

# Govt spent GHS1m on 68th Independence Day celebration

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## GCB Bank records highest-ever profit of GHS 1.91bn in 2024

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# General News

## We must forge ahead, not despair in time of economic challenges - Mahama urges citizens

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

President John Dramani Mahama has called on Ghanaians to remain steadfast and committed to national progress despite the economic hardships facing the country.

Delivering an address from the Jubilee House to mark the 68th Independence Day celebration, the president emphasized the need for resilience, drawing inspiration from the struggles and triumphs of Ghana's founding leaders.

"In recent years, poor choices have stunted our prospects and left us reeling from serious challenges. This stark reality, far from dampening our spirit, must spur us on to strive for rapid development," he stated.

"For if our forebears with far less did not permit their backs to be broken by repressive and exploitative colonial administration, representing an imperial power, how can we, their progenies armed with far more, despair in the face of these challenges?" he added.

He stressed the importance of unity, perseverance, and a collective commitment to rebuilding Ghana, reaffirming his administration's vision for the country's future.

"As I said before Parliament, we shall live the dreams of our forebears in our lifetime. This is not just a promise; it is a call to action," he declared.

Mahama's remarks echoed the theme of this year's Independence Day celebration, "Reflect, Review, and Reset," which underscores the need for national introspection and a renewed sense of purpose.

"Let this be our mission—to rise above fear, silence the voices of doubt, harness the strength within us, and create a future that is fair, prosperous, and inclusive," he urged.

His message comes at a time when Ghana continues to grapple with economic difficulties. The country's macroeconomic crisis in 2022 has significantly impacted poverty levels, with an estimated 30.3% of Ghanaians living in poverty as of 2023.

Ghana's public debt has soared to GHS721 billion due to excessive borrowing, contributing to rising inflation and cedi depreciation. The government spent GHS6.1 billion on debt servicing in February 2025 alone and is projected to pay GHS180 billion next year,

according to Felix Kwakye Ofori, Minister-designate for Government Communications and spokesperson for the president.

Economic analysts and stakeholders have urged the government to implement bold tax policy measures and reforms to improve fiscal stability and restore investor confidence.

Government is set to provide the 2025 budget and economic statement to inform the citizens on the path ahead in ensuring economic recovery.



*John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana*

## Canada, Ghana secure landmark air transport deal, allowing 14 weekly passenger flights

By **Amanda Cartey**

Canada and Ghana have signed their first-ever air transport agreement, a move expected to boost travel, tourism, and trade between the two countries.

According to a statement from the Canadian government, the agreement allows airlines from both nations to operate regular flights, increasing connectivity and economic opportunities.

"The new agreement with Ghana includes the right for Canada and Ghana to designate multiple airlines to operate scheduled air services between the two countries, the right for those airlines to serve any points

in the two countries, and a capacity of 14 weekly passenger flights and 10 weekly all-cargo flights for the airlines of each country. Airlines can offer services under this new agreement immediately," the statement read.

Announcing the development, Canada's Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Anita Anand, highlighted Ghana's growing importance as a trade and travel partner.

"Ghana is a growing market for Canada, and I am pleased to see this first agreement open the door to new opportunities for travellers and

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*File photo*

# General News

## Canada, Ghana secure landmark air transport deal, allowing 14 weekly passenger flights

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businesses in both countries," she said. "This agreement will connect more passengers and strengthen our cultural and commercial ties."

Canada's Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade, and Economic Development, Mary Ng, also underscored the deal's economic benefits.

"This agreement will enhance

connectivity, promote tourism, and drive economic growth. It provides critical support for our exporters, giving them access to the dynamic West African market," she stated.

The agreement comes at a time when trade between Canada and Ghana is on the rise. In 2023, Canada's exports to Ghana reached \$281 million, while imports from Ghana totaled \$99.8

million. The new air transport deal is expected to further strengthen economic ties by making it easier for businesses to transport goods and services between the two nations.

This agreement is part of Canada's Blue Sky policy, which promotes competition in the aviation sector and helps develop international

air services. Canada now has air transport agreements with more than 125 countries worldwide.

With the deal now in effect, airlines can immediately begin operating flights under the new terms, offering more travel options for passengers and creating new opportunities for businesses in both Canada and Ghana.

## Govt to pay \$31m to complete payment for new BoG headquarters - Dr Asiama

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG), Dr. Johnson Asiama, has revealed that an outstanding amount of \$31 million must be paid to cover the complete cost of the new Bank of Ghana headquarters located at Ridge.

Dr. Johnson Asiama made this known when appeared before Parliament on Wednesday, March 5, to provide details on the construction of the central bank's new headquarters following demands from National Democratic Congress (NDC) Members of Parliament (MPs) for a breakdown of the project's financing, cost variations, scope, and timeline.

He noted that out of the total cost at \$261.8 million, an amount of \$230 million was paid in February this year for the project commissioned last year.

"Mr Speaker, as of February this year, a total of 230 million dollars approximately has been paid towards the project with an outstanding balance of 31.8 million dollars to be paid to the contractor," he said.

According to the Bank of Ghana Governor, "a total of 48.3 million dollars has been paid in taxes and levies that were related to the construction."

Beyond the core building, separate contracts were awarded for other infrastructure. These include ICT systems and network infrastructure which was awarded at a cost of 8.6 million dollars. Integrated electronic security systems which was also awarded at a cost of 15.8 million dollars and furniture and furnishing that was also awarded at 11.1 million

dollars. "These elements were included to ensure the Bank operates in a secure and technologically advanced environment in line with the needs of a modern central bank," Dr Asiama explained.

The official inauguration of the Bank Square by former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo was held on November 20, 2024. The facility was designed to integrate advanced technology with modern architecture to enhance the BoG's capacity in regulating Ghana's financial system.

During the inauguration, former

President Akufo-Addo highlighted the significance of the new headquarters in strengthening Ghana's financial infrastructure and aligning it with global standards.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) is investigating potential corruption in the procurement process of the BoG headquarters. This probe was initiated in response to a petition from Bawku Central MP Mahama Ayariga, who raised concerns over cost escalations without approval from the Public Procurement Authority (PPA).

The investigation targets former BoG Governor Dr. Ernest Addison, former Deputy Governors Dr. Maxwell Opoku-Afari and Mrs. Elsie Addo Awadzi, as well as the project contractor, Goldkey Properties Ltd.

Ayariga disclosed that in response to his inquiries, Dr. Addison cited "National Security" as the reason for withholding details on project cost variations in a letter dated August 22, 2023. The OSP has yet to release its findings to the public.



New BoG Headquarters

# General News

## Agenda 111: \$24.09m needed to operationalise Trede, Kokoben, Ahanta hospitals - Health Ministry

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Ministry of Health has clarified that the Trede, Kokoben, and Ahanta hospitals under the Agenda 111 initiative remain unfinished, requiring a total of \$24.09 million to become fully operational.

This comes in response to claims by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Minority that the three hospitals were completed and operational. However, in a statement issued on Tuesday, March 4, the Ministry noted that while the facilities had reached 95% completion, critical components such as medical equipment and some laboratory facilities were yet to be installed.

“Although Trede, Kokoben, and Ahanta hospitals were commissioned by former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the project is still under construction with an overall completion rate of 95%.

No medical equipment has been installed, and some laboratory facilities are still under construction. The hospitals have not been handed over to the Ghana Health Service for operation. The estimated cost to make Trede, Kokoben and Ahanta facilities operational is \$8.03 million each.”

The Ministry explained that the required funds would cover the installation of essential medical equipment and the completion of pending construction works before the hospitals could serve the public.

In light of concerns over financial mismanagement and project delays, the government has announced plans to audit the Agenda 111 initiative. The review will assess financial irregularities and consider private sector involvement in completing the stalled facilities.

Health Minister Kwabena Mintah

Akandoh disclosed that President John Dramani Mahama had tasked him with evaluating the initiative and providing recommendations on the best way forward.

With the audit aimed at uncovering the extent of mismanagement, the government is also exploring alternative funding models to ensure the completion of the project.

Agenda 111 was originally envisioned to bridge healthcare infrastructure gaps, particularly in underserved regions. The initiative

includes the design, procurement, construction, equipping, and commissioning of 101 district hospitals, six regional hospitals in newly created regions, one regional hospital in the Western Region, two psychiatric hospitals in Kumasi and Tamale, the rehabilitation of Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Sekondi, and the redevelopment of Accra Psychiatric Hospital.

Once completed, the project will stand as Ghana's most extensive healthcare infrastructure investment since independence.



*Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, Health Minister*

## Three dead, GNFS officers injured after explosion at Konongo

By **Phoebe Martekie Doku**

A fire outbreak at a cluster of mining explosives shops in Odumase, near Konongo in the Asante Akyem Central Municipality, has claimed three lives and injured several others, including five firefighters.

The blaze, which started on Wednesday, March 5, quickly spread to nearby structures, destroying 30 buildings and eight shops.

In a Facebook update on Thursday, the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) reported that its personnel sustained serious injuries following an explosion at one of the shops storing explosives.

The GNFS further stated that

firefighting efforts were hindered by the collapse of a pump operator and an assault by hostile civilians.

“The pump operator collapsed, making it impossible to initiate firefighting. Hostile civilians pelted stones at responders, forcing them to withdraw. A backup crew from FK Jersey (Ejisu) was dispatched but did not proceed to the scene due to security concerns,” the post read.

The statement confirmed that three civilians had died, while an unknown number of people sustained injuries, including five GNFS personnel. The injured firefighters, who were receiving treatment at the Asante Akim Central Government Hospital,

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*Fire outbreak Konongo*

# General News

## Three dead, GNFS officers injured after explosion at Konongo

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have since been discharged.

Earlier reports on social media suggested that the incident was

triggered by a fire at a shop stocked with dynamites and other blasting materials used by small-scale miners. The resulting explosion caused

extensive destruction, reducing buildings to rubble and inflicting severe injuries on multiple individuals.

Meanwhile, the GNFS has assured the public that investigations are underway to determine the exact cause of the explosion.

## Govt spent GHS1m on 68th Independence Day celebration

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

President John Dramani Mahama has revealed that Ghana's 68th Independence Day celebration cost the government GHS 1 million, a significant reduction from previous years.

Speaking at the event held at Jubilee House on Thursday, March 6, President Mahama explained that the decision to relocate the celebration from Independence Square to the presidential palace was aimed at cutting costs amidst the country's economic difficulties.

According to the president, initial estimates suggested that hosting the event at Independence Square at the usual scale would have cost GHS 20 million.

"This year, we received an estimate of at least 20 million Ghana cedis for

holding the event at the Independence Square on the same scale as the previous year," he stated.

Given the current financial constraints, he said it was necessary to adopt a more cost-effective approach.

He noted that spending such an amount on a few hours of celebration would have been unjustifiable under the present economic conditions.

"This decision will save us 95% of the estimated cost of the event," the president emphasized.

President Mahama further disclosed that in previous years, the celebrations were much costlier, citing the GHS 15 million spent on the 2024 event in Koforidua and the GHS 13.7 million used for the 2023 celebration in Ho.

Despite the scaled-down celebration,

the president reassured Ghanaians that the significance of Independence Day remained intact.

He emphasized that the occasion continues to serve as a reminder of Ghana's leadership in Africa's independence struggle and its role in inspiring other nations to seek self-determination.

This year's celebration, themed "Reflect, Review, Reset," called on the nation to pause and consider its socio-economic journey while looking toward the future.

During the event, a new official logo was unveiled, symbolizing Ghana's resilience and visionary goals.

Despite a more modest scale than previous editions, the event preserved its traditional elements. The program featured a Military Guard of Honour inspection,

dynamic cultural performances, and a moving poetry recital by a senior high school student.

A coordinated march-past included ten schools, six basic and four senior high institutions, such as Accra Wesley Girls and St. Mary's SHS Cadet.

In addition, the event was attended by an impressive lineup of dignitaries, including traditional rulers, religious leaders, student delegates, political party representatives, and prominent figures from the business community.

Meanwhile, the Convention People's Party (CPP) has commended President John Dramani Mahama for his decision to scale down the 68th Independence Anniversary celebrations.



Independence day celebration

# General News

## Expedite work on Ofonkor-Nsawam project, 3 others in Accra - Roads Minister orders contractors

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Minister for Roads and Highways, Kwame Agbodza, has directed contractors working on four major road projects in the Greater Accra Region to expedite construction efforts. The affected projects include the Ofonkor-Nsawam road, the Tema Motorway extension, the Tema-Akosombo road, and the Tema-Aflao road.

During an inspection tour on Wednesday, Mr. Agbodza expressed dissatisfaction with the slow progress of work on three of the projects—Ofonkor-Nsawam, Tema-Akosombo, and Tema-Aflao. He urged contractors to accelerate construction and improve conditions on unpaved sections to minimize the inconvenience faced by motorists.

He specifically instructed contractors to address the deteriorating portions of the roads and ensure regular watering to reduce dust and improve road safety.

Acknowledging the current economic challenges, the Minister assured that these projects remain a top government priority.

“Despite financial constraints, we are committed to ensuring that these roads are completed. Funding will be provided to keep the projects on

track,” he stated.

Motorists and commuters have voiced frustrations over construction delays, citing prolonged inconveniences and road congestion.

Ing. Abdulai Mahama, Project Manager for the Ofonkor-Nsawam Junction rehabilitation project, attributed the delays to compensation

disputes, utility relocation issues, and ongoing legal cases.

He disclosed that property owners, especially around the Amasaman two-tier interchange, have contested compensation valuations, stalling payments and further delaying progress.

“In addition to logistical challenges,

we are currently handling about 80 court cases related to land and compensation disputes, which have affected the project timeline,” Ing. Mahama explained.

Despite these setbacks, the government remains committed to completing the projects and ensuring they are fully accessible to the public as soon as possible.



Kwame Agbodza, Minister for Roads and Highways

## GJA contends court injunction on Esewani Community Radio closure

By Amanda Cartey

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has strongly opposed an interim injunction issued by the Kade District Court ordering the closure of Esewani Community Radio and two information centers in Kade.

The court order, granted ex parte, mandates the suspension of operations at Esewani Community Radio, Esewani Information Center, and Sir Plan Information Center until the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assesses their noise levels and grants them permission to operate.

The injunction, effective for ten days unless extended, was sought by the Krontihene of Asuom, Nana Boadi Amponim Obodade; the Kyedomhene of Asuom, Nana Deibour II; and Abusuapanin Abosi Agyei.

The plaintiffs argue that excessive noise from the radio station and information centers has become a community nuisance, potentially leading to health complications such as neurosis and nervous breakdowns. In response, while acknowledging the court's authority, the GJA has vehemently opposed the decision.

The association has engaged with the management of Esewani Community

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File photo

# General News

## GJA contends court injunction on Esewani Community Radio closure

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Radio and advised them to seek legal redress through a Stay of Execution, a Varying Order, or an Order of Certiorari at a higher court.

The GJA has outlined several objections to the ruling, citing constitutional violations and economic repercussions. It has urged the Chief Justice to take interest in the case, warning against the arbitrary use of judicial power to undermine constitutional rights.

According to the association, the court erred in granting the injunction

ex parte, as the plaintiffs failed to provide evidence that the noise levels exceeded permissible regulatory limits. It also argues that the order directs the EPA to evaluate noise levels while the station is not in operation, a process it deems illogical and impractical.

The GJA further questions the necessity of an ex parte injunction, arguing that the defendants should have been given the opportunity to respond. The association maintains that the injunction infringes on citizens' right to information and

threatens press freedom, which is protected under Article 162(3) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

Additionally, it highlights the economic consequences of the closure, stating that it affects employees' livelihoods and disrupts contractual obligations with advertisers, potentially causing financial harm to the station.

The GJA asserts that the court's decision does not meet the legal thresholds for granting an injunction, including prima

facie case assessment, balance of convenience, and irreparable injury criteria. It has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting press freedom and ensuring that media operations are not unduly curtailed by arbitrary legal actions.

The association has assured its members and the public that it will pursue all legal avenues to challenge what it considers an unjust ruling. As the case unfolds, the GJA remains resolute in defending media independence and the right to information in Ghana.

## Fisherfolk to ditch premix fuel as gov't introduces rechargeable boat engines

By Amanda Cartey

Fisherfolk in Ghana will soon switch from using expensive premix fuel to rechargeable outboard motors as the government rolls out a pilot project to introduce renewable energy-powered boat engines.

The initiative, led by the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, aims to cut down fuel costs and reduce pollution.

Energy Minister John Jinapor, speaking at a four-day policy dialogue themed "Accelerating Energy Transition in Ghana," and hosted by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), emphasized the project's benefits.

"Most of our fisherfolk use what we call premix, which is essentially a mixture of petrol and oil. However, new technology now allows the use of rechargeable outboard motors, even with solar panels," he explained. The minister highlighted that similar projects have been successfully implemented in other countries, and Ghana is taking steps to follow suit.

"This pilot project will transition many of our fisherfolk fisherfolk will switch from fossil fuel-based outboard motors to rechargeable, renewable outboard motors," he added.

The transition to renewable energy for fishing is expected to provide long-term savings for fisherfolk

while contributing to Ghana's efforts to lower carbon emissions.

The policy dialogue is scheduled to run from March 5 to 8, 2025, in Accra, bringing together policymakers, researchers, and investors to discuss the country's energy future.

Last year, the Director of Environment and Natural Resource Research Initiative (ENRRI-EfD Ghana)

Professor Wisdom Akpalu, reported that 90 per cent of fisherfolks in a study conducted by his outfit want the premix subsidy removed.

He mentioned that concerns were raised over the framework of allocating premix fuel subsidy, as it was often fraught with numerous challenges, notably shortages and diversion.

On the above basis, Vice Chairperson

of Ghana National Canoe Fishing Council, was certain that subsidy on premix fuel needed to be withdrawn by the Government.

Hence, the new initiative if successfully implemented, could mark a significant step towards reducing Ghana's reliance on fossil fuels while improving the livelihoods of coastal communities.



John Jinapor, Energy Minister

# General News

## GES sets March 14 deadline for verification of revoked appointments

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has directed all staff whose appointments were recently revoked to undergo a mandatory verification process by March 14.

This directive, aimed at streamlining the payroll system to ensure that only properly recruited personnel remain on record, was outlined in a letter dated March 5, 2025. The letter referenced an earlier communication issued on February 17 regarding the annulment of certain appointments. The decision followed a directive

from the Chief of Staff, as stated in a letter from the Office of the President dated February 10.

The latest order from the GES requires affected individuals to participate in a validation process overseen by a three-member regional committee comprising the Regional Human Resource Officer, the Regional Internal Auditor, and the Regional Accountant.

Affected individuals have been asked to complete the verification process by submitting four key documents: a National Service Certificate, a Licensure Certificate, an Academic

Certificate, and an Appointment Letter.

The Acting Director-General of GES, Prof. Ernest Kofi Davis, stressed the importance of this exercise, urging all affected personnel to comply.

"This validation is crucial to maintaining an accurate and up-to-date payroll database," he stated. GES has assured that the process will be conducted efficiently and has called for full cooperation from all involved.

Meanwhile, an attempt by the Minority in Parliament to initiate

a probe into the mass dismissal of workers hired after December 7 has been blocked.

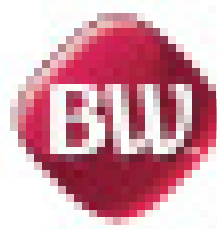
The Minority, along with two New Patriotic Party (NPP) MPs, had filed a motion urging Parliament to declare the dismissals unconstitutional. However, before the motion could be debated, Majority Leader Mahama Ayariga objected, arguing that the issue was already being litigated in court.

First Deputy Speaker Bernard Ahiafor upheld the objection, effectively preventing the motion from proceeding.



Prof. Ernest Kofi Davis, Acting Director-General of GES





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# Business

## GCB Bank records highest-ever profit of GHS 1.91bn in 2024

By Amanda Cartey

**G**CB Bank PLC has posted its highest-ever profit before tax (PBT) of GHS 1.91 billion for 2024, reflecting a 25.3% increase from the previous year.

The record-breaking financial performance marks a strong conclusion to the Bank's four-year strategic cycle. The audited results, released on Tuesday, indicate significant revenue growth despite a challenging economic landscape. Total revenue for the year surged by 19%, driven by a 19.02% increase in interest income, a 42.72% jump in non-funded income, and an 8.41% rise in net trading income.

GCB Bank's focus on sales and customer-centric strategies contributed to a robust balance sheet expansion. The Bank's total assets grew by 58% year-on-year to GHS 42.58 billion, securing an 11.58% share of the industry's total assets—outpacing the sector-wide growth of 33.79%.

Its loan portfolio also saw substantial growth, rising by 52.83% to GHS 10.2 billion, accounting for 11.85% of total industry loans. Deposits climbed by GHS 12.73 billion to reach GHS 34.63

billion, a 58.1% increase, compared to the industry-wide growth rate of 28.76%.

GCB Bank's capital position strengthened further, with shareholders' equity increasing by 44.72% to GHS 4.05 billion. The year-end Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at 15.23%, exceeding the regulatory minimum of 13%.

The Bank also recorded improvements in asset quality, with its Non-Performing Loans (NPL) ratio declining by 5.1% to 15.1%. Earnings per Share (EPS) rose to GHS 4.56, while Return on Equity (RoE) and Return on Assets (RoA) stood at 35.29% and 3.48%, respectively.

Despite economic pressures, the Bank demonstrated resilience, leveraging investments in technology, personnel, and operational systems to sustain growth.

"Investments in the systems, people, and technology have set a strong base for growth as we transition into a new strategy cycle from 2025," GCB Bank stated in its financial report.

Reflecting on the Bank's achievements, Managing Director Farihan Alhassan

described 2024 as an "exceptional year" for GCB. "These stellar results represent the best performance in our history in nominal terms, marking a significant achievement in our journey," he stated.

However, he acknowledged areas that require improvement, particularly in operational efficiency. "This performance notwithstanding,

there is still room for improvement in our efficiency metrics," Alhassan said, adding that ongoing investments in talent and infrastructure would enhance operational effectiveness.

"Overall, 2024 was a strong year, and we are determined to build on this momentum as we look to the future and continue to drive growth in the years ahead," he concluded.



Farihan Alhassan, GCB Managing Director (MD)

## MTN's revenue surges to GH¢9bn as stock hits record high

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

**T**elecommunications giant in Ghana, MTN's revenue surged to GH¢9 billion as its stock reached a record high on Tuesday, March 3.

The company's share price soared to GH¢3.02 per share up from GH¢2.91 the previous week reflecting a robust rebound that has seen its stock appreciate by 114 percent over the past year, including gains of 36.4 percent over the last six months and 20 percent since the beginning of the year.

This impressive market performance follows MTN's earnings report on February 28, which revealed a 34.5 percent increase in service revenue for 2024.

A key contributor to this growth is the company's data segment, which has emerged as its biggest growth driver. Revenues from the data business surged by 53.8 percent to GH¢9 billion, as more customers shift from traditional voice calls to digital data services.

Contributing further to this success, MTN recorded a 13.7 percent increase in active data subscribers and a 19 percent rise in average data usage per customer.

Consequently, overall network data traffic expanded by 35.3 percent, reinforcing the pivotal role of data in MTN's revenue mix.

According to MTN strategic investments in network infrastructure and technology upgrades have positioned it to capitalize on this digital trend.

In its annual report, active data subscribers increased by 13.7 percent, and higher smartphone adoption drove a 19 percent rise in average data usage per customer.

Overall network data traffic expanded by 35.3 percent. This trend toward digital services has come at the expense of traditional voice revenue. Despite a 13.5 percent increase in total call usage, voice revenue declined by 0.9 percent to GH¢3.5 billion.

The company explained that aggressive pricing on call plans helped cushion the impact, as more customers opted for internet-based communication over conventional calls.

Meanwhile, MTN Ghana has stressed its commitment to staying ahead in the digital era, stating, "We continue to prioritise network resilience and cutting-edge technology to ensure our customers stay connected."



MTN

# International

## Sudan's military leader proposes roadmap for constitutional transition

Amid the civil war, the foreign ministry associated with the Sudanese army has proposed a strategy for conducting elections. The initiative includes establishing a transitional government, appointing a civilian prime minister, and facilitating a national dialogue with civil society.

Sudan's military leader, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, mentioned that Sudan has proposed a potential "roadmap" that includes a "constitutional transition" and the possibility of free elections in the future.

He noted that a national dialogue would involve all significant factions and conflicting parties within the country.

Sudan has been in turmoil since April of last year when rising tensions between the military and the Rapid Support Forces erupted into

widespread conflict. Burhan expressed his strong backing for Arab leaders' reconstruction initiatives for Gaza during a summit in Cairo on Tuesday.

He reiterated Sudan's "steadfast support for the Palestinian people" in their pursuit of an independent state in line with the two-state solution.

"We firmly oppose any initiatives that seek to displace our Palestinian brothers from their homeland under any guise, as this poses a threat to Arab national security and to regional and global stability," he emphasized.

At the summit, Arab leaders endorsed Egypt's post-war strategy for the Gaza Strip, which aims to allow the approximately 2 million Palestinians to remain, countering U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to depopulate the area and transform it into a beach resort.

The approval of the \$53 billion plan by Arab leaders in Cairo was a clear rejection of Trump's vision.

The outcomes of the summit were

praised by Hamas, dismissed by Israel, and met with a tepid reaction from the Trump administration.

*Source: Africanews*



*Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, Sudan's military leader*

## Guinea-Bissau's president Embalo to seek second term

Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo said he will run for a second term in November, amid tensions with an opposition that refuses to recognize him as the country's current president.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS that had been sent to Guinea-Bissau in hopes of resolving the country's political crisis departed Monday after what they said were threats of expulsion from Embalo.

Embalo, who dissolved the opposition-dominated parliament in late 2023, told reporters he would run again Monday at the airport in the capital Bissau following his trip to Russia, Azerbaijan and Hungary. "I will be a candidate for my own succession," Embalo said.

Guinea-Bissau's constitution sets the presidential term at five years, renewable once, and Embalo would be running for an allowed second term. But the details of his first term are complicated, and the opposition argues that his first term already has ended.

Embalo's announcement risks escalating tensions in the small West African nation, which has endured multiple coups since gaining independence from Portugal over 50 years ago.

Embalo won an election on Nov. 24, 2019 and was sworn in as president on Feb. 27, 2020, but the opposition contested the result and the Supreme Court did not recognize his victory until Sept. 4.

The opposition says Embalo's term should have ended on Feb. 27 of this year, but the Supreme Court has ruled that it should run until Sept. 4. Embalo has set the election date for Nov. 30 and says that he should stay in office until then, but the opposition has refused since last week to recognize him as president.

Opposition leaders have warned they will plan mass protests and strikes, but were waiting to see if the ECOWAS mission was successful.

Embalo says he has survived two attempts to overthrow him in the last three years. After the most recent one in December 2023, which involved a shootout between the national and

presidential guard, he dissolved the opposition-controlled parliament, accusing it of passivity.

Last week, Embalo met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss potential economic and security ties as Russia has emerged

as the security partner of choice for a growing number of African governments, displacing traditional allies such as France and the United States.

*Source: Africanews*



*Umaro Sissoco Embalo, President of Guinea-Bissau*

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