

Inferno destroys Kantamanto Market; over 100 shops damaged

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General News

Deadline for 2025 WASSCE Private Candidates registration set for Jan 8 - WAEC

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has announced January 8, as the deadline for registration for the 2025 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for Private Candidates, First Series.

In a notice issued by WAEC, the registration process, which is currently ongoing, allows candidates to sign up for the First Series of the private examination, popularly known as WASSCE PC1 which offers students a quicker path to improve their grades.

The WASSCE for Private Candidates now gives individuals the opportunity to retake one or two papers without waiting an entire year, representing a significant departure from the previous system.

The examination is scheduled to take place from January 24 to February 15, 2025, with candidates expected to write various subjects under secure and standardized conditions.

WAEC has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the examination.

Candidates are advised to visit WAEC's official website to access detailed registration guidelines and complete the process at accredited internet cafés approved by the council.

The Ghana Examinations Committee has released a report detailing examination irregularities during the 2024 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

A total of 4,108 candidates had their subject results cancelled for bringing unauthorized materials, including prepared notes, textbooks, and printed materials, into examination halls.

The results of 483 candidates were annulled for possessing mobile phones in examination halls, which is a violation of examination rules.

Subject results for 781 candidates and the entire results of 209 candidates were withheld for various suspected

offenses. These cases are still under investigation, and their final outcomes will depend on further findings.

Additionally, the results of candidates from 319 schools have been withheld

over alleged collusion during the examination. The withheld results are subject to release or cancellation based on the outcome of ongoing investigations.



WAEC Head office

Cholera cases surge to 359, 37 succumb to disease

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

Thirty-seven (37) deaths have been recorded so far from the cholera outbreak in parts of Ghana with the number of confirmed cases also increasing from 346 to 359.

Two more deaths have been reported in the Western region, prompting the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to conduct mortality audits. Out of the total number of deaths, five individuals were brought in dead. Meanwhile, there have been 4,618 suspected cholera cases spread across 91 districts, out of the 276 districts in the country.

The GHS has also mentioned an increase in confirmed cholera cases, with the number of affected districts rising from 44 to 46 by December 24, 2024.

In response, the GHS has dispatched rapid response teams at national, regional, and district levels to affected areas to help control the spread of the disease.

Recent reports reveal that Agona East in the Central Region and La Nkwantanang Madina in the Greater Accra Region are the latest areas to confirm cholera cases.

However, the number of hospitalizations has decreased from 64 to 46.

The Western Region still has the highest number of hospitalized individuals, with 37, while Greater Accra has the lowest with just 3, and the Central Region reports 6 cases.

The Ghana Health Service has traced 9,667 contacts related to the outbreak, with 8,667 of them completing the required five-day follow-up.

Meanwhile, the GHS has completed Phase 2 of its Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaign, targeting 18 sub-districts across 4 high-risk districts in the Western Region.

The vaccination took place from December 15 to 18, 2024, with a mop-up exercise on December 19, 2024.

A total of 596,205 people, about 92.9% of the target population, were vaccinated during this phase. In addition, the GHS has increased

testing of food vendors and water samples in the affected districts to prevent further spread of cholera.



File photo



General News

CETAG declares indefinite strike on January 2 over unresolved grievances

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Colleges of Education Teachers Association of Ghana (CETAG) has announced an indefinite strike effective yesterday, Thursday, January 2, 2025.

The association revealed this in a statement dated December 31, 2024 following the Association's Emergency National Council meeting held on December 30, 2024, with the government and other stakeholders.

According to the statement, members resolved to take industrial action in response to unresolved issues including the government's non-compliance with the National Labour Commission's arbitration awards, the delayed migration of teaching staff onto affiliate universities' pay structures, unpaid compensation for all-year-round work done in 2022, prolonged delays in issuing appointment letters based on staff audit reports, unpaid book and research allowances for staff at Akrokerrri College of Education, and the lack of enforcement by the NLC to compel compliance with its directives.

"The employer's continuous violation of signed agreements and roadmaps on the outstanding compulsory

arbitration award issued by the NLC on May 2, 2023, has left us with no choice," parts of the statement said.

The strike, according to CETAG, aligns with section 159 of the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651), emphasising that the action has become imperative due to the government's persistent violation of signed agreements and roadmaps regarding the compulsory arbitration award issued by the NLC on May 2, 2023.

"Conclusively, the National Council of CETAG wishes to state unequivocally that members of the union shall not under any circumstance return to the colleges to undertake any official duties including teaching, and supervision of project work and macro-teaching, until the last pesewa is paid into our accounts," it stated.

The ongoing strike is expected to heavily disrupt academic activities in Ghana's colleges of education, including teaching and the supervision of student projects.

Key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and the National Labour Commission (NLC), are being urged to take immediate action to resolve the issues and minimize further

disruptions to education.

Meanwhile, the Colleges of Education Teachers Association of Ghana (CETAG) last went on strike in May 2023.

The reason for that strike was the government's non-compliance with the National Labour Commission's

(NLC) arbitration award issued on May 2, 2023. The award mandated several actions, including the migration of teaching staff in colleges of education onto the pay structure of their affiliate universities, which had not been implemented; which still lists as one of the reasons for their recent strike.



File photo

Inferno destroys Kantamanto Market; over 100 shops damaged

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

A raging fire on Wednesday, January 1, swept through the Kantamanto Market in Accra's Central Business District, leaving devastation in its wake as it destroyed numerous shops and displaced hundreds of traders.

The inferno reduced large sections of the bustling market to ashes, with traders scrambling to salvage their goods as the flames quickly engulfed over 100 stalls and merchandise. Footage released by the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) revealed the extent of destruction, with vast portions of the market left in ruins.

Multiple fire tenders from across the Greater Accra Region were deployed by the GNFS in a concerted effort to control the blaze. Although the fire was contained to prevent further

spread, significant damage had already been done.

Speaking from the scene, GNFS Public Relations Officer Alex King Nartey confirmed that no casualties had been reported. However, he disclosed that a firefighter sustained a dislocated shoulder while battling the flames and has since been transported to a health facility for treatment.

As of Thursday morning, firefighters were still working to fully extinguish the fire, and the GNFS has launched an investigation into the cause of the incident. The exact extent of the damage and losses incurred is yet to be determined, although traders estimate millions of cedis worth of goods have been lost.

This is reportedly the first major fire incident that has been battled barely 24 hours into the new year, 2025.



Kantamanto Market on fire

General News

159 hectares of reclaimed mining sites handed over to communities by Minerals Commission

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Minerals Commission has officially handed over 159 hectares of reclaimed mining sites to seven communities in the Ashanti Region during a ceremony held at Asiwa in the Bosome Freho District.

The reclaimed lands are part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to restore degraded mining sites under its Land Reclamation and Restoration Programme.

The restored lands, totaling 159 hectares, are located in various communities including Asiwa, Adakabunso, Yapeesa Kokoben, Anyinase, and Adakabunso 2 within the Bosome Freho District. Other reclaimed sites are in Beposo, Bosomtwe District, and Odumase in the Asante-Akim Central Municipality.

The reclamation initiative, undertaken by the government through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Minerals Commission, aims to reverse the environmental damage caused by mining while improving the socio-economic conditions of the affected communities.

So far, the Commission has successfully restored 493 hectares of degraded lands across the Ashanti,

Western North, and Central Regions, furthering the goal of land restoration and enhancing livelihoods in mining-affected areas.

The ceremony, which marked the completion of the reclamation in the Ashanti Region, brought together key stakeholders, including traditional leaders from the seven beneficiary communities. In his address, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Samuel Tika, emphasized the crucial role mining plays in Ghana's economic growth while stressing the importance of land restoration after mining activities.

"Mining has long been an essential driver for the growth of the Ghanaian economy, providing resources that promoted innovation and spur national growth. However, mining comes with the responsibility to protect and restore lands affected by mining activities," Tika stated.

He noted that the reclamation process signifies the end of mine closure but also provides an opportunity to heal the earth, transforming disturbed landscapes into thriving ecosystems that can benefit communities for generations.

"Successful reclamation involves careful planning, innovative techniques, and collaboration with environmental experts and local

communities. We must engage in meaningful dialogues to understand community needs and aspirations, ensuring that our reclamation efforts align with their desire for a healthier and more vibrant future," he said.

Tika further highlighted the Commission's efforts in reintroducing traditional vegetation, implementing sustainable practices, and ensuring the proper management of local ecology and hydrology through the reclamation process.

"We have seen firsthand the positive impact that responsible reclamation can have, not just on the landscape but in restoring the trust and support of communities we serve," he added.

He also urged chiefs from the various communities to take responsibility for the reclaimed lands and protect them to ensure the long-term benefits of the government's investment.

"Let us also remember that our commitment to reclamation should extend beyond our own projects. We have a responsibility to share our knowledge and expertise with others in the mining sector.

By fostering a collective approach, we can elevate the standards of reclamation across the mining industry and ensure that we all contribute to a more sustainable

future," Tika urged. The District Chief Executive for Bosome Freho, Kofi Adu Amoateng, also spoke at the ceremony, calling for collective efforts to combat illegal mining, which has become a national problem. He highlighted the reclaimed sites as symbols of hope and opportunities for the communities and emphasized the importance of protecting them from illegal miners.

"The once-neglected mining sites now symbolize hope and opportunities for the communities. We must protect them and ensure they are not exploited by illegal miners," said Adu Amoateng, commending the government and the Minerals Commission for their significant efforts.

Consultant for the project, Thomas Tsioboe-Darko, praised the reclamation as a commitment to ecological recovery and sustainable development.

He acknowledged the vital roles played by the communities, especially the chiefs, and called for continued community ownership of the project for the benefit of future generations.

Nana Korteabofour Dom II, representing the Kokofumanhene, expressed the commitment of the communities to safeguard the reclaimed lands and ensure their sustainable development.



Minerals Commission hands over 159 hectares of reclaimed mining sites to 7 communities



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Business

McDan Aviation requests dialogue to reverse closure of terminal by GACL over \$3m debt

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

McDan Aviation has called for constructive dialogue with the Ghana Airport Company Limited (GACL) to resolve issues surrounding the closure of its private jet terminal at Kotoka International Airport, Accra.

The Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL) has provided a detailed breakdown of the debts owed by McDan Company Limited as part of its ongoing debt recovery efforts. In a press statement, GACL revealed that McDan owes a total of \$3,995,622.66 and GHS 13,523.37 across various categories.

Additionally, the company is required to remit a 15% share of gross revenue from its operations to GACL for the period between September 1, 2022, and November 30, 2024. The private aviation company expressed disappointment over GACL's decision to deny access to its terminal, which was shut down on Monday, December 30, 2024, over \$3 million outstanding debt.

"Nevertheless, we remain committed to engaging in constructive dialogue

to achieve a favorable resolution," the company stated in a press release following the shutdown.

"McDan Aviation expresses its disappointment regarding the recent decision by the Ghana Airport Company Limited to deny access to our terminal," the statement read. McDan acknowledged its financial obligations but clarified that the reported debt figure is inaccurate.

"It is important to note, however, that McDan Aviation does not owe GACL \$3,000,000.00 for the terminal, as has been erroneously reported," the statement, signed by Chief Executive Officer Kwaku Ampromfi, emphasized.

The company also highlighted its recent efforts to settle its financial responsibilities, stating, "Last week, we made an additional payment with the plan to continue payments from January 2025."

GACL acknowledged receiving a partial payment of GH¢2,000,000 from McDan on December 24, 2024. However, this amount falls significantly short of the total owed. McDan further explained that its

financial situation is partly due to an ongoing land litigation case involving GACL. The company noted that it had communicated this issue to GACL and requested a suspension of payments until the legal matter is resolved.

McDan Aviation Hub is the first and only freight company in Ghana with an air carrier license for chartered

cargo flights. It also serves as a general sales agent for multiple airlines and operates a Fixed Base Operations (FBO) license for private jet services at Terminal 1 of Kotoka International Airport. The company reiterated its commitment to resolving the matter amicably to restore operations at its terminal.



Daniel McKorley, CEO McDan Group

Finance Minister presents 2025 mini budget

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam presented the first-quarter budget for 2025 on January 2, 2025, following weeks of delays that resulted in a government shutdown at the start of the New Year.

The mini-budget is essential for the Ghanaian government to address economic challenges and set the country on a path toward sustainable growth and development.

Initially scheduled for presentation on December 19, 2024, the budget was delayed primarily due to a hung Parliament, where the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) held an equal number of seats.

Additionally, the Finance Minister's failure to appear on the originally scheduled date led to further postponements, pushing the presentation to January 2, 2025.

The Vote on Account, a provisional financial measure, was crucial for government operations until the full 2025 budget was approved by the incoming administration.

The mini-budget also faced delays due to disagreements between the opposition NDC and the ruling NPP majority in Parliament. The dispute revolved around unresolved government matters, particularly a request for tax waivers.

The outgoing government has requested 68.1 billion cedis to fund its operations until the new administration, led by John Mahama, presents the main budget for 2025. This temporary budget will cover public sector salaries, necessary payments, critical infrastructure maintenance, and social programs. However, Parliament adjourned on December 20, 2024, without the mini-budget being presented.



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

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