



NPP, NDC charge into 2024 polls with mammoth rallies in Accra

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EC outlines media briefing plan for Dec 7 election updates

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General News

EC outlines media briefing plan for Dec 7 election updates

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Electoral Commission (EC) has announced a series of scheduled media briefings during the upcoming polls to ensure a transparent, fair, and well-informed voting process on December 7.

To ensure real-time information dissemination, the EC in a press statement, Deputy Chairman for Operations, Samuel Tettey, outlined the schedule for the briefings, which will start at 9:00 am, followed by updates at 12:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 6:00 pm.

“From 9:00 pm on Election Day, the Commission will provide media briefings as and when results are received from the regions. Each briefing session will last no more than 30 minutes. The Commission will also use the media briefings to respond to any stories and reports from around the country,” parts of the statement dated December 5, read.

The EC has invited accredited media personnel from the National Collation Centre to attend and report on these updates. Additionally, it has stressed the importance of verifying election-related information through official channels to minimize the spread of misinformation during the election period.

To address challenges related to

transportation and connectivity, particularly in remote areas, the EC has introduced several measures. Speedboats will be deployed to transport electoral materials to the dwarf islands and hard-to-reach areas in the Afram Plains North and South constituencies.

Furthermore, the EC has partnered with the Ghana Air Force to airlift materials, ensuring quicker delivery to regions with limited road access and poor internet connectivity.

Meanwhile, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) and the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) have launched the National Elections Situation Room (ESR),

aimed at monitoring the elections, supporting voter participation, and ensuring transparency as part of several civil society organizations' contribution to the success of the elections.

Backed by the European Union and the Norwegian Government, the ESR will operate 12 hours a day, extending to 24 hours during the election period. Executive Director of IDEG, Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey, emphasized the need for domestic observers and a regulatory framework to govern the activities of situation rooms, ensuring they align with electoral laws. He also highlighted concerns about disjointed civil society

activities, which could negatively affect the peace and credibility of the elections.

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) is ramping up efforts to combat misinformation during the elections. The organization will deploy 30 media monitors and 20 regional fact-checkers, supported by over 100 radio and TV stations.

These monitors will focus on rural areas where misinformation often thrives, tracking and responding to fake news. With these comprehensive measures, the EC and its partners aim to ensure a credible and peaceful electoral process in 2024.



Jean Mensa, chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana

NPP cronies grabbing El-Wak lands on cheap 99-year leases - Ablakwa

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has alleged that the Akufo-Addo administration has illegally allocated Agric Extension lands at the El-Wak Sports Stadium area to cronies within the New Patriotic Party (NPP) at heavily discounted prices.

According to Ablakwa, these lands, which were originally state property,

were offered on 99-year leases, with none of the beneficiaries paying more than GHC300,000 for a plot.

In a Facebook post, Ablakwa described the development as part of a broader “state capture” agenda, accusing the government of engaging in secretive and unethical practices. He revealed that the land in question, acquired by the state in 1936 for an aerodrome and allocated to the Chief Agriculture Officer in 1959, has now been

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Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of Parliament for North Tongu



General News

NPP cronies grabbing El-Wak lands on cheap 99-year leases - Ablakwa

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carved into 60 parcels and allocated without public advertisement or transparency.

“This reckless and unpatriotic land grab has forced Agric officials off the property, and bungalows have been demolished to make way for the rapid construction of residential accommodations,” he said.

Ablakwa claimed that beneficiaries include Nana Attobrah Quaicoe, Director-General of the National Intelligence Bureau, and Kennedy Osei Nyarko, the NPP MP for Akim

Swedru. Both allegedly secured their plots under 99-year leases signed by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

Citing official documents from the Lands Commission, Ablakwa stated that Quaicoe acquired Parcel Number 8 on May 11, 2021, while Nyarko received Parcel Number 18 on March 4, 2024. “Top NPP officials used proxies and companies to register their interests, but their identities have now been uncovered,” he added.

The lawmaker criticized the lack of parliamentary approval for rezoning the land, as required under Ghana’s Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925). He further questioned the ethical implications of Nyarko’s involvement, given his past role as a Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

Ablakwa assured that a future John Mahama administration would launch a full investigation into the matter and retrieve all looted lands through an initiative dubbed “Operation Recover All

Loot (ORAL).” He also reiterated his commitment to sponsoring a Private Member’s Bill that would prohibit politically exposed persons from acquiring state assets.

“This shameless looting of state property must end. Our only opportunity to stop this corrosive state capture is to vote out the NPP regime on December 7, 2024,” he concluded.

The ruling party has yet to respond to the allegations made by the North Tongu legislator.

Be prepared to win or lose – Goodluck Jonathan tells political candidates ahead Dec 7 elections

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Leader of the West African Elders Forum and the ECOWAS Mission to Ghana for the 2024 elections, Goodluck Jonathan, has called on political candidates in Ghana’s upcoming general elections to maintain peace and accept the outcomes of the December 7 polls.

The former Nigerian President underscored the importance of conducting transparent and credible elections. He emphasized that stakeholders are counting on a peaceful process.

Speaking at a meeting with the National Election Security Taskforce on Thursday, December 5, he stated: “We want elections that will be peaceful, transparent, and credible, and then all the stakeholders will be happy. Just like the IGP said, we will plead with our own colleagues who are politicians to be peaceful. Only one person wins in an election, and so whenever you are going for an election, you should be ready to either win or lose.”

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, echoed these sentiments during an earlier meeting with political party representatives in Accra on November 21. He stressed the importance of collaboration between the parties and the police to ensure an incident-free election.

Dr. Dampare urged the candidates to prepare for both celebration and

concession, stating:

“As you plan to celebrate your possible victory, plan to also celebrate your defeat or endure it, knowing that only one will win. As long as everybody plays their role, Ghana will win. We are ready for the elections, and we need your support to ensure that our plan works for

the sake of Ghana.” The Ghana Police Service has assured the public of its readiness to maintain law and order throughout the electoral period, urging political parties to support these efforts to uphold the country’s democratic values.

Meanwhile, the African Union Commission (AUC) has deployed its

election observation mission across all 16 regions of Ghana. These observers will closely monitor critical aspects of the electoral process on election day, including the opening of polls, voting, the closing of polls, and the counting of ballots at polling stations.



Goodluck Jonathan, former Nigerian President

General News

Cybercriminals leveraging election giveaways to steal personal data - CSA warns

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Cyber Security Authority (CSA) has raised an alarm about fraudulent links circulating on social media, falsely claiming to offer cash prizes or giveaways from presidential candidates.

These deceptive schemes lure users into sharing personal information in exchange for answering simple questions.

In a circular, the CSA noted, "The public is hereby warned of malicious links circulating on social media, requesting users to answer simple questions and provide personal information in exchange for funds or giveaways from political candidates. These links have been set up solely

to harvest the data of citizens for future attacks."

The CSA has therefore advised individuals to verify the sender of any suspicious messages and avoid clicking on unsolicited links, especially those linked to political parties or candidates. The authority is also encouraged individuals to report any incidents of cybercrime to help combat these fraudulent activities.

Earlier this year, the CSA reported 194 online fraud cases between January and March 2024, resulting in financial losses totaling approximately GH¢2,404,161.

The CSA explains that cybercriminals often create fake online shops or impersonate legitimate businesses

on social media, offering goods at unrealistically low prices. They also generate fraudulent business profiles or listings on platforms like Google Maps, using search engine optimization techniques to manipulate search results and divert inquiries to their own contact information, instead of legitimate businesses.

Once victims engage and make payments, typically to mobile money wallets, the scammers block further communication, and the promised goods are never delivered.

Additionally, malicious actors often send unsolicited emails or messages, claiming to be from a romantic interest or a company offering seasonal deals, further deceiving the public.

"These messages contain links or attachments that, when clicked, install malicious software (malware) or steal personal information," said the Cyber Security Authority.

The Authority, therefore, cautioned the general public to be aware of unsolicited messages offering exciting or "too good to be true" deals.

"Use a reputable online marketplace or retailer when purchasing items or gifts. Consider reviews and customer feedback before making an online purchase. Search engines can be manipulated to show misleading results. Check the official website or consult reliable sources to validate the contact details of the shop you are searching for."



Dr Albert Antwi-Boasiako, Director-General of the Cyber Security Authority (CSA)



General News

21,700 African women including Ghanaians killed by family members or partner in 2023 – UN Women report

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

A recent United Nations Women and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report reveals that 21,700 African women, including Ghanaians, were killed by family members or intimate partners in 2023.

The report, titled “Femicides in 2023: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides,” highlights that femicide - an extreme form of gender-based violence - continues to be a global crisis.

The data, which covers the global impact of intimate partner and family-related violence, underscores a devastating reality: every ten minutes, a woman is killed by a close relative or partner. “Globally, 85,000 women and girls were intentionally killed in 2023.

Of these, 60 percent - 51,100 - were killed by an intimate partner or family member. The data shows that 140 women and girls are killed every day by their partner or a close relative, which means one woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes,” the report states.

Africa recorded the highest number

of femicide cases in 2023, followed by Europe and the Americas. Out of the total 51,100 deaths worldwide, Africa accounted for 21,700, Asia 18,500, the Americas 8,300, Europe 2,300, and Oceania 300.

“In 2023, Africa recorded the highest rates of intimate partner and family-related femicide, followed by the Americas and Oceania. In Europe and the Americas, most women killed in the domestic sphere - 64 percent and 58 percent, respectively - were victims of intimate partners, while elsewhere, family members were the primary perpetrators,” the

report notes.

To combat this issue, UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous stressed the need for stronger legal frameworks and greater accountability from governments. “Violence against women and girls is not inevitable - it is preventable. We need robust legislation, improved data collection, greater government accountability, a zero-tolerance culture, and increased funding for women’s rights organisations and institutional bodies,” she emphasized.

Ghana is also grappling with the crisis, having seen over 100 women murdered by male partners between 2021 and 2023. In Nigeria, femicide remains a significant challenge, with deeply entrenched patriarchal norms contributing to the violence. Between July 2023 and June 2024, the country recorded 52 femicide cases.

The Gender Centre for Empowering Development (GenCED) is urging the government and law enforcement agencies to collaborate on addressing this concerning trend and preventing further loss of life.



File photo

2024 Election: Important rules to remember on Dec. 7

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Millions of Ghanaians are gearing up for its 9th presidential and parliamentary elections in less than 24 hours. It is imperative for every eligible voter to understand the rules set by the Electoral Commission to ensure a smooth voting process and avoid breaking any regulations.

Before heading to the polls, make sure to check your voter and polling station information to ensure you are going to the correct location.

On election day, go to your assigned polling station with your Voter ID card and join the queue if there is one. It is important to follow all rules and regulations at the polling station to maintain order and compliance

with the law. Keep your Voter ID card safe throughout the process and listen to the voting instructions given by electoral officers.

If you wish, you can leave the polling area after casting your vote, but you can return at 5 pm to observe the vote count. Always be respectful toward other voters and ensure that your vote is cast in secret, as per the law.

There are several key “don’ts” that voters must keep in mind on election day. First and foremost, never vote more than once. Voting multiple times is illegal and could lead to arrest and prosecution. Additionally, never accept a bribe in any form as it is a criminal offense. Do not take photos of your ballot

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File photo

General News

2024 Election: Important rules to remember on Dec. 7

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paper after voting, as this is prohibited by law. Similarly, do not impersonate someone else or use their details to vote, as this is considered fraud.

Refrain from causing or encouraging violence at the polling stations, as it

can disrupt the electoral process and lead to serious consequences. Avoid wearing party colors or symbols at the election venue, as this could be seen as partisan behavior.

Never attempt to steal or tamper with ballot boxes, as this undermines

the integrity of the election. Do not engage in vote-buying or sell your vote to others.

Weapons or ammunition are strictly prohibited at polling stations, and anyone found in possession of such items will face severe penalties.

Violating any of these electoral rules and laws could attract up to two years in jail. It is essential for all voters to follow the guidelines set by the Electoral Commission to ensure that the election is free, fair, and peaceful.

NPP, NDC charge into 2024 polls with mammoth rallies in Accra

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ghana's two leading political parties, staged massive rallies in Accra on Thursday, marking the conclusion of their campaigns ahead of the 2024 general elections.

The ruling NPP hosted its rally at the UG Sports Directorate Park near the University of Ghana Sports Stadium, while the NDC's event took place at Zurak Park in Madina. Both venues attracted hundreds of enthusiastic supporters clad in party paraphernalia, cheering loudly for their respective flagbearers.

Despite police concerns over the close proximity of the two venues along the Accra-Madina stretch, the parties declined requests to relocate, prompting heightened security measures to maintain

peace and order.

The NPP's General Secretary, Justin Frimpong Kodua, exuded confidence in the party's chances, declaring, "We are winning the elections, and nothing can stop it. Bawumia is the incoming president, and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) cannot stop it."

Sammy Awuku, Director General of the National Lottery Authority (NLA), also urged voters to choose the ruling party, describing the elections as a pivotal decision for the country's future.

"The election before us is an election between hope and hopelessness. It's a contest between the future and the past. The election before us is a destiny vote. The free SHS, job creation, and money in the pockets of the youths are number one on the ballot paper. Don't play with your destiny; vote wisely. This election is not about a fake promise of offering

you three chicks or running shifts at a nightclub, no, not at all. This election is about your future," he stressed.

On the other hand, the NDC, buoyed by its supporters, expressed confidence in victory. General Secretary Fifi Fiavi Kwetey called on Ghanaians, particularly the youth, to vote for a change in leadership.

"December 7 is for the youth, and you have to look at the suffering, the disappointment, the loss of hope, and come out to make a statement that enough is enough and the NPP must go," he charged.

NDC National Chairman Johnson Asiedu Nketiah also rallied supporters to stand firm against what he referred to as the NPP's "skirt and blouse" tactics.

"We are not going to fall for the tricks of the skirt and blouse people.

We are voting for President Mahama and voting for our parliamentary candidate. I am standing here and have worked with the 276 parliamentary candidates of this party across the country. I am convinced that we are returning to office with a very strong majority in Parliament," he declared.

Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, who secured the top spot on the ballot paper, aims to break the eight-year political cycle and secure another term for the NPP. Meanwhile, former President John Mahama is focused on making a comeback and restoring the NDC to power.

Ahead of the polls, Mahama issued a stern warning against any attempts to manipulate the upcoming elections, stressing the party's commitment to safeguarding the integrity of the polls.



Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (L) and John Dramani Mahama (R)



General News

Ghana to rollout HPV vaccination exercise targeting girls aged 9–14 years in 2025 - GHS

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

Ghana is set to roll out a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination exercise targeting girls aged 9–14 years in 2025, according to the Ghana Health Service (GHS).

HPV is a small, non-enveloped DNA virus that infects skin or mucosal cells, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The virus is highly transmissible, with most individuals acquiring an infection at some point in their lives, particularly soon after the onset of sexual activity.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Ghana Health Service, Jacob Acquah Andoh, confirmed that the national exercise will commence next year, with a specific timeline to be announced in due course. He assured that comprehensive plans are being developed to ensure the smooth implementation of the vaccination exercise.

This was revealed during a stakeholder meeting held on Thursday, December 5, supported by UNICEF Ghana. The meeting focused on implementing effective Social and Behavior Change (SBC) strategies to ensure the successful rollout of the HPV vaccine. Key

discussions centered on addressing myths and misconceptions about the vaccine, which have been identified as potential barriers to its acceptance.

Dr. Kwame Amponsa-Achiano, Programme Manager for the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), outlined the history and rollout process of the vaccine in Ghana. He noted that the HPV vaccine was piloted in two phases between 2013 and 2015. The initial phase targeted in-school children, while the second phase included both in-school and out-of-school girls.

Building on lessons learned from these pilots, the national rollout will adopt an age-based strategy focused on girls aged 9–14 years to ensure equitable coverage and protection.

Stakeholders and partners at the meeting pledged their support, including logistical and technical assistance, to ensure the success of the program.

HPV types 16 and 18, classified as “high-risk” genotypes, are responsible for approximately 70% of cervical cancer cases worldwide. Additionally, types 6 and 11, known as “low-risk” genotypes, cause genital warts, a condition that

significantly affects quality of life. Cervical cancer, the most serious clinical consequence of HPV infection, remains a leading cause of cancer-related mortality in women, with approximately 250,000 deaths recorded annually worldwide, according to the National Institute of Health.

To combat this, two prophylactic

HPV vaccines—a bivalent and a tetravalent vaccine—have been available since 2006. The rollout of the HPV vaccination program in Ghana represents a critical step toward reducing the burden of cervical cancer and other HPV-related diseases, particularly in developing countries where the prevalence remains high.



Jacob Acquah Andoh, GHS Public Relations Officer

I won't accept results if election is marred by violence, ballot snatching - Mahama

By **Amanda Cartey**

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) presidential candidate, John Dramani Mahama, has expressed concerns about potential disruptions during the upcoming December elections, which may affect his acceptance of the results.

In an interview with Thomas Naadi of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Mahama emphasized the importance of a credible and fair election process. He warned that widespread incidents of violence, ballot snatching, and intimidation could

prevent him from accepting the election outcome. He stressed that the transparency and fairness of the election would be crucial in his decision to accept the results.

“If, on election day, we witness widespread incidents of ballot snatching, violence, and intimidation, including the military harassing voters and thugs causing chaos, how do you expect me to accept that result?” he questioned. “It all comes down to how transparent and fair the process is.”

Mahama also addressed several key issues, including illegal mining

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John Dramani Mahama, NDC presidential candidate

General News

I won't accept results if election is marred by violence, ballot snatching - Mahama

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(galamsey), the 24-hour economy, and the anti-LGBTQI bill. On illegal mining, Mahama pledged to tackle the problem by halting operations in forest reserves and on water bodies. He criticized the high-handed approach to the prosecution of anti-galamsey protestors, calling it excessive. Mahama assured that if he were elected, he would direct the Attorney-General to halt the prosecution of those arrested

during the protests. On the 24-hour economy, Mahama emphasized its transformative potential, noting that the benefits would extend beyond his administration. He explained that implementing a 24-hour economy is a gradual process, not a one-time event.

Mahama assured that his government would start this process during his term, even if it would take

longer to fully realize its benefits. He argued that Ghana would lose out if future administrations failed to continue the initiative.

Regarding the anti-LGBTQI legislation, Mahama stated that he would only assent to the bill after conducting a thorough review. The bill, which seeks to impose criminal penalties on individuals engaging in or promoting LGBTQI+ activities,

has been passed by Parliament but has faced legal challenges, preventing it from being sent to the President for approval.

Mahama clarified that he would consider the contents of the bill carefully before making a decision. Public pressure for the bill's approval has been growing, with protests calling for its immediate passage.

Bawumia's electric buses to take over commercial transport system in 2025 - GAPTE anticipates

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Managing Director of the Greater Accra Passenger Transport Executive (GAPTE), Charles Annan, under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, has expressed optimism about replacing most of the fuel-powered buses in the country's transport system with electric ones.

This announcement follows Ghana's receipt of its first shipment of 50 electric buses as part of a government initiative led by Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. The goal is to bring 100 electric buses to the country by the end of the year.

The new fleet, which arrived on November 12, is designed to reduce

carbon emissions, lower transport costs, and introduce cleaner energy alternatives to the nation's public transport system.

Speaking during a media engagement on December 4, 2024, Annan emphasized the advantages of electric buses, including reduced transport fares due to the elimination of fuel costs. As a result, he anticipates that electric buses will soon replace the fuel-powered buses currently in use nationwide.

"Because we don't buy fuel, transport prices have been reduced for those who board the electric buses compared to other commercial buses. Looking at their cost-effectiveness and durability, I believe that by the end of 2025, the majority of our commercial vehicles will be electric. It's a game-changer,"

he said.

Annan also revealed the government's plan to establish solar-powered charging stations for the newly launched electric buses. "Ultimately, we aim to use solar power to charge the buses. From the studies conducted, we can set up solar panels at Adentan and charge the buses using solar energy. By 2025, we hope to fully implement this initiative," he added.

The electric bus plan was first announced by Dr. Bawumia in July 2024 during a meeting with the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU). According to Dr. Bawumia, the government's push toward electric vehicles (EVs) aligns with Ghana's climate goals and aims to reduce the high cost of

transportation for citizens.

The electric bus initiative also aims to motivate private transport operators to consider similar eco-friendly options. In addition, the government has outlined plans to build a nationwide network of EV charging stations, which will support the new bus fleet and contribute to the infrastructure for future electric vehicle use.

The public response has generally been positive, with many hopeful that the shift to electric buses will address long-standing issues in Ghana's public transportation system. As these buses enter regular service, they are expected to reduce Ghana's dependence on imported fuel and could lead to lower transportation costs over time.



New electric buses



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Business

Ghana's Gross International Reserves improves to \$7.92 billion - BoG

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Ghana's Gross International Reserves (GIR) saw an increase, climbing from \$7.83 billion in September 2024 to \$7.92 billion in November, according to data released by the Bank of Ghana (BoG).

The BoG highlighted that from January to the end of September 2024, the country managed to push reserves to \$7.83 billion, equivalent to 3.5 months of import cover, and further growth pushed the figure to \$7.92 billion by November.

The Bank noted that this significant growth in reserves has strengthened Ghana's external financial position considerably in 2024. The announcement followed the 121st regular meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

But on its website, the Finance Ministry, in an article dated December 4, reported Ghana's external reserves

improved to \$7.7 billion in November. This information was announced by Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam at a Monthly Press briefing where he highlighted Ghana's restored macroeconomic stability and accelerated growth.

According to the Bank of Ghana (BoG), the improved external position was supported by a higher current account surplus and a reduction in net financial outflows, leading to a strong external reserves build-up.

"The current account surplus increased to \$2.2 billion in the first nine months of the year, compared with a surplus of \$912 million over the corresponding period in 2023," the Central Bank revealed.

It said the strong current account surplus was supported by increased gold and crude oil exports as well as robust remittance inflows.

"This development, together with a lower net outflow of \$414 million

in the capital and financial account (relative to a net outflow of \$1.4 billion in 2023), contributed to an improved balance of payments position in the first three quarters of the year," the statement indicated.

Gold exports significantly contributed to this total, with a value of \$9,551.1 million, maintaining its position as

the country's top export earner. Cocoa exports also demonstrated resilience, with October 2024 figures amounting to \$1,150.8 million.

Similarly, oil exports were robust, standing at \$3,331.3 million, driven by higher global oil prices and consistent production levels. Other exports, encompassing non-traditional goods, reached \$2,450.1 million in October.



Dr. Ernest Kwamina Yedu Addison, Governor of the Bank of Ghana

Financial inclusion driven by AI-driven fintech solutions - BoG Dep. Governor

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The First Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG), Dr. Maxwell Opoku-Afari, has emphasized the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in driving financial inclusion and boosting economic growth.

Highlighting the potential of AI-driven fintech solutions, he noted that platforms like Paystack and Flutterwave are leveraging machine learning to detect fraud and simplify transactions for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

"These innovations are not only boosting productivity but also driving economic growth by enabling businesses to thrive," he stated.

Dr. Opoku-Afari dismissed fears that AI would render workers redundant, arguing that, instead of replacing jobs, AI is more likely to complement human labor, enhance productivity, and revolutionize the economy across various sectors.

"There are those who harbor the destructive fears of AI on labor dynamics. While many studies have

predicted the likelihood that jobs will be replaced by AI, what we do know in fact is that in many of the cases that have been examined, AI is likely to complement human work. This complementarity is expected to enhance productivity in the long run," he explained.

He outlined the broad impact of AI on the global economy, noting its role in transforming finance, healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, education, transportation, and energy.

In the education sector, Dr. Opoku-Afari highlighted the use of intelligent tutoring systems to address teacher shortages and provide personalized learning experiences. Citing Uganda as an example, he explained how AI is facilitating access to legal education for rural communities, empowering citizens who previously lacked resources.

In Ghana, he pointed out that AI-enabled digital banking services are simplifying credit scoring for SMEs, thereby spurring entrepreneurial activity, creating jobs, and strengthening the economy.

"Evidence shows that the real impact

of AI on the economy cuts across many sectors, including early diagnostics in healthcare, precision farming in agriculture, autonomous systems in transportation, and smart energy grids," he added.

The Bank of Ghana has also adopted AI to enhance its monetary policy processes. Dr. Opoku-Afari revealed that AI is being used for forecasting and gathering real-time data.

Through algorithms and web crawlers, the Bank collects price data from firms with an online presence, which is then processed to provide real-time inflation figures.

"Our AI-generated inflation provides us with real-time inflation numbers, and this is novel. Our peers in the sub-region have requested technical assistance in this area to help support their work in their jurisdictions," he said.

Dr. Opoku-Afari stressed the importance of policy interventions to maximize the potential of AI while addressing its risks. He called for investments in digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity, and digital capabilities to create an environment

conducive to AI innovation.

He also underscored the need to enhance human capital and foster local innovation to ensure effective adoption of AI solutions.

In conclusion, Dr. Opoku-Afari reiterated that the integration of AI into various sectors presents a unique opportunity for emerging economies like Ghana to accelerate development and improve the lives of millions.



Dr. Opoku-Afari, BoG Dep. Governor



International

Nigeria introduces the R21 vaccine in a pivotal move for malaria control

Happiness Iniye Wilson, with her 11-month-old daughter Ayibabomote strapped to her back, walked into the Family Support Programme Clinic in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The clinic is one of the key sites for the introduction of the R21 malaria vaccine, a major public health intervention aimed at protecting children from one of the deadliest diseases in Nigeria.

"This is a relief for mothers like me," said Wilson, beaming with optimism. "I'll make sure to inform other mothers about this life-saving vaccine so they too can protect their children."

A Lifesaving Intervention

The R21 vaccine launch in Nigeria marks a significant milestone in the fight against malaria, a disease that remains a leading cause of illness and death, particularly among children under five years of age. Nigeria accounts for approximately 27% of the global malaria burden, according to the World Malaria Report 2022.

Over 97% of Nigeria's population is at risk of malaria, making the vaccine introduction a crucial addition to the country's arsenal of interventions, which already includes insecticide-treated nets, indoor residual spraying, seasonal malaria chemoprevention, and effective case management.

The vaccine rollout is being implemented in phases, starting with Bayelsa in the south and Kebbi in the north—two states with high malaria burden.

Phased Rollout in High-Burden Areas

Nigeria has received one million doses of the malaria vaccine, with 846,200 doses provided by GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and 153,800 doses procured by the Nigerian government. The vaccine

schedule involves four doses: the first at five months of age (up to 11 months if late), the second at six months, the third at seven months, and a booster at 15 months (up to 23 months or later if delayed).

At the launch event in Bayelsa, Dr. Appah Williams, Executive Secretary of the Bayelsa State Primary Health Care Board, emphasized the importance of this initiative. "What we achieve here will set the stage for other states as we scale up nationally," he said.

Dr. Williams highlighted the large turnout of caregivers and detailed the community engagement efforts, which include grassroots campaigns, media outreach, and stakeholder collaboration to build public trust in the vaccine.

The First Lady of Bayelsa State, Dr. Gloria Ehibomo Diri, encouraged families to participate: "Let us spread the word about the importance of vaccination and create a brighter, healthier future for our children."

Professor Seiyefa Brisibe, Bayelsa's Commissioner for Health, praised the dedication of healthcare workers and partners: "Every malaria vaccine administered, every child protected, and every parent informed brings us closer to eliminating malaria in Nigeria."

Progress in Kebbi State

Similarly, Kebbi State held its launch event in Birnin Kebbi, where Deputy Governor Alhaji Umar Abubakar-Tafida described the vaccine introduction as a "symbol of hope" and reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating malaria. Representing Governor Idris, the deputy governor emphasized the vaccine's inclusion in routine immunization programs.

State Commissioner for Health, Comrade Yunusa Musa Ismail, explained that the selection of Kebbi and Bayelsa was strategic, given their high malaria case numbers. "Our target is to vaccinate 179,542 children aged five to fifteen months with the four doses," he said. Kebbi has received 595,980 doses to support this goal.

Traditional leaders, including the Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Muhammadu Iiyasu Bashir, pledged their support for the campaign, underscoring the role of community involvement in its success.

A Call to Action

WHO's Country Representative in Nigeria, Dr. Walter Kazadi Mulombo, congratulated the country on this milestone and reiterated the organization's commitment to supporting the government in extending the vaccine

rollout to other states. He encouraged parents to ensure their children receive the vaccine and urged health workers to integrate other essential child health services during the campaign.

"This initiative signals a brighter future for Nigeria's children," said Dr. Mulombo.

Bright Future Ahead

Health worker Amagbopere Patience, who administered the first dose in Bayelsa, shared her experience: "Since we commenced vaccination, parents have been eager. There's been no resistance, only enthusiasm."

With this phased rollout, Nigeria takes a bold step toward reducing the toll of malaria and protecting its most vulnerable population—children.

Source: WHO



A child being vaccinated in Yenagoa during the Malaria vaccine Roll out

Six bodies retrieved from illegal goldmine in South Africa

Six bodies have been pulled from an abandoned mine in Stilfontein in South Africa.

The number of miners still trapped underground is still unknown.

One local source said there were around 4,000 trapped, but police say the figure is likely to be in the hundreds.

The derelict gold mines located approximately 150 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg, have been surrounded by police for the past month, aiming to remove those who are illegally operating there.

Authorities have been restricting food and water supplies to encourage them to evacuate the mine. Many illegal miners known as Zama Zamas come from neighbouring Mozambique and Lesotho and often face harsh conditions to work and reside in South Africa.

Some locals associate their presence with a rise in criminality, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has called them a "menace" to the country's economy and security.

Source: AfricaNews



Gold mineshaft where illegal miners are trapped in Stilfontein, South Africa

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