revealed this development at the ongoing 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The road map for the EWS, coordinated by the World Food Programme (WFP), aims to address gaps in climate and weather information dissemination while providing resource mobilisation strategies. "The road map will be ready in one month, keeping us within the 2027 deadline set by the UN for all countries to establish EWS. By the next three years, we will have a fully-fledged system where information reaches every citizen across the country," Dr Asuman said.

The EWS framework builds on

four key pillars: understanding risk and vulnerability, monitoring and forecasting extreme weather events, communicating weather information, and ensuring preparedness for disaster response. It was formally launched on October 29 under the Early Warning for All initiative, reflecting Ghana's commitment to global disaster risk reduction goals.

Speaking at the Africa Ministerial Conference on Meteorology at COP29, Dr Asuman emphasised that the initiative would harmonise efforts across government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), and Water Resources Commission (WRC). He noted, "A coordinated proposal involving all stakeholders makes it easier to attract funding than working in silos. We need all institutions working together for a seamless EWS." The strategic plan lays out modalities for securing funding locally and internationally,

recognising the financial and technical resources required for full implementation. This aligns with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's call at COP27 for countries to establish EWS by 2027. Ghana's efforts align with regional initiatives spearheaded by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). These partnerships aim to enhance Africa's resilience to climate impacts, such as floods, droughts, and erratic rainfall patterns.

Dr Mariane Diop, Programme Manager at WMO Africa Regional Office, highlighted the urgent need for improved EWS across Africa. "Only 40 percent of Africa's population currently has access to EWS. This is particularly concerning because African economies and livelihoods depend heavily on agriculture, which is highly vulnerable to climate change," she stated.

Dr Diop called for collective action to ensure disaster information

reaches vulnerable communities promptly. "It is important that all stakeholders work on EWS together so that the relevant information can reach the local communities where it is needed most," she added. The imminent roll-out of Ghana's EWS will place the country among global leaders in disaster risk preparedness. By fostering collaboration among local and international stakeholders, Ghana aims to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change on its population and economy while meeting its commitments to international frameworks.



Dr Eric Asuman, Director-General of GMet

Supreme Court verdict in Vacant seat case recipe for future misunderstandings - Justice Atuguba

By *Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*

Retired Supreme Court Justice William Atuguba has expressed concerns over the Supreme Court's verdict over the controversial vacant seat saga hanging around the neck of Parliament citing the Judiciary's ruling as one that lacks enforceability without accompanying orders.

The Supreme Court on November 12, 2024 ruled that the Speaker Alban Bagbin's declaration of the four parliamentary seats as vacant was unconstitutional.

According to the retired Justice who served on the bench of the Supreme Court for over two decades, the decision is binding in principle but cannot be practically implemented because specific directives to enforce the judgement were absent, a situation that is likely to lead to disputes or delays in implementing the decision.

Speaking during a media engagement on Saturday November 16, 2024, Justice Atuguba noted mentioned that,

"The Constitution itself says the Supreme Court shall, for the purposes of a declaration, and across one of these articles, make such orders and give such directions as it may consider appropriate for giving effect or enabling effect to be given to the declaration," Justice Atuguba stated.

He emphasised that the "bare declaration" issued by the Supreme Court would require further orders to be effectively enforced, noting that the "enforceability aspect of it is absent" without such additional directives from the court.

"Article 2 doesn't stop at declaration. It goes further to say the Supreme Court shall, for the purposes of a declaration, and Clause 1 of this article make such orders and give such directions

as it may consider appropriate for giving effect or enabling effect to be given to the declaration so made. So the Constitution itself it's there that the bare declaration to be effective needs further orders..."

The Supreme Court's declaration was made in response to a case challenging the Speaker of Parliament's ruling on the vacation of certain parliamentary seats.

Also on the show was the Dean of the UPSA Law School, Prof Kofi Abotsi.

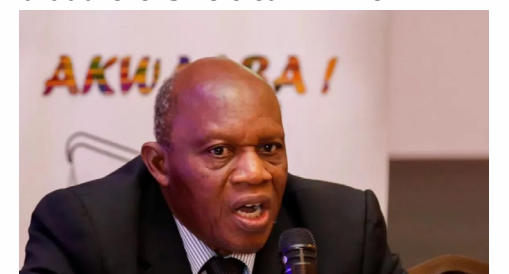
He was concerned over the Supreme Court's failure to outline what constitutes the vacation of a parliamentary seat in its recent ruling against the Speaker of Parliament.

The court's decision overturned Speaker Alban Bagbin's declaration of vacancies for MPs seeking to contest upcoming elections on the tickets of parties other than those under which they were elected.

Meanwhile, on the issue of enforceability and the potency of creating disputes or misunderstandings, counsel of the Speaker, in reaction to the Supreme Court's verdict stated that,

There is no order saying that the MPs must be allowed in Parliament or an order directing that Parliament recognize the said MPs as earlier ordered by the Court contained in the majority decision of the Court. The order staying execution of the Speaker's ruling is NOW SPENT"

Private legal practitioner, Martin Kpebu on the other hand suggested that the Supreme Court's decision on the vacant seats saga suggests that there is no clear winner.



Justice William Atuguba, Supreme Court Justice

General News

EC destroys defective ballot papers for Ahafo and Volta regions over serialisation errors

By Persis Roberts

The Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana has confirmed the destruction of defective ballot papers meant for the Ahafo and Volta regions ahead of the 2024 general elections. This move follows the discovery of serialisation errors during the Commission's audit process at the printing facilities.

In a statement signed by Samuel Tettey, the Deputy Chairman of Operations, the EC revealed that the destruction of the flawed materials occurred on Saturday, November 16, 2024. The process was conducted through incineration and witnessed by agents of political parties, the National Intelligence Bureau, National Security, the Ghana Police Service, and the Electoral Commission itself.

"The destruction done through burning was witnessed by the Agents of the Political Parties,

the National Intelligence Bureau, National Security, Ghana Police Service, and the Electoral Commission," the statement noted.

The EC further assured stakeholders that all defective ballot papers would be accounted for and appropriately destroyed. To maintain transparency, the EC also announced the destruction of any remaining defective ballots, including those with serial number discrepancies on Sunday, November 17, 2024. Political parties and relevant stakeholders were invited to observe the process.

"The Commission will today, Sunday, November 17, 2024, account for all the ballot papers printed for both regions, which will be burnt subsequently due to challenges with the serial numbers. The Commission will inform the Political Parties and other Stakeholders in due course

to enable them to observe the destruction of these ballot papers," the statement read.

The serialisation errors arose during the printing process, prompting the Commission to take immediate corrective measures. According to the EC, the automated system responsible for assigning serial numbers encountered technical issues, leading to gaps in the numbering sequence. The printing house adopted a manual system to resolve the issue, but this approach was deemed unreliable by the EC.

"In the light of the above, the Commission took the decision to reprint the ballot papers and informed the Political Parties at an Emergency IPAC Meeting on Friday, 15th November, 2024," the statement read.

The reprinting will be undertaken by Buck Press and Acts Commercials for the Ahafo and Volta regions, respectively.

The EC emphasised that the decision to recall and destroy the ballots was based solely on reports from its internal teams and audit department. Contrary to speculation, no political party raised the issue of serialisation errors during the printing process.

The EC reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a credible electoral process and assured the public that all measures are being taken to safeguard the integrity of the 2024 general elections.



Jean Mensa, Electoral Commission Chairperson

EOCO chases 6 men over financial crimes

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) has issued a public notice seeking assistance in locating six individuals involved in serious financial crimes, including the possession of forged documents, defrauding by false pretences, and money laundering.

The suspects, whose actions pose a significant threat to the nation's economic stability, are:

Asamoah Reginald Kwadjo who is currently wanted for allegedly possessing forged documents. Second on the list is Quicoo-Williams Elliot, also wanted for allegedly possessing forged documents.

Another wanted man is Kwame Dwomoh Poku, who is being sought for alleged defrauding by false pretences and money laundering.

Asampana Bernard is wanted for allegedly defrauding by

false pretences and money laundering.

Evans Glakpe is also facing charges of defrauding by false pretences and money laundering and finally

Frimpong Andrew Annor is wanted for alleged involvement in defrauding by false pretences and money laundering.

EOCO has called on the public to assist in locating these individuals. Any information leading to their arrest can be reported to EOCO's headquarters in Accra, regional offices, or the nearest police station. Additional contact numbers are: 0271111570, 0208272296, and 0579709066.

Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) in Ghana was officially established in 2010 under the Economic and Organised Crime Office Act, 2010 (Act 804). It was previously known as the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), which had been in existence since 1993,

operating under the Serious Fraud Office Act, 1993 (Act 466).

It is tasked with investigating and prosecuting organised economic crimes, recovering proceeds from such activities, and

providing intelligence to relevant authorities.

EOCO is currently being led by Executive Director Maame Yaa Tiwaa Addo-Danquah.



EOCO Logo

General News

Neglect of parks, medians of city roads impacting environmental health - GhIC cautions govt

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Ghana Institute of Horticulturists (GhIH) has expressed concern over the growing neglect of parks, medians of city roads, and urban landscapes, warning that the situation is negatively impacting environmental health in urban communities.

This caution was issued during the 24th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Institute, held from November 13-15, at the Great Hall of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi.

Speaking under the theme, "Agrochemicals Usage for Enhanced Horticultural Crops Production: Our Health, Wealth and Environment," the GhIH emphasised the importance of these green spaces to urban environmental health.

"We draw the attention of Government to the growing neglect in the maintenance of parks, medians of city roads, and the general landscapes of towns and cities, which are critical for improving the environmental health of our urban communities," the Institute stated, calling on both the government and private companies to partner with the GhIH to address this challenge.

Several parks in the country's

capital such as the Efua Sutherland Park that provide recreational services are in a deplorable state. The most sought after, Legon Botanical Gardens, is presently under renovation and the management of the University of Ghana has pledged to update the public on its reopening.

Protecting the Environment and Food Security

The GhIH expressed alarm at the ongoing degradation of the environment through activities such as illegal mining (galamsey) and improper agrochemical usage, which threaten food security and public health. The Institute called on the government to enforce policies and deploy resources to protect farmlands, forests, and water bodies while engaging local authorities to curb these destructive activities.

Strengthening Agencies and Ensuring Safe Agrochemical Usage

Highlighting the critical role of regulatory bodies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), the Institute lamented the challenges of inadequate staff and funding. It urged the government to bolster these agencies to ensure proper regulation of agrochemicals,

eliminate the use of banned substances, and strictly enforce the guidelines for approved chemicals.

Boosting Horticulture and Reducing Imports

The Institute acknowledged the government's efforts through initiatives such as Planting for Food and Jobs Phase II (PFJ 2.0) but advocated for a stronger focus on horticultural crops like tomatoes, onions, and carrots.

"We call on Government to develop crop-specific policies for tomato, onion, and carrots to increase their production and processing to reduce their importation into the country," the Institute urged, emphasising that such measures could create jobs, especially for women and youth.

Supporting Research and Food Safety

The GhIH stressed the need for increased funding to universities and research institutions to enhance studies on agrochemical usage and food safety. Additionally, it encouraged agrochemical companies to invest in the training of agricultural extension agents and farmers to ensure the safe use of agrochemicals.

Collaboration and Representation

The Institute reiterated its

readiness to collaborate with government and stakeholders to enhance the horticulture sector, calling for representation on the Horticultural Advisory Board of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). "As a matter of urgency, government should consider having representatives of the GhIH on the Horticultural Advisory Board to support the ministry in matters related to horticultural policies," the communiqué stated.

The conference concluded with an appeal to all Ghanaians to prioritise food safety to protect public health and ensure the global competitiveness of Ghana's horticultural exports.

Sponsors of the three-day event included Chemico Agrochemicals, Rainbow Agrosciences, and BioEnsure Limited, among others.



File Photo

Do not attend any 'supposed' emergency recall of Parliament - Asiedu Nketia warns NDC MPs

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

National Chairman of the Opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), Johnson Asiedu Nketia has advised Members of Parliament (MPs) belonging to his party to boycott any emergency recall of the House, which is currently on an indefinite recess.

While addressing party supporters in the Western Region on November 16, 2024, the NDC National Chairman slammed the NPP accusing them of their intentions to bid for an emergency recall "to continue with the insatiable corruption they have

perpetrated for the past eight years"

He has therefore urged that, "...Let no NDC MP set foot in Parliament. If they like, they can go and burn the sea. There's no work in Parliament that can be said to be an emergency. There's no emergency. Parliament will only be recalled so they can continue with the insatiable corruption they have perpetrated for the past eight years.

They still want to advance the corruption with just three weeks left. We won't go close to them

today or tomorrow".

His comments come after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the Speaker's declaration of the four parliamentary seats as vacant including three held by the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The Speaker had justified his decision by citing Articles 97(g) and (h) of the Constitution, along with precedent, arguing that the affected MPs forfeited their seats by opting to contest the upcoming elections either as independent candidates or under the banner of

a different political party.

However, the Supreme Court, in a 5-2 majority ruling, held that an MP can only vacate their seat under Articles 97(g) and (h) if they choose to remain in Parliament while adopting a new political identity.

Reacting to this decision, Asiedu Nketia accused the Supreme Court of overstepping its constitutional mandate, warning that such actions pose a serious threat to Ghana's democracy and must be firmly opposed.

"The judges can say what they

Continued on page 7

General News

Do not attend any 'supposed' emergency recall of Parliament - Asiedu Nketia warns NDC MPs

Continued from page 6

want. We will also use the rules of Parliament to work in Parliament. When we speak of democracy standing firm, democracy does not exist if you take out Parliament.

That is why every nation interested in their democracy must collectively protect their Parliament because your democracy falters if Parliament is weakened, and that would not be allowed to happen.

Our Parliament and democracy were built off our blood. We won't sit and watch one person come and destroy our democracy. That will not happen today or tomorrow," he added.



Johnson Asiedu Nketiah, National Chairman, NDC

UNICEF Ghana warns of rising online exploitation of children

By Persis Roberts

UNICEF Ghana has raised concerns about the increasing exposure of children to online exploitation, urging immediate action to address the issue. Disturbing trends show that children in Ghana are increasingly becoming targets of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA), with alarming statistics underscoring the gravity of the situation.

A 2017 UNICEF study on child internet use in Ghana revealed troubling trends that are now believed to be worsening. The study found that 20% of children aged 9 to 17 had received sexual messages through social networking platforms, while another 20% had met in person with someone they initially encountered online.

Additionally, 50% of children reported encountering sexual images on the internet, and 40% admitted they did not feel safe online. Half of the children surveyed also described having upsetting experiences during their online activities.

Experts warn that these numbers

may have worsened as internet access and mobile device usage among children has grown over the years.

The E-Crime Bureau has sounded the alarm on the dangers of unregulated online access, noting that children are increasingly being exploited to produce harmful content. The Bureau's Lead for Financial Crimes and Anti-Money Laundering, Eric Kwaku Mensah, highlighted the seriousness of the issue during a workshop in the Ashanti Region.

"Most of the physical crimes now have metamorphosed into the

internet domain. And one of the categories of people who have fallen prey is children. The dangers of the internet space have become so dire. The trend has been going higher and there's a need to curb that," he said.

The Bureau emphasised the need for improved education on internet safety and urged parents to monitor their children's online activities closely.

To combat the issue, UNICEF has developed a training manual for Ghana Police officers to address OCSEA. On November 15, facilitators from police training

schools nationwide participated in a workshop in Kumasi to familiarise themselves with the manual. The initiative aims to empower law enforcement to proactively address online crimes targeting children.

UNICEF Ghana believes that curbing this trend requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including law enforcement, parents, and educators. Continuous education on internet safety and robust enforcement of laws against online exploitation are key strategies to protect children.



File Photo



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Business

Aboso Glass Factory allegedly sold to scrap dealers despite revival plans

By Persis Roberts

The Aboso Glass Factory in Tarkwa, Western Region, has allegedly been sold to scrap dealers, sparking outrage and raising questions about the future of the facility.

This claim emerged from a viral video shared by YouTuber Goshers, who documented ongoing dismantling activities on the site.

Goshers reported, "I learned it has been sold, and they are cutting the metals away, including transformers." His account was corroborated by unidentified individuals on-site, with one remarking, "The current government has sold the Aboso Glass Factory to scrap dealers." Another added that multiple trucks had been loaded with scrap

metal.

The Aboso Glass Factory was inaugurated in 1966 under the leadership of Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. At its peak, it was a key supplier of bottles for Ghana's beverage industry, employing approximately 500 people and producing millions of bottles and glass products annually. However, financial challenges and management issues led to its decline, and it was later renamed the Tropical Glass Factory.

In recent years, the factory has been a subject of government plans to revive it as part of Ghana's industrialisation agenda. Notably, in 2017, President Nana Akufo-Addo announced intentions to rehabilitate the factory under

the One-District-One-Factory initiative, supported by private investors. GIHOC Distilleries Company Limited subsequently took over operations in 2019, aiming to reduce reliance on imported bottles and boost local production.

A recent letter dated September 27, 2024, saw GIHOC granting Linkin Birds Company permission to access the factory.

"In fulfilment of the agreement entered into in July 2024, your institution has abided by the terms of the contract. This notice is giving your institution the approval to access the Aboso glass factory for general cleanup, including discarded machines and other debris. Your institution can, and without any encumbrances,

access the glass factory for the scraps, the letter stated.

Reacting to the current state of the factory, GIHOC's Managing Director, Maxwell Kofi Jumah, attributed the dismantling to an agreement with prospective investors, but official government clarification remains pending.



File Photo

AfCFTA opens application for supply and non-consulting services; deadline set for January 2025

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat has announced a call for reputable and qualified vendors to pre-qualify for the supply of goods, services, non-consulting services, and works.

Interested vendors must complete the pre-qualification process by submitting a Google Form application no later than Monday, January 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. GMT. Submissions are strictly electronic, and physical documents will not be accepted.

This initiative is part of the Secretariat's effort to streamline procurement processes for upcoming tenders as it continues its mission to foster intra-Africa trade and economic development.

The Secretariat encourages vendors from both local and international markets to apply for pre-qualification, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. These criteria include maintaining a clean record free from suspension by organisations such as the

African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), World Bank, or other public institutions.

Pre-qualified companies will benefit from exclusive access to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Quotations (RFQs) specifically tailored to their expertise and capacities.

As part of the application process, vendors must attach essential documentation. These include

a certificate of incorporation, company profile, evidence of tax payment, and labour certificates for works. Applicants must also provide proof of public procurement registration (where available) and valid Ministry of Works and Housing certificates for applicable works.

Additionally, vendors must present evidence of delivering at least three similar past services or goods,

along with client references. Local companies are required to submit a Public Procurement Authority (PPA) certificate. Contractors are allowed to apply for more than one category.

For further information or clarifications, vendors can contact the Travel & Procurement Unit via email at afcftatender@au-afcfta.org and copy the relevant contacts provided in the announcement.



AfCFTA

International

Xi says he will work with Trump team as he meets Biden in Peru

By Reuters

Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed on Saturday to work with the incoming U.S. administration of Donald Trump as he held his final talks with outgoing President Joe Biden on conflicts from cyber crime to trade, Taiwan, the South China Sea and Russia.

Biden met Xi for about two hours at a hotel where the Chinese leader was staying, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Lima, Peru, for their first talks in seven months.

"China's goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-U.S. relationship remains unchanged" after Trump's election, Xi said as he met Biden, acknowledging "ups and downs" between the countries. "China is ready to work with the new U.S. administration to maintain communication, expand cooperation and manage differences."

Biden told Xi that the two leaders have not always agreed but their

discussions have been "frank" and "candid."

Two months before Trump returns to the White House, U.S. officials see magnified risks of conflict during the transition. Biden told Xi that maintaining leader-to-leader talks would be vital even after he left office, said Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

The president-elect has vowed to adopt blanket 60% tariffs on U.S. imports of Chinese goods as part of a package of "America First" trade measures. Beijing opposes those steps. The Republican also plans to hire several hawkish voices on China in senior roles, including U.S. Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state and Representative Mike Waltz as national security adviser.

Biden has aimed to lower tensions with China, and there were few signs of a breakthrough on the major issues.

But Biden and Xi did agree that human beings, not artificial

intelligence, should make decisions over the use of nuclear weapons, according to the White House, the first time the countries are known to have raised the issue.

The U.S. and Chinese presidents also talked about North Korea, an ally of China whose deepening ties with Russia and deployment of troops in Moscow's war with Ukraine have raised concerns in Washington, Beijing and European capitals.

"President Biden pointed out that the (People's Republic of China's)

publicly stated position with respect to the war in Ukraine is there should be no escalation, no broadening the conflict, and the introduction of (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) troops runs foursquare against that," said Sullivan.

"He also pointed out that the PRC does have influence and capacity, and should use it to try to prevent a further escalation or further expansion of the conflict with the introduction of even more DPRK forces."



Joe Biden, US President on the left, Xi Jinping, Chinese President

Voter turnout in focus as Gabonese await referendum results

By Africanews

In Gabon, about 860,000 registered voters were expected to cast their ballot Saturday (Nov. 16) on whether to adopt a new constitution.

A win of the "yes" or a "no" vote is not the only key figure; voter turnout is widely talked about as the people await official results from the interior ministry.

"For a major polling booth, there was no big turnout here at the Ngouabi voting centre. when I cast my ballot in the voting booth, I saw a lot of ballot paper in the bin, which I regret," former prime minister Billie Bi-Nzé told the media.

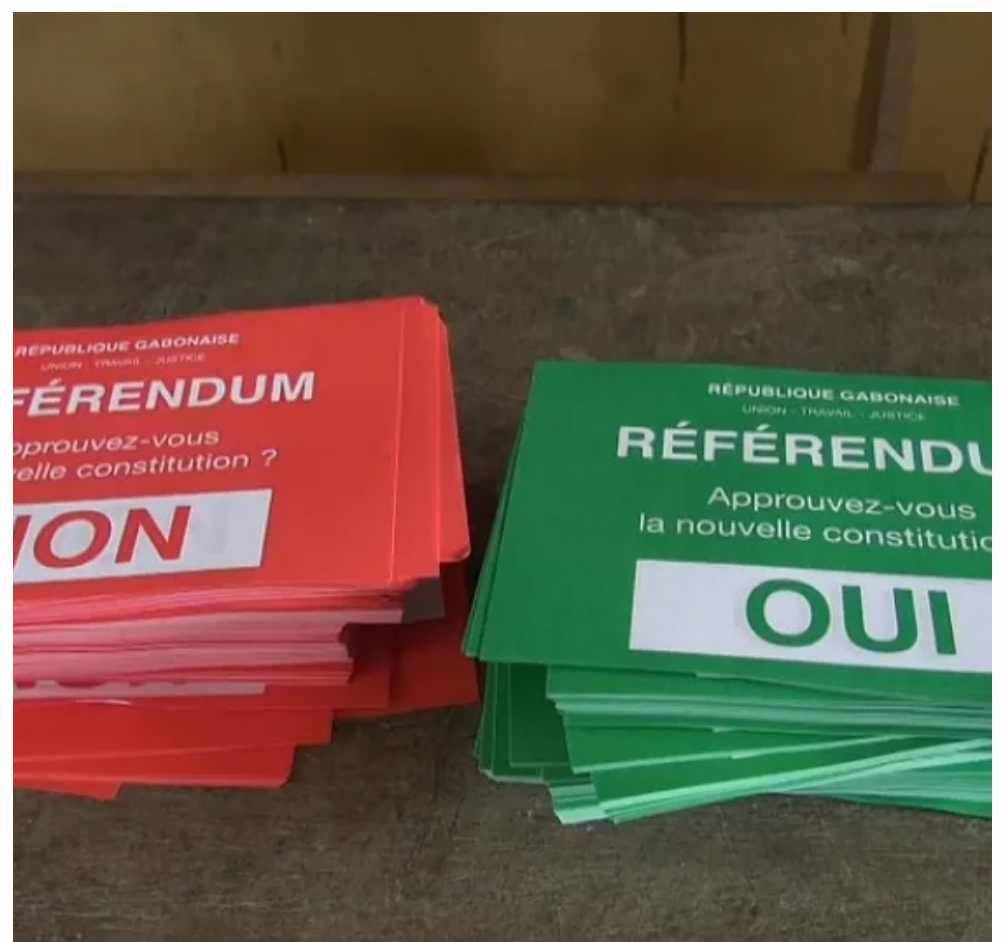
"I think that maybe the population didn't quite understand the assignment. Unfortunately, many left in the bin what they didn't vote for. But this will not count, it will

be an invalid vote."

Now that the vote has ended, many Gabonese say the focus should go to the restoration of institutions, a pledge of the ruling junta known as the Committee for the transition and restoration of institutions promised when seizing power.

"It's time to accelerate the reforms that the president of the transition announced when ascending to power," one resident said.

"If the draft constitution really seeks to put Gabon on the road to bliss, then Gabonese, all Gabonese should benefit from the country's resources. Secondly, people who come here to unlawfully take advantage of this country while Gabon continues to suffer, these people should face sanctions," another resident said.



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