

22-year-old herbalist remanded for defiling girl, 11

— Page 13

Successor to interdicted education director passes on

— Page 13

Government considering abolishing death penalty — President

— Page 20



MiDA to complete priority projects

By Emelia Ennin Abbey

THE Management of the Millennium Development Authority (MiDA) has indicated that it is committed to completing and inaugurating all

prioritised projects under the Millennium Challenge Account (MCC) grant in the next one year and six months, using funds available before the cancellation of the power compact.

MiDA said it now had \$308.2 million available for it under the

• Continued on page 03

‘Pragyas’ push Berekum taxis out of business

— Pages 8/25



Daily Graphic

INSIDE TODAY

GRAPHIC WEATHER

MORNING 2/15

31°

Re: **GT. ACCRA**

Hazy sunshine

OTHER REGIONAL CAPITALS

Temp:	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low		
Bolgatanga	39°	15°	Sunyani	38°	16°	Koforidua	36°	22°
Cape Coast	30°	26°	Tamale	33°	25°	Kumasi	39°	21°
S/Takoradi	33°	25°	Ho	40°	21°	Wa	38°	16°

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	OVERNIGHT
MORNING 31° Re: GT. ACCRA	AFTERNOON 33° Re: GT. ACCRA	EVENING 28° Re: GT. ACCRA	OVERNIGHT 25° Re: GT. ACCRA

Source: www.accuweather.com

Inside Africa

Ethiopia to hold parliamentary elections in August

ETHIOPIA'S election board on Friday set a date of August 29 for parliamentary elections that will be a first test of voter support for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has eased political restrictions since he took office in 2018.

— Page 05

Politics

CSOs TAKE STOCK OF ABORTED REFERENDUM

— Page 18

Opinion

The Bawumia factor

HE is the Vice-President in recent memory that one cannot wish away in this our Republic. Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice-President in the current government, was once again in his best elements last Tuesday with country, kinsmen and women on his mind.

— Page 07

Gender

Fight against child trafficking:

Media urged to play advocacy role

THE County Director of Free the Slaves (FTS), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that fights against child trafficking, Mr Joha Braimah, has reiterated his call on the media to partner his outfit in the fight against child trafficking along the Volta Lake.

— Page 11

Regional

2 Sunyani factories put on 1D1F programme

THE Sunyani Municipal Assembly in the Bono Region is to retool and expand two existing processing factories as part of the government's flagship One-District, One-Factory (1D1F) programme, Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Mrs Justina Owusu-Banahene, has disclosed..

— Page 12/21



News

UN agencies confer with Sanitation Minister on achieving SDGs

NINE United Nations (UN) agencies, led by the acting resident Coordinator, Ms Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, have met with the Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ms Cecilia Abena Dapaah, to discuss further collaboration to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the country.

— Page 24

News

2 Organisations express disapproval over Ejisuman SHS students de-boardinisation

TWO organisations, Child Rights International (CRI) and Africa Education watch — have expressed disapproval over the de-boardinisation of seven students of the Ejisuman SHS.

— Page 20

Sports

Kotoko's hegemony under threat

ASANTE Kotoko Coach, Maxwell Konadu, is optimistic of victory against rivals Ashantigold (Ashgold) in their fierce Ghana Premier League (GPL) Week 10 regional derby at the Baba Yara Stadium tomorrow.

— Page 31



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Meet Yaa Peprah Amekudzi — Pages 6/27

• The woman spearheading 'cocoa life' in Ghana

Epilepsy not demonic, contagious

— Neurologist

By Efi Akese

An epileptologist and neurologist at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, in Accra, Dr Patrick Adjei, has appealed to families with relatives who suffer epilepsy to seek medical care as the condition was treatable. He explained that contrary to beliefs that the condition was demonic and contagious, it is a

Continued on page 03



• Mrs Yaa Peprah Amekudzi, Ghana Country Lead, Cocoa Life Programme



News

MiDA to complete priority projects

• Continued from page 01

compact for the implementation of projects following the withdrawal of \$190 million by the MCC and an additional counterpart fund of \$23 million from the government.

This came to light when the management of MiDA interacted with some journalists in Accra yesterday.

Projects

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MiDA, Mr Martin Eson-Benjamin, told the journalists that the remaining funds would be used to support investments in infrastructure and business-process-related projects that would enhance the operational efficiency of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG), cut commercial and technical losses, improve the ECG's finances and allow power to be distributed efficiently.

Part of the funds, he said, would be used to support the Energy Commission (EC) and the Ghana Standards Authority in the form of capacity upgrades to enable them to carry out labelling standards, energy auditing and equipment testing.

He said another tranche of the fund would go into the retrofitting of some public buildings at the University of Ghana, the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and some ministries in Accra, to ensure efficient power consumption and lower electricity bills.

Additionally, Mr Eson-Benjamin said, there were plans to improve access to power in eight selected markets in the Greater Accra Region and two others in the Northern Region.

"MiDA is fully committed to meeting the aspirations of the compact, the expectations of the governments of Ghana and the United States of America, (USA), the fund providers," he said.

Power outages

The Technical Controller of the Authority, Mr William Amuna, said given the limited period of time to the expiration of the compact, a number of projects were going to be rolled out in the coming days.

He said work was ongoing on the construction of the biggest power substation in the country, which was scheduled to be handed over to GRIDCo by the end of July this year.

Additionally, Mr Amuna said, contractors would soon start work on the second largest bulk supply point at Kasoa and substations at the University of Ghana to ensure reliable power supply to the new University of Ghana Teaching Hospital and the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research.

Another substation would be constructed at Kanda in Accra to ensure reliable power supply to the 37 Military Hospital and surrounding communities.

The technical controller indicated that the agency was also laying interconnection lines "which will have to pass through people's lands and business places, among others. We will have to block roads and take off power. We know it is an election year and when power goes off, it has implications, but we must understand that we will have to suffer to gain.

"We will sacrifice a little and in the end, we will have stable power supply," he emphasised.

Mr Amuna, therefore, urged the public to bear with the authority during such periods, giving an assurance that MiDA would do its best to manage the situation by giving enough notices to the public and ensure that work was done swiftly to lessen inconveniences.

Background

The Ghana Power Compact II with the MCC was expected to end in 2021.

The compact is a direct support to the energy sector's strategic objectives to achieve power supply efficiency, including exports to neighbouring countries as well as supplies to new oil and gas-based industries.

The programme objectives, under Compact II, are focused on developing projects and initiatives that will address the constraints to the supply of adequate and reliable power.

It has a private sector participation

Fact Sheet

- A five-year compact between the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Government of Ghana entered into force in September 2016.
- The \$498-million Compact is aimed at improving the performance of Ghana's power sector.

(PSP) as a precondition, which saw some entities taking over the management of ECG on concession for 35 years, during which the private partners were to invest significantly in the power distribution company.

However, on Tuesday, July 30, 2019, the government suspended the PSP arrangement, citing what it termed as the "detection of fundamental and material breaches of PDS's obligation in the provision of Payment Securities (Demand Guarantees) for the transaction which were discovered upon further due diligence".

"The demand guarantees were key prerequisites for the lease of assets on March 1, 2019 to secure the assets that were transferred to the concessionaire," it said.

Compact

The Minister of Information, Mr Kojo Opong Nkrumah, told journalists on August 1 last year that the government was taking steps to secure the second tranche of \$190 million compact from the American government following the suspension of PDS operations.

Negotiations between the government and the USA fell through, leading to the cancellation of the PSP deal, thus reverting ECG to its status quo.

The suspension compelled the US government to withdraw the \$190 million which was left to be committed to the power compact.



• Mr William Amuna

Photo Report

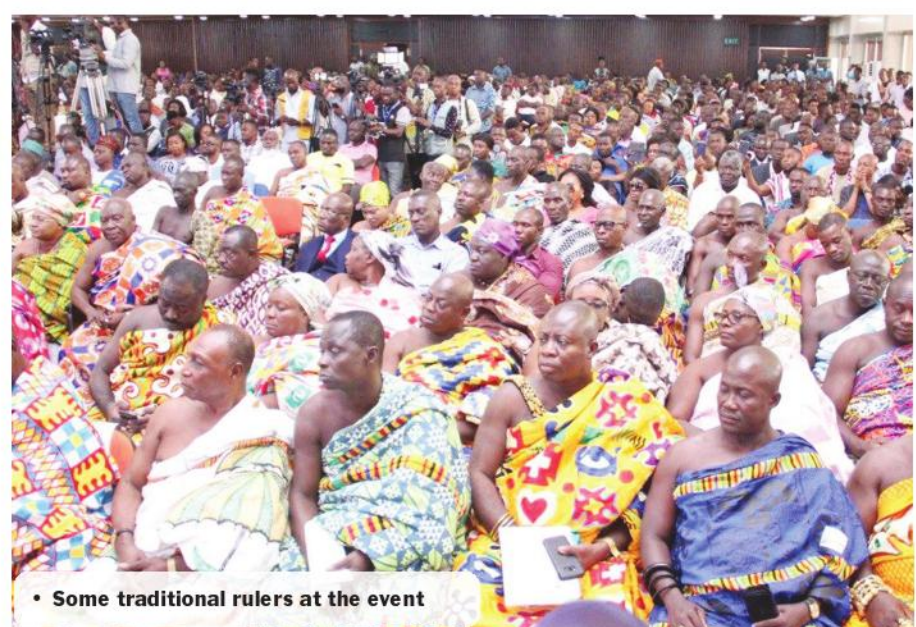
Pictures: EMMANUEL BAAH & COURTESY JUBILEE HOUSE



• Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (arrowed) making a graphic presentation at the event



• Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (right) exchanging pleasantries with Baffour Asare Owusu Amankwatia VI, the Bantamahene



• Some traditional rulers at the event

Town Hall Meeting, Results Fair

• Dr Mahamudu Bawumia responding to cheers after delivering his speech at the meeting



THE first Town Hall Meeting and Results Fair was held in Kumasi, last Tuesday. The event, which was under the theme: “Demonstrating fulfilment of our promises”, gave an account of the government’s performance in office in the last three years.

It was attended by traditional rulers, academia, civil society groups, political parties and the general public.

The Vice-President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, addressing the meeting, described the performance of the first three years of the New Patriotic Party — led administration as the best in the history of the Fourth Republic.

He said the recent validation exercise undertaken by the government in 2019 put the overall performance of the government at 78 per cent.

Inside Africa

South Africa must fix its public finances — Ramaphosa

CAPE TOWN (SOUTH AFRICA), FEBRUARY 14

SOUTH AFRICA must fix its strained public finances and procure more renewable energy quickly to address a power crisis, President Cyril Ramaphosa said last Thursday.

Ramaphosa acknowledged in an annual address to parliament that growth had stalled, exacerbating high levels of unemployment and increasing hardship for millions of citizens.

But the speech was short on specifics or timeframes that would have reassured investors that his government had a clear plan to solve the deep-seated structural problems in Africa's most industrialised economy.

"Low levels of growth mean we are not generating enough revenue to meet our expenses, our debt is heading towards unsustainable levels, and spending is misdirected," Ramaphosa said.

"We cannot continue along this path. Nor can we afford to stand still."

Ramaphosa came to power two years ago with pledges to lift growth and improve governance, after a decade of policy missteps and corruption scandals under his predecessor, Jacob Zuma.

But he has found it hard to revive investor confidence given severe power cuts, repeated bailouts to ailing state firms and infighting in his governing African National Congress party.

- REUTERS



• Cyril Ramaphosa - South African President

No money to bring Ugandans back home from Wuhan

KAMPALA (UGANDA), FEBRUARY 14

THE Ugandan government has said it's too costly to charter a plane to bring home an estimated 105 students stranded in the virus-hit city of Wuhan, in China.

Instead, the government had said it was going to send them some financial assistance.

It is an issue that is dividing Uganda's parliament.

This news will be unwelcome news for the students who have said they've been traumatised by weeks of isolation and the fear that they could contract coronavirus.

Health Minister Jane Ruth Aceng told Members of Parliament (MPs) last Thursday that Uganda neither had the knowledge nor a specialised facility to handle an outbreak.

But \$61,000 (£46,700) was being given to support students in Wuhan that would be wired to their phones. It is unclear how much each student will receive.

Some of the students have complained that they are running out of money, food and protective face masks.

They have been running a social media campaign under the hashtag #EvacuateUgandansInWuhan.

The government confirmed that more than 260 travellers, both Chinese and Ugandans, had been asked to self-isolate themselves for two weeks after they had arrived from China last Thursday. - BBC

Ethiopia to hold parliamentary elections in August

ADDIS ABABA (ETHIOPIA), FEBRUARY 14

ETHIOPIA'S election board on Friday set a date of August 29 for parliamentary elections that will be a first test of voter support for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has eased political restrictions since he took office in 2018.

The date is two weeks later than the electoral board had previously indicated, on account of weather.

"Looking at parts of the country which will be affected by the rainy season, pushing the schedule a little further will ease our burden," board chairwoman Birtukan Mideksa said at a conference on election preparations taking place in Addis Ababa.

Less areas will have rain compared to at the end of the

month, she said.

Ethiopia's 109 million people are experiencing unprecedented political and economic change, but Abiy's reforms have also unleashed ethnic rivalries that have spilled into violence.

Plans to hold the parliament and regional council elections in May were postponed as neither authorities nor parties would be ready, Mideksa said in January.

Ethiopia has had regular parliamentary elections since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power in 1991 but, with one exception, none were competitive.

Abiy, who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for his efforts to reconcile with Ethiopia's neighbour and longtime foe, Eritrea, has promised that this year's vote will be free and fair. - REUTERS



• Abiy Ahmed - Ethiopia's Prime Minister

Kenyan men 'escape' to Valentine's Day conference

NAIROBI (KENYA), FEBRUARY 14

WHAT started as a joke on social media in Kenya about one of the ways men could avoid their partners on Valentine's Day, has become a reality.

The suggestion that men told their other halves that they were attending a Men's Conference —

has become a reality.

This year an actual Men's Conference has been held at a five-star hotel in the capital, Nairobi.

In a clip shared by a local broadcaster, participants discussed different topics, including leadership in households and mentoring of young men.

A panel of male speakers have been exchanging religious and

cultural views on relationships.

However, the conference has been criticised for allowing women in the audience.

"The #MensConference that is being televised on Citizen is Joke. How are women allowed in a men's only function. This is just evident enough that some 'elites' want to hijack the event and make profits from it" - BBC



• Kenyan Men's Conference 2020

MEN'S CONFERENCE 2020



• Asian airlines have been hit hard by the virus outbreak

6 Health workers die from coronavirus in China

HUBEI (CHINA), FEBRUARY 14

SIX health workers have died from coronavirus in China, while 1,716 health workers have also been infected amid concerns about the shortage of protective equipment, state officials have announced.

This brings the number of those known to have died from the virus to 1,381 people.

The total number of infections, according to the National Health Commission, jumped to 63,922 cases.

Zeng Yixin, Vice Minister of China's National Health Commission, said 1,102 medical workers had been infected in Wuhan where the outbreak began, and another 400 in other

parts of Hubei province.

He said the number of infections among staff was increasing.

"The duties of medical workers at the front are indeed extremely heavy; their working and resting circumstances are limited, the psychological pressures are great and the risk of infection is high," Mr Zeng said, quoted by Reuters.

Local authorities have struggled to provide protective equipment such as respiratory masks, goggles and protective suits in hospitals in the area.

The World Health Organisation said there was no major shift in the virus's pattern of mortality or severity despite a spike in cases in Hubei, the epicentre of the disease, last Tuesday.

Most of this was down to

Hubei using a broader definition to diagnose people, said Mike Ryan, Head of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme.

There was also no significant rise in cases outside China, the WHO said.

One doctor told AFP news agency that he and 16 colleagues were showing possible symptoms of the virus.

Another medical worker told the CNN she and more than 100 other staff at her hospital had been quarantined. A further 30 had been confirmed to have been infected there out of a staff of 500.

On February 7, the plight of medical workers was highlighted by the death of Li Wenliang, a doctor at Wuhan Central Hospital who had tried to issue the first warning about the virus on December 30. - BBC

Trump's tweets make my job 'impossible'

— US Attorney General

WASHINGTON (USA), FEBRUARY 14

UNITED STATES Attorney General William Barr has said President Donald Trump "undercuts" him by tweeting, making it "impossible for me to do my job".

His criticism of Mr Trump comes amid intense scrutiny of the Justice Department over the handling of a case involving Roger Stone — a convicted former advisor to the President.

Stone was convicted in November of obstructing an investigation by the House Intelligence Committee into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

The attorney general had been accused of bowing to presidential pressure.

Mr Barr's comments are a rare sign of annoyance with Mr

Trump.

"I think it's time to stop the tweeting about Department of Justice criminal cases," Mr Barr told ABC News.

"I cannot do my job here at the department with a constant background commentary that undercuts me," he added.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the President should listen to Mr Barr's advice.

"If the attorney general says it's getting in the way of doing his job, the President should listen to the attorney general," the Republican senator told Fox News.

There was widespread anger this week when the Justice Department said it planned to reduce the length of the prison sentence it would seek for Stone, a long-time friend of the President. - BBC



• William Barr (right) has been seen as an ally of Donald Trump



• As he bowed out, Mr Griveaux said no one should be subjected to such a "torrent of mud"

Paris race for mayor... Macron's ally Benjamin Griveaux steps down over sex video

PARIS (FRANCE), FEBRUARY 14

A SEX video has ended French ruling party candidate Benjamin Griveaux's hopes of becoming mayor of Paris.

The ex-spokesman for President Emmanuel Macron's government, who was already trailing in the race, was apparently targeted by a Russian protest artist accusing him of hypocrisy.

"No one should be subjected to such abuse," said Mr Griveaux, 41.

The video, showing a man in a compromising position, quickly spread on social media late last Thursday.

Opponents from across France's political spectrum voiced their outrage.

Incumbent Mayor Anne Hidalgo appealed for respect for people's private lives, while far-left leader

Jean-Luc Mélenchon condemned the attack as "odious". Prime Minister Edouard Philippe expressed his support for his former colleague.

My family doesn't deserve this. I'm not prepared to expose my family and myself anymore when all these attacks are allowed. This goes too far.

The video appeared on a little known website that featured a profile of Mr Griveaux's political ambitions and his "fanatical faith in family values". It then alleged that Mr Griveaux had exchanged intimate mobile phone messages with a young woman and sent her a personal video.

A link to the site was shared by an MP who was forced to resign from Mr Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) Party in late 2018.

Mr Griveaux told the BFMTV news channel that for the past year he and his family had been subjected to

"defamatory remarks, lies, rumours, anonymous attacks... and even death threats".

"This torrent of mud has affected me and above all hurt the people I love."

Mr Griveaux's lawyer said he would press charges over the publication of the video, which he said violated the right to a private life.

Petr Pavlensky, who sought asylum from Russia in 2017, said he had posted the video online.

He first gained notoriety by nailing his scrotum to Moscow's Red Square in 2013 and then fled Russia and sought asylum in France when he was accused by the authorities of a sexual assault that he denied.

The current Socialist Mayor, Ms Hidalgo, is leading in the polls, ahead of Republicans candidate Rachida Dati. - BBC

Daily Graphic

EDITORIAL

Saturday, February 15, 2020

Today, February 15 is International Childhood Cancer Day

ON International Childhood Cancer Day, which falls today, we pause to recognise contributions by advocates around the world and call for renewed collaboration to care for children with cancer.

International Childhood Cancer Day is celebrated annually to raise awareness of and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, survivors and their families.

Childhood cancer is a disease that has not received much attention in the country. For a very long time, the focus has been on adult cancer — breast, prostate and cervical cancers.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), each year, approximately 300,000 children are diagnosed with cancer — a disease that touches countless families and communities in all regions of the world.

However, the WHO says that “with access to quality care, more than 80 per cent of children with cancer can survive, living full and healthy lives”.

But many children in low- and middle-income countries do not receive or complete care, and, as a result, over 90 per cent of childhood cancer deaths

occur in low-resource settings. Ghana, a middle-income country, records an estimated 1,200 cases of childhood cancer every year.

On the average, the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, which has the largest cancer registry, is said to record approximately 170 new childhood cancer cases every year, with Lymphoma, a condition that affects the immune system, being the leading cause of death among children.

Other leading cancer conditions include Leukemia, which records 16 per cent of all cancer cases; Wilms, 14 per cent and Retinoblastoma, 12.5 per cent.

Presently, between Korle Bu and the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH), which have the oldest cancer registries, there are only six trained oncologists with radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatments available at the two centres.

The WHO has, over the years, highlighted the importance of diagnosing childhood cancer early and improving access to treatment for children and adolescents with cancer.

The situation, however, is that the cost of cancer treatment in the country is high, with that of childhood cancer being no different, and this deters many parents from sending their children for treatment.

One organisation that has, since 2008, been knocking on the doors of people in authority to ensure that the cost of childhood cancer does not scare parents and guardians from sending their children and wards to hospital is the Dr Robert Mitchell Memorial Foundation (RoMMEF).

The Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mrs Emma Mitchell, is of the view

that if the diagnosis and treatment of childhood cancer is absorbed by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), the lives of many children can be saved.

The Daily Graphic shares this position and concern of the CEO of the foundation.

We are of the firm belief that should the NHIS absorb the cost of childhood cancer treatment, a lot of burden will be lifted off most parents.

Again, absorbing the cost will help the country get an accurate cancer registry for it to be able to research into the particular types of cancers that are presented in various hospitals, as most parents and guardians will not hide their children at home or send them for unorthodox treatment because they consider the ailment as a taboo.

We, therefore, urge society to make issues concerning children, including childhood cancer, a top priority, so that children can also grow into their full potential and become the future leaders that we so much desire.

We further call for a global response to give every child the best chance of surviving cancer by raising awareness of and improving access to healthcare centres.

Your voice
How can we control and fund the treatment of childhood cancer in the country? Our reporter, Zadok Kwame Gyesei, sought some answers from our readers.



Bukari Ayuba

The question is how many people know about childhood cancer? During my Third Trimester Field Practical (TTFPP), I found that many people in the communities lacked knowledge of some serious diseases. So, I think more awareness should be created of the disease.



Kwame Elorm

Screening of children for cancer must be encouraged, and some of the donor funds should be set aside for treatment, if detected.



Tee Jay

The best ways we can control cancer in children are vaccination and regular medical care. Non-profit organisations can create T-shirt fundraisers to raise money for the purpose.

The Bawumia factor



Reality zone

With Vicky Wireko

HE is the Vice-President in recent memory that one cannot wish away in this our Republic. Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice-President in the current government, was once again in his best elements last Tuesday with country, kinsmen and women on his mind.

Dr Bawumia was speaking at the government's Town Hall meeting and Results Fair in the Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi. He went to the fair to account to the entire people of Ghana, his government's fulfilled or yet to be fulfilled promises.

Manifesto promises

From the A to Z of their manifesto promises and on topics from the economy through to education, health, to agriculture, industry, jobs, foreign policy,

electricity, water, the banking sector and many others, the Vice-President did what he does best as the great communicator that he is.

He was on point with his message, commanded interest, succeeded in drawing his audience's attention and for the over two hours that he was on his feet, he got me spellbound, glued to my radio and later my television set. I did not want to miss his delivery for anything else.

His message of the day was a serious one and he made sure that being on top of issues, he brought every bit of it alive.

As he went through his delivery with a body language that said it all, his modest smiles and similes were graciously applied. Going through the government's tick-off list, he took cognisance of where he was standing, his immediate audience and quickly connected where necessary by using the Twi language to illustrate some of his points. That he is an effective communicator who succeeds in carrying his audience with him is in no doubt.

In our current dispensation, he is a great asset to his party, particularly as they head towards the competitive December general election.

His message of the day was a serious one and he made sure that being on top of issues, he brought every bit of it alive.

Dr Bawumia's recounted list of achievements and what is in the pipeline are for the people to judge. However, for me as a citizen and not a spectator, what perhaps excited me most was his delivery on the banking crises.

Banking crises

I had never had the reality of the situation that confronted the Bank of Ghana (BoG) and for that matter the financial industry so well explained as he did. He juxtaposed the action taken by the

BoG with the crises that could have accosted the nation in terms of credibility in the banking sector, job losses and total investment losses should the BOG not have taken the bold step to clean up the mess.

The icing on the cake for investors who

have been caught in the web of the financial sector crises was the Vice-President's assurance last Tuesday that no one would lose his or her investment. Though yet to be fulfilled, it was great news, especially coming on the heels of a recent promise by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo that every investor would be paid their locked-up investment.

Payments

Dr Bawumia in his delivery in Kumasi emphasised that each investor would be

paid the full amount saved at the time of the collapse. He went on to explain that the government had asked the receiver of the collapsed banks to speed up the validation process for payments to be effected.

My heart was lifted up and one is inclined to believe that many others who have had their investments locked up for a year or more would rejoice at the news.

On January 4, 2020, this same frustration of locked up investments in collapsed financial institutions was on my mind when I had cause to write an “open letter” to the receiver in my column in the Daily Graphic.

In the “open letter” entitled: “Best New Year gift to consider”, I appealed to the receiver to add to his list of considerations and pay off locked-up investments of all senior citizens as a matter of priority. Most of them had faith in the regulated financial institutions and, therefore, entrusted their life savings in the investment instruments that were available. They took decisions for their money to work for them in retirement.

The waiting period has been treacherous and far too long for depositors. Hearts have been broken and disappointments and grief have taken over. The Vice-President has, however, reiterated the President's words and assured all investors that not a pesewa of their locked-up investment would be lost.

Now hope was rekindled last Tuesday and suffering investors would be counting the days thanks to the Bawumia factor.

Writer's E-mail:
vickywirekoandoh@yahoo.com

Regional Focus



On the move. Tricycles are now the choice of many commuters

'Pragyas' push Berekum taxis out of business

From Biya Mukusah Ali, BEREKUM

THE use of motor tricycles, popularly referred to as "Pragya" has become the preferred means of transport by commuters in and around Berekum in the Bono Region. Even a newcomer will attest to this fact on arrival as the riders toot their horns to draw attention to their services.

Their operation has become a nuisance to taxi drivers as they have virtually pushed them out of business.

One can count about 50 of these motor tricycles at a go on the Berekum Main Station street either dropping off or picking up passengers who usually wait for them at the shoulders of the road.

They charge GH1, no matter one's destination within the Berekum main town and the adjoining suburbs, and make an average of GH50 daily.

Residents at Berekwa, Mpatapo, Mpatasie, Amankwakwa, Adom, Domlete, Biadan, Sofokyerre and Kutre No. 1 and 2, who used to pay more than GH2 to get to their destination now pay only GH1 for the use of "Pragya".

Transportation

Until the arrival of the "pragya" transport business about five years ago, the taxi business was thriving as they were virtually the only means of transport for visitors and other commuters in and around the town.

Commuters standing at the shoulders of the road watch empty taxis pass by but as soon as they spot "pragyas" at a far distance, they rush to board it.

It is, however, not safe to use the motor tricycles which are mostly driven by unlicensed individuals, particularly teenagers. Some of the riders do not observe rules

and regulations on the road, making it very dangerous for the patrons.

Last year, the Berekum Magistrate Court slapped various fines on some operators of tricycles while one of them was remanded into prison custody for various offences but

that has not deterred them.

Taxi business folding

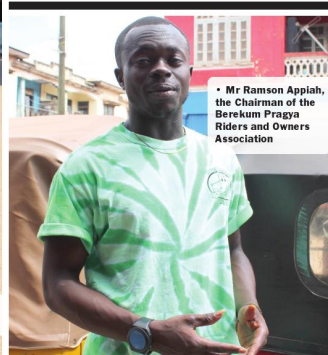
A 47-year-old taxi driver, Mr Samuel Asare-Mensah, told the *Daily Graphic* that activities of the "pragya" operators in the



A line-up of pragyas along the Berekum main station street. Pictures: BIYA MUKUSAH ALI



Some of the tricycles come in fanciful designs



Mr Ramson Appiah, the Chairman of the Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners Association

NUMBER CRUNCH

1,000

The Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners Association currently has over 1,000 registered members.

area were collapsing the taxi business.

He said the daily income of taxi drivers kept reducing each day as passengers now patronised the services of "pragya" more than the taxis.

Mr Asare-Mensah explained that he was considering selling his taxi cab to enter into the "pragya" business since it was clear that residents in Berekum and its environs preferred using "pragya" to taxis.

Employment, tax

The Chairman of the Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners

Association, Mr Ramson Appiah, told the *Daily Graphic* that the pragya business had created employment for about 3,000 young people in the area.

He said the association had over 1,000 registered members, explaining that there were about 2,000 other riders who had refused to join the association.

Mr Appiah said most of the riders were university and college graduates who did not have jobs and believed that the pragya business was offering them decent jobs.

"All pragya riders pay their taxes to the Berekum Municipal Assembly and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) just like commercial vehicles," he stated, adding that they had also acquired riding licenses.

Mr Appiah said members of the association would continue to honour their tax obligations to support the development of the municipality.

Challenges

He said the main challenge facing the operation of the pragya business in Berekum was the continuous seizure and the arrest of members of the association by the Motor Transport and Traffic Directorate (MTTD) of



With GH1 one is able to go anywhere in Berekum on board the pragya



The pragya takes two passengers

the Ghana Police Service (GPS).

"Because our activities are not regularised, the police seize our tricycles and extort monies from us. I'm not happy about the way the police treat us. The police say the government has not yet legalised or regularised the use of Pragya for commercial purposes in the country," he said.

Mr Appiah accused the police of extorting GH3 from every pragya operator daily and

appealed to the government to legalise the operations of motor cycles and tricycles for commercial purposes to help address the conflict between the police and their operators.

He again raised concern about the deplorable nature of Berekum town roads, explaining that the roads were riddled with potholes which made riding on them very dangerous.

1st
ANNIVERSARY
1945-2019



DR P.A. KURANCHIE

Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts. Our happy memories of you help us through the sadness of losing you. We thank God for a life well lived.

Fondly remembered by your children, the entire family, friends, Management and staff of Kasapreko Company Limited, Management and staff of Agricultural Development Bank, National Investment Bank and Old Vandals Association.

Rest in Peace

Tribute

Torch bearer finishes race

• Mrs Mercy Awurakua Sakyibea Kwakyi

THE Association of Women in the Media (ASWIM) joins Ghanaians to celebrate the distinguished life of Mrs Mercy Awurakua Sakyibea Kwakyi, whose resilience, professionalism and dedication to the cause of women's empowerment, helped sow the seeds in fighting for their recognition and contribution in the various fields of economic endeavour in the country.

Work

Mrs Kwakyi joined the *Ghana News Agency (GNA)* shortly after its establishment in March 1957 as its first female news reporter. Rubbing shoulders with colleagues in a male-dominated work environment, she proved her worth, leaving an indelible mark in the profession.

Consequently, her employers facilitated her training at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, (GIJ), where, as one of only two female students among the 28 enrolled in the second year of its establishment, resulted in her life-long bonding with her counterpart, Ms Josephine Sappor. Earlier, Mrs Kwakyi had worked with the New Times Corporation.

Returning to the *GNA* after completing her training, she covered and wrote in-depth and exclusive stories on local and international assignments; the activities of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, which helped greatly in building confidences of

citizens in nation building.

She was privileged to pursue a number of courses abroad, one of which was an advanced course in News Agency Techniques for 18 months in Prague, now Czech Republic, from 1963 - 1965 as the only female among 24 males from 25 countries.

She took up high-profile assignments, including covering the Pan African Organisation and secured participation in a competitive Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) course as the only Ghanaian female among participants from 10 Commonwealth countries.

In 1974, after the CPU course, she was seconded to the Castle as a Press Secretary to the then First Lady, Mrs Faustina Acheampong. She also had the opportunity to become the Press Secretary to Mrs Fathia Nkrumah, during which period she accompanied her to the United Nations in New York, USA, to receive a posthumous award on behalf of her late husband, Dr Kwame Nkrumah. After that assignment, she returned to her job at the *GNA*.

Aptitude

Her professional aptitude did not go unnoticed, hence in 1983, the US Embassy nominated three female journalists to be guests of the American government in touring eight states in America. They were Mercy Kwakyi, Josephine Sappor, both of *GNA*, and Ms Ajoa Yeboah-Afari of the then Graphic Corporation. The tour included visits to New York, Washington DC and Arkansas



• The late Awurakua Sakyibea Kwakyi

and the three of them became known as The American Fraternity.

Promotion, women

In all these, however, Mrs Kwakyi was passionate about the promotion of the cause of women and children. This obviously culminated in the establishment of ASWIM, when she and other colleagues felt the need to bring women working in the media together, to use their training to give them a voice on issues affecting their lives and livelihoods.

She, therefore, took up the responsibility of treasurer of ASWIM, when it was formed in 1980.

She put her sterling qualities and efforts at the service of all, together with those of the late Janet Amerley Esseku, President; Ms Josephine Sappor, Vice-President; the late Dorinda Bannerman-Bruce, Secretary; Ms Wendy Asiamah, Assistant Secretary; Mrs Gifty Affenyi-Dadzie, Public Relations Officer, and Mrs Maud

Blankson Mills, as well as Ms Vicky Tetteh, Executive Members to raise the image of women in the country.

Together, women media practitioners played complementary roles through ASWIM, shining the light on women achievers; speaking for the vulnerable and voiceless; preventing the abuse of their rights, advocating the mainstreaming of gender issues into national policies, among other such issues.

Farewell

As we bid you farewell, your compatriots and the present generation of ASWIM are full of gratitude to you for the yeoman's job you did in your chosen profession and its effects on the women's front in Ghana.

We will hold on to your virtues of love for humanity and the determination to make a difference wherever we are for a better life for all.

Fare thee well, Auntie Mercy!



• The late Nana Nyamaa II

Nana Nyamaa II, royalty with nobility goes home

By Emmanuel Adu-Gyamerah

FOR years, Nana Nyamaa II played her role as a queenmother with royalty and nobility and exhibited natural qualities.

She has been described by those who worked closely with her as "an inborn leader with graceful features and youthful beauty which made her look younger than her age, but wise too", and rightly so, because with all her power as a queenmother, she always wore a welcoming smile.

She was a committed member of the Catholic Church and worshipped at Christ the King Cathedral, Sunyani.

Campaigns

In spite of her stature in life, Nana Nyamaa II used her status to champion the rights of women and children not only in the Sunyani Traditional Area but the then Brong-Ahafo Region.

The "Keep Sunyani Clean" campaign, the Virgins Club and the Yaa Nyamaa Foundation, all of which she supported and

mobilised resources for in aid of the needy and under-privileged, showed how she devoted her reign to the cause of the vulnerable in the society.

She was a member of a number of councils, including the Bono, the Bono East and Ahafo Peace Councils and the Sunyani Regional Hospital Advisory Board. She played her roles well to ensure the well-being of the people in the area.

Enstoolment

Born on Sunday, April 24, 1955 to the late Opanin Kofi Yeboah of the Atoase Royal Family and Madam Yaa Anima of the Boahen Koorkor Family, Nana Yaa Nyamaa II was known in public life as Helena Yeboah. She was the first daughter of her mother's 13 children and the fifth child of her father's 52 children.

Even though she was called Akosua at birth as the Akan custom demands, being a female born on Sunday, her grandmother, Yaa Boaa, whom she was named after, demanded that her name be changed from Akosua to Yaa (a female born on Thursday).

She spent 10 years at the Twene Amanfo Primary and Middle School, now Twene Amanfo Senior High/Technical School, in Sunyani for her basic education, starting at age seven in 1962.

As a brilliant student, she was awarded a scholarship in 1972 after completing her basic education at the Toase Secondary School in the Ashanti Region, but subsequent events did not allow her to enjoy that facility.

Her grandmother, the then Queenmother of Sunyani, Nana Afua Yeboah, died in 1972 and Nana Nyamaa II was "captured" by members of the royal family and enstooled as her successor.

The late Nana Nyamaa II's funeral rites begin on Saturday, February 22, 2020. She will be laid in state from February 26, 2020, and a government delegation and people from far and near will file past the body to pay homage, after which the final funeral rites will be observed.

Fare thee tell. Damirifa due Nana Yaa Nyamaa II.

Gender

Fight against child trafficking: Media urged to play advocacy role

From Ezekiel E. Sottie, KUMASI

THE County Director of Free the Slaves (FTS), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that fights against child trafficking, Mr Joha Braimah, has reiterated his call on the media to partner his outfit in the fight against child trafficking along the Volta Lake.

He said the advocacy role played by the media in society would go a long way to end the child trafficking menace in the country.

Mr Braimah made the remarks at the closing ceremony of a three-day media engagement workshop organised by FTS in collaboration with International Needs Ghana, Partners in Community Development Programme (PACODEP) and Mission of Hope in Kumasi last Thursday.

"The media plays a key role in awareness creation and dissemination of complexities of human trafficking since we started the fight and, therefore, the media cannot be left out if we want to achieve results in the fight against child trafficking which has more or less taken root in Ghana," he said.

Free the Slaves

He said the FTS had embarked on a four-year project which aimed to free hundreds of children found along fishing communities and surrounding

regions along the Lake Volta and trained more than 2,000 community members, traditional authorities and government officials on ways to combat child trafficking sustainably.

According to Mr Braimah, the FTS in partnership with International Needs Ghana had already trained community leaders to recognise child trafficking, take appropriate action and help integrate rescued children into communities.

He added that the FTS had also raised public awareness in selected communities for families of reintegrated children and provided staff training and grants to NGOs that provided after-care services for child trafficking victims.

Mr Braimah noted with concern that the activities of the FTS on child trafficking could not be successful if the

media was left out, hence the media engagement in order to get the needed results of the programme.

He added: "We need to collaborate and win the fight against the innocent children who should be enjoying formal education. I know and everyone is aware that the media reaches more geographical areas for which reason the media has been engaged for these three days to find lasting solutions to the child trafficking menace. In short, the media is an effective tool in monitoring and disseminating information on the child trafficking issue on hand," he emphasised.

More awareness

He urged the media to create more awareness at both community and national levels in order to rescue victims of child trafficking for the

rehabilitation and reintegration of such children for economic livelihood support for survivals and their families

A broadcaster with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), Mr Kingsley Obeng-Kyereh, who was a resource person, urged the media to have all the facts in reporting issues on child trafficking.

He explained that the issues of child trafficking were not just social but developmental, since "we were talking about our future human resource that would take the place of the present leaders of the country".

Human rights

Mr Obeng-Kyereh added that the issue touched on the human rights of the children and as a country that prided itself as the first to rectify United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we should be sensitive to issues of child protection.

"The media has the capacity to make issues relevant to the needs of the state so that the more we draw attention to some of these untoward activities, the more awareness is created in our interest as a country," Mr Obeng-Kyereh added.

He also stressed the need for the media to keep doing follow-ups on child trafficking issues in the identified communities, adding that "one child is even too much to lose".



• Participants and organisers after the event

ECG launches gender and social inclusion policy

By Vera Korangtemaa

THE Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) has launched its gender and social inclusion (GSI) policy as part of its effort to mainstream gender equality and inclusion in its operations.

The policy seeks to help promote gender equality and also give individuals in the company equal rights among themselves.

Speaking at the launch of the policy in Accra last Wednesday, the Director of the Department of Gender of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Rev. Mrs Comfort Asare, said as a gender advocate, the formulation and launch of the Gender Inclusion Policy by the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) would help increase achievement in the promotion of gender equality in the country.

She said gender was a cross cutting issue because it affected every facet of development in the country.

Rev. Mrs Asare said it was important to emphasise that the concept of gender was not interchangeable with women.

"Gender refers to both women and men and the relations between them," she noted.

She said life had become more complex and required change in perception about the capabilities and potential of males and females.

She said gender equality meant that the rights, responsibilities

and opportunities of individuals would not depend on whether they were born male or female.

Promoting gender equality

Rev. Mrs Asare called on people not to think that the promotion of gender equality meant that women and men would become the same but that equality between women and men had both a qualitative and quantitative aspect.

"Quantitative aspect refers to the desire to achieve equitable representation of women, increasing balance and parity, while the qualitative aspect refers to achieving equitable influence on establishing development

priorities and outcome for women and men," she noted.

She emphasised that equality involved ensuring that the perceptions, interest, needs and priorities of women and men which can be very different because of the deferent roles and responsibilities of women and men, were given equal weight in planning and decision making.

"It has been realised that excluding men from the processes to ensure gender equality caused a big challenge in realising our dreams and, therefore, men are now being brought onboard to galvanise their support," she noted.

For his part, the Managing Director of the Electricity Company of Ghana, Mr Kwame Agyeman-Budu, said the company would put in efforts to ensure that the strategies, plans, policies and activities were promoting gender equality.

Life has become more complex and requires change about the capabilities and potential of males and females.

Regional Focus

2 Sunyani factories placed under 1D1F programme

From Biya Mukusah Ali, SUNYANI

THE Sunyani Municipal Assembly in the Bono Region is to retool and expand two existing processing factories as part of the government's flagship One-District, One-Factory (1D1F) programme, Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Mrs Justina Owusu-Banahene, has disclosed.

The factories which have been registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI) to participate in the 1D1F programme in the municipality are EKA Food and CHADOMA Company Limited.

The EKA Food Processing Company, located at Abesim near Sunyani, is processing vegetables into spices for the local market, while the CHADOMA Company Limited, also located in Sunyani, manufactures steel wool for the local and foreign markets.

Mrs Owusu-Banahene disclosed this at the assembly's meet-the-press series in Sunyani and explained that the two companies were waiting for a bank facility to expand their production.

"The two companies are already in production but are waiting for a bank facility to expand their production," she said.

Meet-the-Press

The purpose of the meet-the-press encounter was to interact with the media on the performance of the assembly from 2018 to 2020. Mrs Owusu-Banahene took the

participants through some of the government's flagship programmes and development projects which have been executed by the assembly from 2018 to 2020.

The projects include educational facilities in various schools, construction and rehabilitation of toilet facilities, rehabilitation of streetlights and patching and tarring of roads, among others.

She also took the participants through social intervention programmes such as the presentation of working tools and equipment to Persons Living with Disability (PLWDs) and farm inputs such as cashew seedling and fertilisers to farmers.

The MCE outlined the assembly's plans to clear heaps of refuse at the various dumping sites to keep the municipality clean.

Livelihood programme

Mrs Owusu-Banahene said a total of 2,077 people were trained in the Green Skills Project, an environmentally friendly livelihood programme implemented in 20 communities to create jobs and employment for women and youth in the municipality.

She said the beneficiaries were trained and supported in poultry and fish farming, organic vegetable production, beekeeping, rabbit, grass-cutter and snail rearing as well as afforestation.

She added that the economic development project was implemented by the assembly in collaboration with Plan Ghana and funded by the European Union to support residents with employable skills.

She again explained that 122 artisans made up of 109 females and 13 males were also trained in skills development such as mushroom production, soap making, fresh yoghurt preparation, detergent and bead making.

Mrs Owusu-Banahene explained that the assembly and Zoomlion Company were providing a door-to-door waste collection service to improve waste collection in the municipality.

She said the assembly had procured hundreds of litter bins to enhance the door-to-service and instituted sanitation day clean-up

@ a glance

The Sunyani Municipal Assembly is to retool and expand two existing processing factories as part of the government's flagship One-District, One-Factory (1D1F) programme.

Revenue performance

Mrs Owusu-Banahene, said the assembly had adopted strategies to improve revenue performance such as the enforcement of building regulations for the payment of permits, the serving of all demand notices by close of every month and improving the capacity of revenue collectors.

She explained that the assembly was also constructing market centres in some communities to improve trading in a bid to increase the assembly's revenue.

Challenges

Mrs Owusu-Banahene said the use of obsolete equipment by the assembly was affecting productivity and service delivery, especially waste management equipment.

She said there was pressure on the assembly's internally generated fund (IGF) for waste management as the municipality continued to grow in terms of population.



Mr Denis A. Asai (standing), National General Secretary of COHNAG, addressing the press conference

Community nurses demand justice for slain colleague

From Daniel Kenu, KUMASI

THE Community Health Nurses Association of Ghana (COHNAG) has demanded swift action from the Ashanti Regional Police Command to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators involved in the alleged rape and killing of one of their own, Ruth Ama Eshun, on February 3, 2020 at Ayum.

The deceased nurse, who was with the Sewua Health Centre in the Bosomtwe District of the region, was found dead few metres from her residence with her underwear pulled down in what appeared to be an attempted rape before her killing.

A police source said two people had been arrested in connection with the killing but no further information was provided.

Past incidents

The National Public Relations Officer of COHNAG, Mr Joseph Appiah-Kubi, said in the recent past, some members had been killed in cold blood yet nothing had been heard of their killers.

"As for this one, we will not allow it to pass unnoticed like the others. We call for justice now," he said.

Mr Appiah-Kubi said: "We demand an immediate action against these horrible crimes and call on all members to stay calm as we pursue the case to its logical conclusion."

While demanding justice, the association also called for increased security for all nurses, especially those who worked at night.

He urged the Ghana Health Service and all stakeholders to liaise with all security agencies in the country to find the culprits.

Ongoing projects

The DCE mentioned a good number of ongoing development projects including classroom blocks being put up by the assembly, major roads and feeder roads from Adumasa through Gyakiti and Anyaase among others which were being undertaken by the central government.

He said the district was poised to implement all the programmes and projects outlined by the government and the assembly and stressed the need for the various heads of departments and institutions within the district to help the assembly achieve the targets set.



Mrs Justina Owusu-Banahene, MCE for Sunyani, addressing the meeting

Railway project on course

Asuogyaman DCE assures residents

From Ezekiel E. Sottie, ATIMPOKU

THE District Chief Executive for Asuogyaman in the Eastern Region, Mr Samuel Kwame Agyekum, has assured the people of Asuogyaman that nothing will hinder the ongoing construction of a railway line from Tema to Mpakadan in the Asuogyaman District.

He said the construction of the rail line was a government project and nobody would prevent the government from completing the project for which huge financial commitments had been made.

"This is a government project and the government has made a commitment with a huge loan facility. When it is finally completed, economic activities in the country will be enhanced and Asuogyaman will be one of the beneficiaries because of the port to be sited at Mpakadan.

"We the people of Asuogyaman are fortunate to have the railway run through our district. We should rather be the people who should support the government in every possible way to ensure that the project is completed on schedule for us to start enjoying the benefits," Mr Agyekum stressed.

He gave the assurance in response to questions from the press at the engagement at the district assembly at Atimpoku last Wednesday.

Mr Agyekum said there was no doubt that the railway project would grow the economy of the district.

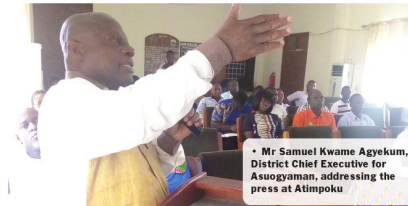
"Whatever it takes for the government and for that matter the Asuogyaman District Assembly to ensure that the project is completed will be done without any hindrance, because the government and the district assembly supersede those individuals hindering the project. I can assure you that we have cleared those impediments and the way is very clear for the ongoing project to succeed," he added.

Land litigation

Responding to a question regarding the railway construction and matters arising in the Asuogyaman District, he explained that some individuals who claimed to be land owners were putting impediments in the way of the contractors.

He said those individuals claimed that the government was dealing with the Omanehene of the Akwamu Traditional Area instead of dealing with them.

"Personally, I do not see anything wrong with the construction firm consulting the paramount chief of the area who represents the people in his traditional area and, therefore, I appeal to our people to withdraw their stance which will not help us in any way," he said.



Mr Samuel Kwame Agyekum, District Chief Executive for Asuogyaman, addressing the press at Atimpoku

Succeeded projects

The DCE said he inherited as many as

13 uncompleted projects in 2017 from the previous government which were scattered

Successor to interdicted education director passes on

From Emmanuel Modey, WA

THE Wa Municipal Director of Education, Ms Theresa Ninnang Sung-Aabu, who was to take over from the interdicted Upper West Regional Director of Education, Mr Duncan Nsoh, 55, has passed away, three days after she was named to act.

She died at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra yesterday morning after what some family sources described as a short illness.

This was a day after the letter promoting her to take up a higher responsibility as the acting Regional Director of Education for the Upper West Region was dispatched.

Ms Sung-Aabu herself had been on retirement since October last year, sources at the Regional GES office told the *Daily Graphic*.

The interdiction of Nsor and the order to hand over, contained in a letter

The death of Ms Sung-Aabu took Wa by surprise as most of the people expressed shock at the news, although she had not been well for some time now.

signed by the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, Professor Kwasi Opoku Amankwa, occurred last Wednesday.

"You're to hand over the office to the Wa Municipal Director of Education, who is by a copy of this letter, directed to take temporary responsibility for the region during the period of the interdiction," Prof. Opoku-Amankwa wrote.

Surprise

The death of Ms Sung-Aabu took Wa by surprise as most of the people expressed shock at the news, although she had not been well for some time.

She was the husband of a former Regional Chairman of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr Matthew Aabu-Sung, who is also a businessman based in Wa.

When the *Daily Graphic* visited her residence, the place was deserted as the family was said to be in Accra, where she had been admitted before her passing.

Interdiction

Mr Nsor was interdicted last Wednesday on circumstances surrounding the auctioning of a truck belonging to the Wa School for the Deaf.

According to the GES, in a letter signed by the Director-General, Professor Kwasi Opoku-Amankwa, at the time of the auction, the truck was still under the care of Mr Nsor, who had refused to notify the school or the Director-General about the



• The late Theresa Ninnang Sung-Aabu

development.

The letter of his interdiction was to facilitate investigations into allegations against him including "bribery in the appointment of some heads of some second cycle schools in the region".

Nsor was also alleged to have deducted money from some allowances belonging to teachers in the region.

Background

Mr Nsor, who took over the position following the retirement of Mr Evans Kpebah on June 3, last year, was the Pusiga District Director of Education.

The DG has since set up an investigative committee to look into the issues.

22-year-old herbalist remanded for defiling girl, 11

From Samuel Duodu, TAMALE

A 22-YEAR-OLD herbalist who allegedly defiled an 11-year-old girl at his shrine at Gbayamili, near Tamale in the Northern Region has been remanded in prison custody.

The mother of the girl had sought the assistance of the herbalist, Adam Arafat, to cure her daughter of an ailment but he ended up allegedly defiling her.

The victim, who is said to have bled from her private parts and unable to walk after the act, is on admission at the Tamale Teaching Hospital (TTH).

Charges

The Northern Regional Coordinator of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service,

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mr Emmanuel Holortu, who made this known to the *Daily Graphic* in Tamale yesterday, said the suspect was charged with defilement and sent to court to be remanded until the victim was discharged from hospital for the case to continue.

DSP Holortu said the herbalist had advertised his work in the media and added his phone numbers in order for people to contact him for help, and that was how the mother of the victim was able to reach him.

He said after the mother contacted the suspect on phone, she travelled with the girl from Bawku in the Upper East Region to see the herbalist to cure her.

DSP Holortu stated that the victim and her mother arrived in Tamale from Bawku about 9 p.m. on February 10, 2020 and called the suspect who met them at the lorry station. He then hired a tricycle, popularly

known as 'yellow yellow', for them to follow him while he rode on his motorbike to his shrine at Gbayamili where they lodged that night.

He said the following day, the suspect asked the mother of the victim to go and buy a bottle of Schnapps to enable him to prepare some concoctions for them for the treatment of the ailment.

The DOVVSU commander said immediately the mother left the shrine, the herbalist forcibly had sex with the victim and warned the girl not to tell anybody about the act or else she would die.

@ a glance



■ A self-styled herbalist is in the grip of the police in the Northern Region for allegedly defiling an 11-year-old girl.

DSP Holortu added that when the victim's mother returned with the bottle of Schnapps, Arafat prepared the concoction for them, but when the woman and her daughter left the shrine, the former realised that the girl could not walk well.

When she asked the girl why that was so, the victim told the mother that she was sexually assaulted by Arafat when she (mother) left them.

The girl, the DOVVSU commander said, further told her mother that she bled from her private parts after the act.

Complaint

DSP Holortu said the mother lodged a complaint at the police station and the suspect was arrested.

He stated that the victim, who could not walk then, was sent to the TTH for medical attention.

He said after investigations, the suspect was charged with the offence.

Opinion

Patrick Akorli bows out in style

• As MD/CEO of GOIL

REFLECTIONS

By
Razak
El-Alawa



LAST Saturday will stand out as a great day in the life of Patrick Akpe Kwami Akorli, a day the former MD and Group CEO of GOIL will forever remember and cherish, as the company organised a lavish send-off for the man who was the face of GOIL in the last decade.

Accolades and encomiums were poured on him from all angles. Dignitaries, who gave testimonies about his achievements and contributions to GOIL, spoke in superlatives.

A documentary on how Mr Akorli changed the fortunes of GOIL in the past 10 years featured former board chairmen of the company, Mr Freddy Blay and Professor William Asoomang, Mr Yaw Agyemang Duah, MD of GOIL for 12 years, and under whom Mr Akorli served in various capacities and Mr Kwamena Bartels, the current Board Chairman, and Mrs Norkor Duah, CEO of Millen Lowe.

Praise

In his welcome address, Mr Kwame Osei-Prempeh, the man who has taken over from Mr Akorli as Group CEO and MD, remarked that Mr Akorli deserved every encomium poured on him, stressing that the history of GOIL would not be complete without a permanent place being reserved for him.

"His love for Ghana is exemplary and in everything he did, he placed Ghana first and above all considerations," Mr Osei-Prempeh added.

He said there have been several MDs at GOIL, but he believed his predecessor was the greatest of them all, a fantastic manager and somebody who was in total control and always on top of issues when he was at the helm of affairs.

The guest speaker, Mr Simon Osei-Mensah, who is also the Ashanti Regional Minister, said he just could not afford to miss the great occasion, despite the volume of work he had to

leave behind.

He described Mr Akorli as a great friend, whom he respected because of his humility. "At the same time, he is a workaholic who is interested in details, a great team player with great attributes and sound management practices", Mr Osei-Mensah added.

Calibre

The calibre of people who gathered at the Movenpick Hotel last Saturday night bore testimony to the great esteem in which Mr Akorli is held. It spoke volumes of the man who was being honoured with such a wonderful send-off.

It was a great night for the bigger GOIL family that included former board members led by the chairmen, retired and current management staff, family members including his beautiful wife Peace and handsome children, friends and well-wishers.

Also in attendance were Lt Gen. Obed Akwa, Chief of Defence Staff, and other military leaders, who, I know, would always owe Mr Akorli a huge debt of gratitude because it was only GOIL, Ghana's own, that would offer credit facilities to the Armed Forces in the supply of fuel.

Conspicuously present was Alhaji Hassan Tampuri, CEO of National Petroleum Authority (NPA). There was also Barima Azuma Nelson, Ghana's former World Featherweight boxing Champion, who has been a GOIL brand ambassador for some time now.

Mr Kwaku Agyemang Dua, the

CEO of the Association of Oil Marketing Companies, Mr Senyo Hosi, head of the Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors and other captains and MDs of Oil Marketing Companies including Total, representatives of Ecobank, Prudential, GCB Bank, First Atlantic, who are bankers of GOIL, graced the occasion.

The presence of traditional rulers also added colour to the occasion. They not only come to show love to a fellow traditional ruler, Dutorfia of Ziavi, Togbe Adza-Nye IV in the Ho Municipality, as Mr Akorli is known in traditional circles, but to celebrate with him in his moment of glory.

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene, who described Mr Akorli as his grandson, could not be present physically, but he sent a delegation, led by Barima Kwadwo Bonsu, who came with kind words and a gift.

The Omanhene of the Kokofu Traditional Area in Ashanti also found time to be present, while Togbe Afede, the Agbogbomefia of Asogli, sent representatives, in addition to a host of other traditional rulers from the Volta Region.

Apart from the gift from Otumfuo, the GOIL Board Management and Staff presented a citation, while the immediate past board, led by Prof.

Accolades and encomiums were poured on him from all angles. Dignitaries, who gave testimonies about his achievements and contributions to GOIL, spoke in superlatives.

Assomanging and that included my humble self, presented gifts to Mr Akorli and his wife, as did GOIL dealers and the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU).

Farewell

Mr Akorli acknowledged, in his farewell speech, that last Saturday evening marked the end of a glorious chapter in his life, a journey that started 25 years ago as a casual worker in 1994 and that took him through various positions and experiences, notable among them being Chief Accountant, Treasurer, Controller, Internal Auditor, Chief Internal Auditor, Head of Finance, Managing Director and finally Group CEO and MD.

"Over the last five years, we have won the CIMG company of the year four times, with the honour of CIMG Marketing Man

of the year being bestowed on myself in 2015. As a chartered accountant, I must say this award was beyond my wildest dreams and was one of my proudest moments," he recalled.

He thanked all those he met in his line of duty and who had helped him to succeed, while expressing his gratitude to the three ministers of Energy he had worked with, namely Mr Armah Kofi Buah, Mr Boagye Agyarko and the incumbent, Mr John-Peter Amewu.

Finally he paid glowing tribute to the three presidents who allowed him to serve, the late Prof. J. E. Atta- Mills, John Mahama and the sitting President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, who not only allowed him to serve his term, but also went on to appoint him as the current chairman of GoEnergy, a subsidiary of GOIL.

Congratulations, Togbe. Enjoy your retirement.

Writer's E-mail:
elzakmediaconsult@yahoo.com/
Mob. 0275 193140



• Mr Patrick Akorli (left) receiving a parting gift from Barima Osei Kwadwo

Call to Higher Service



H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, H.E Alhaji Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President and Chairman of Armed Forces Council, Nana Osei Nyarko III Omanhene of Boso Guan Traditional Area & Vice President of Eastern Regional House of Chiefs, The Quashie family of Saltpond and Boso, Mr. Joseph Amoo Dodoo, Nii Dodoo Nsaki II Otublohum Mantse (President of Ghana Traditional Council), Nii Amoo III Otublohum Dzaasetse, Nii Kpakpo Oti IV Otublohum Adontenhene, Nii Oto Blafo IV Otublohum Seitse, Nii Dzaase Bannerman, Mr Joseph A Dodoo, Nana Kwame Fori (Head of Mould Family), Gp Capt Frank Okine (Rtd), Brig Gen Charles Richter-Addo (Rtd), Helena A Dede Heward-Mills (Elder of Naa Namoah We of Otoblohum), Prof. James Simeon Quashie-Sam, Mr. James Quashie Idun, Prof. Mrs. Martha Dodoo-Tamakloe, Mrs. Kwadu Y. Morton, Mr. Osei Tutu Prempeh, Emmanuel NA Quarcoo, Mr Reginald Laryea, MOBA 1970, Rev. Dr. E. S. M Markwei. The Minister of Defence, Hon. Dominic Nitiwul, Hon. Seth Acheampong, MP for Mpraeso Constituency and Chairman of Parliamentary Select Committee for Defence and Interior, the Chief of the Defence Staff Lt Gen Obed Boamah-Akwa, the Chief of Army Staff, Maj Gen William Azure Ayamdo, the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Seth Amoama, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshall Frank Hanson, GMA Intake 15 announce with regret the passing on of their beloved

VICE ADMIRAL MATTHEW KOFI OWUYA QUASHIE (RTD) 1951 - 2020

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- There will be no wake**
- BURIAL SERVICE:** Friday 21st February 2020
- TIME:** 8:00am
- VENUE:** Garrison Methodist Presby Church, Burma Camp
- RECEPTION:** Arakan Officers' Mess
- ATTIRE:** Black and Red
- THANKSGIVING SERVICE:** Sunday 23rd February 2020 at Living Streams Int. Church, Trade Fair, La behind Zenith College at 10:am
- ATTIRE:** Black and Red

CHILDREN: Mr. Geoffrey B. Quashie, Mrs. Vanessa B. Ababio, Mrs. Antoinette B. Sovereign, Mrs. Amaria N. O. Fekpe, Mr. Joseph N. B. Quashie, Mrs. Natasha N. A Allotey, Mr. Matthew K.O. Quashie and Mrs. Deborah N. O. Nkansah

SIBLINGS: Ms. Matilda Quashie, Ms. Florence Quashie, Mr. Robert Quashie, Ms. Christiana Quashie, Mrs. Georgina Quashie-Addy, Mrs. Edna M. T. Lartey and Siblings, Mr. Oscar Quashie and Siblings, Ms. Felicia Quashie, Mr. Samuel Quashie and Siblings, Mr. Adolphus Quashie and Sisters.

IN-LAWS: Mrs. Michelle Quashie, Mr. Enoch Ababio, Mr. Cecil Sovereign, Mr. Paul Fekpe, Mrs. Persis Quashie, Mr. Reginald Allotey, Mrs. Lady Quashie and Capt Collins Nkansah.

UNCLES & AUNTIES: Mr. Osei Tutu Prempeh, Mr. Joseph Amoo Dodoo, Mrs. Konadu K.Y. Prempeh Morton, Prof. Mrs. Martha Dodoo-Tamakloe, Mrs. Comfort Bannerman, Mr. Joseph Blankson & Siblings

COUSINS: Charles James Bannerman, Lawrence S. Bannerman & Siblings, Samuel Lantey Bannerman,

Adolphus B. Quashie & Sis, Mrs O. Naa Shorme Heward-Mills and siblings, Nii Kwate Owoo, Mrs Joana Dedoe Gyekye and Siblings, Adwoa Coleman and Siblings, Martin Quashie, Mrs. Veronica Ayensu Thompson, Clifford Ankrah & Sis, Aunty Naa Namoah Ankrah & Siblings, Mrs. Henrietta Lokko, Mrs. Juliet Glover, David A Coffie, Mrs. Joana Dede Gyegye & Siblings, Ms. Elizabeth Blankson & Siblings, Juliana Copson & Siblings. Mad. Anna Smith & Siblings, Elizabeth Otoo & Siblings, Mrs. Gladys Okine & Siblings, Mrs. Davida Adomakoh

NEPHEWS & NIECES: Mrs. Lovelace Tuffour, Innocent Boye, Magdalene Boye, Martha Lartey, Mrs. Matilda Quartey, Diana Laryea, Curtis Quashie, Joycelyn Quashie & Bro, Brenda Quashie, Charles Quashie, Enoch K Costley and Joseph E Boateng, Madam Naa Nettey & Siblings, Mrs. Mirinda Amusah, Mrs. Selina Assak, Mrs. Vera Quaye & Siblings, James E. Bannerman-Quaye & Siblings, Joseph Dove, Mrs. Maud Aduma Dodoo, Mrs. S. Naa Koshie Appiah Koranteng, Regina K Aryee & Siblings, Aurora Dose, Dorinda A Bannerman-Menson

GRANDCHILDREN: 15

CHIEF MOURNERS: Nana Osei Nyako III Omanhene of Boso Guan Traditional Area & Vice President of Eastern Regional House of chiefs. Mr. Robert Darko Dodoo (Oheneba of Otoblohum), Mr. Joseph Amoo Dodoo, Nii Dodoo Nsaki II Otublohum Mantse (President of Ga Traditional Council), Nii Amoo III Otublohum Dzaasetse, Nii Kpakpo Oti IV Otublohum Adontenhene, Nii Oto Blafo IV Otublohum Seitse, Nii Dzaase Bannerman, Nana Kwame Fori (Head of Mould Family), Brig Gen Charles Richter-Addo (Rtd) Gp Capt Frank Okine Rtd, Helena A Dede Heward-Mills (Elder of Naa Namoah We of Otoblohum), H. E Aanaa Enim (Former Ambassador Netherlands), H. E Mrs. Eudora Quartey-Koranteng (Ambassador, Italy), Prof. Mariam Greenstreet, Prof. Simon J. Quashie-Sam, Mr. James Quashie-Idun, Mr. Joseph Amu Dodoo (Head of Dodoo Family), Mrs. Kwadu Yidom Morton, Mr. Osei Tutu Prempeh, Pro. Mrs. Martha Dodoo-Tamakloe, Prof. Emmanuel Tamakloe, Dr. Nyaho Nyaho Tamakloe, Amua Dodoo, Emmanuel Nii Aryee Quarcoo, Mr Reginald Laryea, Rev. Dr. E.S.M. Markwei MOBA 1970, Ex W.O 1 Enoch Aryeetey, the entire families of Quashie, Dodoo, Bannerman, Ankrah, Tamakloe, Quartey & All allied Families.

All friends and Sympathisers are invited

Mental health stakeholders call for mental health levy

Jennifer Kwasin & Rejoice Lavinia Eku

A FOUR-YEAR strategic plan to revamp mental health delivery in the country remains on paper. This is because the Mental Health Authority does not have the GH¢254 million it requires to execute the plan.

Some of the activities slated to be undertaken in the four-year plan that was developed in August last year include renovating the Accra Psychiatric Hospital into a modern facility, as well as establishing psychiatric units in all regional and district hospitals.

"The establishment of psychiatric units in regional and district hospitals is meant to enable them to admit at least 20 patients for a two-week period before they are referred to the main psychiatric hospital," the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mental Health Authority, Dr Akwasi Osei, said.

He was speaking at a stakeholders' forum on mental health organised by Basic Needs Ghana in Accra last Thursday.

"We'll need about GH¢254 million to begin our operations and undertake infrastructural works this year," he stated.

He said further that the authority would subsequently require GH¢30 million every year to meet its operational needs and build the infrastructure suitable for an efficient and effective mental health delivery system.

Dr Osei called on the government to institute a mental health levy to adequately resource the country's mental health service.

Forum

The forum was organised by Basic Needs Ghana, in collaboration with the Mental Health Authority and the Alliance for Mental Health and Development, a platform for civil society

Fact Sheet

- In Ghana, about 13 per cent of the adult population is estimated to have one mental health condition or another.
- Mental health disorders account for 14 per cent of the disease burden worldwide.

need to have a mental health levy in place to secure vital resources for the authority.

Strategic plans

Dr Osei said the Mental Health Authority's four-year strategic plan was part of the authority's long-term plan over 12 years in the hope of providing mental health patients in the country with expert care.

"Mental health care in Ghana should be well structured by the end of 2030," he said.

Other activities under the long-term plan include providing a mobile system to receive complaints from family and friends when people begin to show abnormality, as well as setting up a mental health review tribunal to deal with legal cases emanating from mental issues.

Inadequate psychiatrists

In a speech read on his behalf, the

Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr Patrick Aboagye, acknowledged that the country needed more psychiatrists in order to reduce the presence of mentally challenged persons on the streets.

He said there were only 39 psychiatrists in the country, made up of 14 consultants and 25 specialists.

"Out of this number, 31 are in public service, three on contract, three in private practice and two on retirement," he added.

He observed that the number of psychiatrists in the country was "highly inadequate for our population", and requested the support of stakeholders to assist the GHS to train more psychiatrists to treat mentally challenged persons.

He further appealed to the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) to include mentally challenged persons in the Disability Fund under the District Assemblies Common Fund (DAFCF).

"Mental illness is a disability. Persons with mental illness, therefore, qualify to benefit from the three per cent of the district assemblies disability fund," he said.

Approve levy

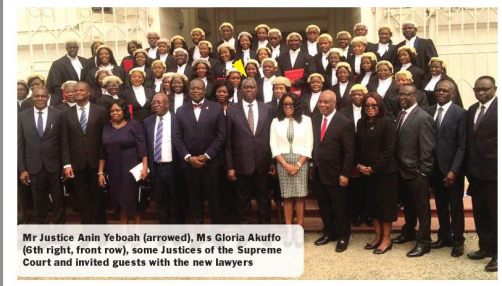
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"We all run the risk of having a mental health disorder anytime in our lives, and so if our institutions are not in the best position to administer care, then we risk losing so many lives," he added.



Dr Akwasi Osei (left) interacting with Dr Ernest Konadu Asiedu (middle), Head of Quality Management, Ministry of Health, and Dr Samuel Kaba, Director, Institutional Care, Ghana Health Service, after the opening ceremony. Picture: MAXWELL OCLLOO



Mr Justice Anin Yeboah (arrowed), Ms Gloria Akuffo (6th right, front row), some Justices of the Supreme Court and invited guests with the new lawyers

49 Newly enrolled lawyers asked to uphold professionalism

By Severious Kale-Dery & Justice Agbenosi

THE Chief Justice, Justice Kwasi Anin Yeboah, has enrolled 49 newly qualified lawyers to the Bar and called on them to uphold professionalism and the ethics in the profession in the course of their work.

He said the number of cases of indiscipline brought against lawyers and which were before the Disciplinary Committee of the General Legal Council was currently on the increase, hence the need for the new lawyers to conduct themselves well in order to avoid being penalised.

"Many of the lawyers, who appear before the disciplinary committee, are young lawyers who come because they lack self-discipline and have the 'get-rich-quick' mentality," Justice Anin Yeboah said.

Self-discipline

The Chief Justice further

emphasised the need for the newly qualified lawyers to pursue their career with discipline adding: "In all your pursuits, you have to be disciplined. Self-discipline should inform your work habits and restrain your emotions in the face of challenges."

Justice Anin Yeboah said the pain of self-discipline was less than the regret one faced later in life. He said the General Legal Council would not close its eyes to infractions on the part of any legal practitioner.

The ceremony

The enrolment ceremony for the newly qualified lawyers happened yesterday at the Supreme Court in Accra.

The occasion was graced by some legal luminaries including the Attorney-General, Ms Gloria Akuffo.

Dressed in black gowns with white wigs, the lawyers were filled with joy when the Chief Justice pronounced that they had officially been called to the

Bar. The hall was fully packed with dignitaries, lawyers, relatives, friends and well wishers such that some had to stand outside to listen to proceedings.

Journalists, who covered the event, were made to go through rigorous security checks, while those without invitation were denied access to the hall.

Research

The Chief Justice said the law profession had undergone transformation requiring that lawyers undertake continuous research in order to become abreast of developments in all facets of law.

He informed the new lawyers that they might come across cases and situations that might not have been addressed through their tuition at the Ghana School of Law.

"The life of a young lawyer should be characterised by humility, respect for seniors at the Bar and the Bench,

willingness to learn, and pursuit of knowledge beyond the frontiers of the Ghana School of Law.

"If you consider yourself a learner you will find that your seniors at the Bar would be willing to guide you in all you do," he said.

Justice Anin Yeboah also advised the young lawyers to keep cordial, honest, diligent and respectful relationships.

Legal training

The Chief Justice said the Ghana School of Law was under intense pressure considering that there were 14 faculties of law offering the Bachelor of Law (LLB) course.

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Justice Anin Yeboah said the General Legal Council was, however, considering opening up professional legal training to other qualified institutions.

That, he explained, would only be possible if such institutions met the set criteria stipulated in the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, which was currently before Parliament.

Scan to listen to the Chief Justice

Graphic LIVE

Ghana marks National Chocolate Day

By Emelia Ennin Abbey

THIS year's National Chocolate Day was celebrated in Accra yesterday with a call on operators in the hospitality industry to promote the consumption of cocoa products.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi, who made the call, said increased patronage of cocoa products offered an opportunity to boost the cocoa sector and the economy and provide employment for people.

The Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) instituted the day in 2005, in partnership with the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Cocoa Processing Company (CPC), to coincide with Valentine's Day.

The day is meant to raise awareness of the need for the public to patronise cocoa products as a means of helping generate more revenue for national development and to improve general well-being.

The theme for this year's edition: "My Chocolate Experience. My Holistic Well-being", was chosen to drive the consumption of chocolate in the country and the rest of the world.



Nana Agyemim Boateng (2nd left) presenting a gift to Mrs Esther Obetsebi-Lamprey (right). Looking on are Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi (left), Nana Adwoa Dokua (3rd right), a Board Member of COCOBOD, and Nii Okwei Kinka Dowuona VI (2nd right), the Osu Mantse. Picture: EBOW HANSON

"I encourage Ghanaians to patronise made-in-Ghana chocolate and give it out as presents to their loved ones, especially on special occasions such as birthdays."

Tourism

Mrs Oteng-Gyasi expressed the hope that the National Chocolate Day would also increase awareness of the health benefits of consuming chocolate.

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of penetrating international markets easily.

"Cocoa is Ghana and Ghana is cocoa. Long live the golden pod and long live Ghana," she said.

Tribute

The Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Tourism Authority, Mr Akwasi Agyeman, paid tribute to the late Jake Otankor Obetsebi-Lamprey, a former Minister of Tourism, who initiated the National Chocolate Day.

He urged operators in the hospitality industry to serve made-in-Ghana cocoa products to their clientele as their

contribution towards the growth of the industry and the nation.

"Let us replace tea and coffee with cocoa," he advised.

Gifts

The Managing Director of CPC, Nana Agyemim Boateng, suggested the use of cocoa-based products as gifts for loved ones.

He said the health benefits of consuming chocolate and cocoa products were enormous.

"If you want to live long, continue to consume cocoa products," he said.

Nana Agyemim Boateng said the CPC was

committed to ensuring that the public and indeed all patrons of the company's products consumed cocoa products that were of the highest quality.

Currently, he said, through the School Feeding Programme, the CPC supplied 650 schools across the country with cocoa products.

The company, he added, had rebranded and introduced 19 more products to its product line, including white chocolates, chocolates with nuts and a mixture of cocoa and coffee.

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Celebrating farmers

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Mr Joseph Boshen Aidoo, said celebrating Chocolate Day meant celebrating the cocoa crop and the farmers involved in growing the crop.

Ghana's cocoa, he said, was of the highest premium quality.

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Brilliant initiative

The Osu Mantse, Nii Okwei Kinka Dowuona VI, said the promotion of the National Chocolate Day was a good initiative and the support ought to be extended to all other goods made in the country.

A citation in honour of the late Mr Obetsebi-Lamprey was presented to his wife, Mrs Esther Obetsebi-Lamprey. She will also receive a monthly supply of chocolate products from the CPC.

The Ghana Dance Company entertained patrons on the occasion of the 15th National Chocolate Day with captivating traditional dance performances, while the winner of the 2019 edition of Talented Kids, seven-year-old Nakeyat Dramani, educated the public on the health benefits that could be derived from consuming cocoa through a poetry recital.

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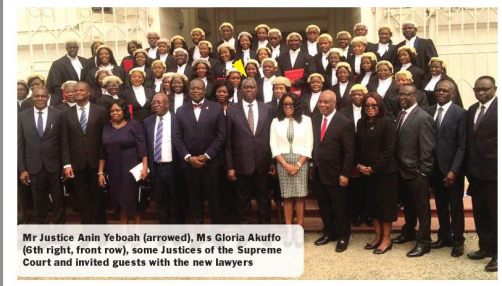
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Politics

CSOs take stock of aborted referendum

By Caroline Boateng

CIVIL society organisations have gathered to reflect on lessons and share their experiences of the aborted December 17, 2019 referendum.

The referendum was to amend Article 55(3) of the 1992 Constitution to legalise the participation of political parties in the election of district chief executives.

However, on December 1, 2019, President Nana Akufo-Addo, in a broadcast to the nation, called it off because he said the consensus for a successful "yes" vote was lacking.

Partners

The meeting, organised by STAR Ghana and the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), also brought

together the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and NORSAAC, a civil society organisation based in the northern regions of Ghana.

All the groups partnered and worked together for a successful referendum before it was aborted.

Representatives of the European Union, the British High Commission, Oxfam, political parties, the Institute of Local Government Studies and the National Association of Local Authorities Ghana (NALAG) were also at the meeting which provided the forum for the participants to reflect, dialogue and learn.

Perspectives

Sharing the perspectives of IDEG, a Senior Researcher, Mr Kwesi Jonah, said the fact that the exercise had been aborted did not mean all hope was lost in the bid to elect local authorities.

He said even after the announcement by the President, the

Chairman of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr Oforu Ampofo, had written to the President indicating their position to dialogue on the issues with him.

Mr Jonah said a highlight of the referendum was that there had been no legal tussles over the issue between individuals.

However, one pitfall of the process, accounting for it being aborted by the President, was the fact that campaigners for the involvement of political parties in the election of local authorities did not have the commitment of those at the helm of political party affairs.

Also, consultations by partners were good but not enough to get all on board.

He said the misconception that the referendum was to change the Constitution to "elect local authorities" instead of a change of Article 55(3) to make legal the participation of political parties in local governance elections

Highlight

Mr Jonah said the misconception that the referendum was to change the Constitution to "elect local authorities" instead of a change of Article 55(3) to make legal the participation of political parties in local governance elections was a wrong message that went out.

Mr Jonah said at a point in time, it seemed IDEG was taking sides; however it was IDEG's long-term commitment after the Constitution review process to engage for better participatory engagements in local-level elections.

Reflection

A representative of STAR Ghana, Mr Frank Kweku Amoateng, said the reflection was important for the next step.

He advocated the documentation of lessons and experiences to serve as a blueprint for the future.

The Gender and Governance Manager of NORSAAC, Ms Kawusada Abubakari, in her review mentioned the fact that there was no communication about how the government was funding the referendum.

There were also some gaps in communication to the vulnerable, including the hearing-impaired and blind, with no information at all about how they were to participate in the process.

A representative of the GJA, Ms Rebecca Ekpe, said the GJA collaborated with civil society organisations with the research base to lobby and sensitise for a 'yes' vote.

She said various programmes to ensure an inclusive local governance through opening up participation in local party politics were rolled out.

According to her, a review of the efforts of the GJA showed a dearth in the leadership of the process, building consensus and the vulnerable being left behind in the process.

Writer's E-mail:

caroline.boateng@graphic.com



• Mr Kwesi Jonah (right) speaking to participants in the forum. Picture: MAXWELL OCLLOO



#GHANAVOTES2020

Kwadaso MP confident of re-election

THE Member of Parliament (MP) for Kwadaso, Dr Samiu K. Nuamah, has expressed optimism about his re-election in the upcoming primaries of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), urging the party delegates to rally solidly behind him for a resounding victory.

"Kwadaso is noted for kicking out MPs after their first term, but this time, the status quo ought to change," he remarked, saying there

was the need for continuity in progress.

The party, he said, should always close its ranks and strive for unity of purpose, doing away with all differences and personal interests for sustainable development and growth.

Dr Nuamah, in an interview with the Ghana News Agency (GNA) at Kwadaso after presenting his nomination forms at the party

office, observed that the NPP's vision was to build a prosperous Ghana.

Therefore, the party must focus on its vision and development agenda devoid of utterances and actions likely to distract its attention.

Party office

The Kwadaso MP cited refurbishment of the party office, educational development and

introduction of youth-friendly programmes as some of his achievements so far in his first term of office.

He has also embarked on several mentorship projects designed to encourage the youth to strive for excellence in their respective fields of endeavour, while contributing significantly to the creation of the Kwadaso Municipality.

Mr Yaw Bonah Boadi, Kwadaso NPP Constituency Chairman, who received the forms, advised the party faithful to work hard in ensuring massive victory for the party in the 2020 general election.

Present at the ceremony were party delegates, supporters and executives. — GNA



• Dr Samiu K. Nuamah

NDC cannot take credit for oil sector growth — Govt

By Desmond Kofi Tawiah

THE Ministry of Energy has stated that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) cannot claim credit for the accelerated growth in the oil sector.

The ministry has described as “misleading” assertions made by the NDC that it adopted policies to ensure the nation consistently increased its share in most petroleum agreements that were negotiated during their tenure.

Background

The NDC in a policy dialogue series last Wednesday, addressed by the Member of Parliament for Yapei/Kasawgu, Mr John Jinapor, accused the government of wasting resources and insisted that the NDC has a far superior record during its tenure compared to that of the President Nana

Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo government.

Reaction

In a reaction to the NDC’s claim, the Deputy Minister of Energy in charge of the petroleum sector, Dr Mohammed Amin Adam, at a press briefing in Accra yesterday, said the NDC did not have the moral right to compare its record to that of the Akufo-Addo government.

“The NDC cannot claim credit for the growth in government take in these contracts. These petroleum agreements were all negotiated and signed by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government under President John Agyekum Kufuor. All the petroleum agreements that are producing crude oil in the country were signed by the Kufuor’s government,” he explained.

He described as “factually untrue” the NDC’s claim that all the 13 petroleum agreements it signed during its tenure enhanced fiscal terms and increased national stake.

“The 13 Agreements signed by the NDC were signed between 2013 and 2016. Out of these, the only companies that have met their minimum obligations are ENI and Springfield. AGM had to change ownership under the NPP Government before it could meet its obligations.

The remaining 10 companies were to drill 11 wells. They have not drilled a single well. They were to spend \$700 million, but they spent only \$30 million,” he explained.

PIAC

Reacting to the NDC’s claim that it established the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) as an independent statutory body mandated to promote transparency and accountability in the management of petroleum resources in Ghana, Dr Adam said “the NDC created a weak PIAC as the committee was not given teeth to bite, but to merely produce semi-annual and annual reports, whose adverse findings cannot be enforced.”

“The NPP government is currently holding consultations with stakeholders on a draft natural resources governance bill, which is going to empower PIAC to enforce its findings,” he added.

BOST and TOR

Dr Adam also indicated that contrary to the NDC’s claim that the Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation Company Limited (BOST) and the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) were making profits during its tenure, they were rather running at a loss.

According to him, BOST, in January 2017, when the NDC handed over power, owed \$624 million to suppliers, Bulk Oil Distribution Companies (BDCs) and related parties in respect of crude oil imports for processing at TOR and refined products which got lost from BOST tanks.

“But as at February 2020, the outstanding amount to settle to clear the books now stands at \$57 million. An audit on BOST accounts shows that between the periods of 2013 and 2016, there was a significant rise in the net losses by the company with the highest net loss of GH¢569 million recorded in

the year 2016. The 2018 management account showed a 70 per cent reduction in losses from the previous year, 2017. Similarly, the 2019 management account indicated a further 41 per cent reduction in the loss level from the year 2018,” Dr Adam stated.

Dumsor

Dr Adam described the challenge thrown by the NDC to the government to shut down the power plants procured under the Mahama administration to see the magnitude of “dumsor” that will befall the country as “myopic”.

“We wish to remind the NDC that we are using the ‘Mahama power plants’ not because there are no other generating plants, most of which are owned by government, but because they committed the state to take or pay contracts over those plants which require us to pay for the power even if we don’t use the power. President Akufo-Addo will not subject Ghanaians to such a challenge by shutting down the plants and still be paying for them with taxes from Ghanaians,” he stated.

“The government of President Akufo-Addo has demonstrated significant commitment and resolve to manage the energy resources of our country efficiently for the benefit of our people,” Dr Adam added.



• Dr Mohammed Amin Adam, Deputy Energy Minister

#GHANAVOTES2020

EC calls on Otumfuo Osei Tutu II

A 10-MEMBER delegation from the Electoral Commission led by the Chairperson, Mrs Jean Mensa, has paid a courtesy call on the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.

The visit afforded the chairperson and her delegation the opportunity to brief the Asantehene on the reforms that had taken place since their assumption of office.

There were also discussions on operational issues relating to the electoral processes in the lead up to the conduct of the 2020 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

Welcoming the delegation, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II expressed his appreciation

for the visit and urged the commission to continue to work in consonance with the constitution for a successful Presidential and Parliamentary Elections slated for December 7.

Members of the delegation included Dr Bossman Eric Asare, Deputy Chairman in charge of Corporate Services, Mr Samuel Tettey, Deputy Chairman, in charge of Operations and Madam Adwoa Asuama Abrefa, a Commissioner.

The rest were Mrs Rebecca Ajalo, a Commission member, Dr Serebuor Quaicoo, the Director, Electoral Services, Dr Yaw Ofori-Agyei, an IT Consultant, and Mrs Sylvia Annoh, Acting Director Public Affairs. —GNA



• Mrs Jean Mensa, EC Chair, in a handshake with Otumfuo Osei Tutu II

Government considering abolishing death penalty

— President

By Donald Ato Dapatem,
JUBILEE HOUSE

PRESIDENT Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has hinted that the government will consider the removal of the death penalty from the country's statute books.

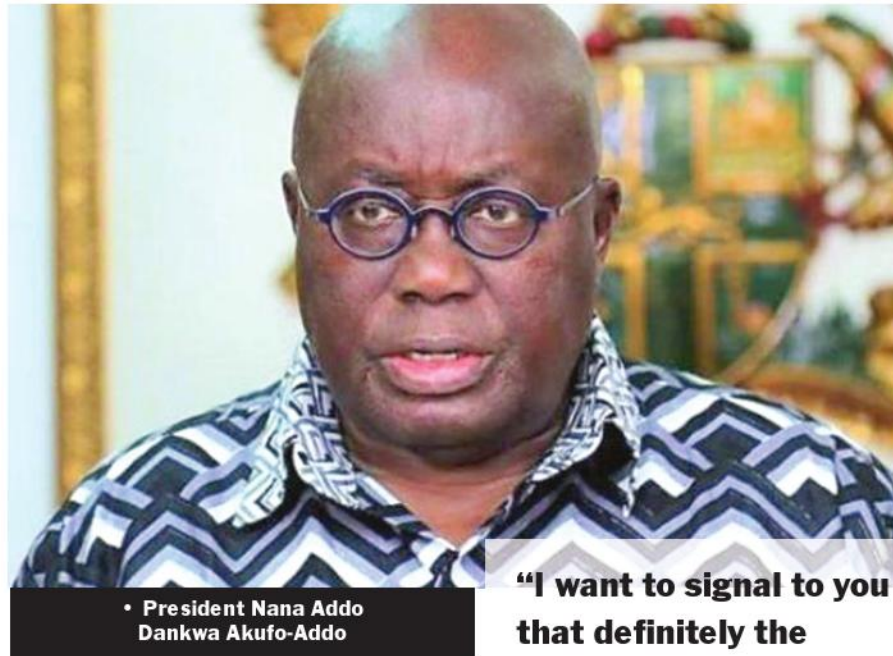
He said the suggestion by Amnesty International (AI) that five out of the six offences that qualify for the death penalty could easily be removed through the parliamentary process was something worth considering by the government.

The sixth offence, which is treason, could only be removed by referendum which is an entrenched clause.

President Akufo-Addo gave the commitment when members of the Ghana section of AI paid a courtesy call at the Jubilee House yesterday.

"I want to signal to you that definitely the ideas you have put forward on that [death penalty] are interesting, and I will have a close look and if indeed the consensus within government goes down on that path, so be it. Rightly, the issue of treason is different," he added.

Amnesty International suggested that the death penalty was an affront to the fundamental human rights of the people and could easily be replaced with life imprisonment without parole.



• President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo

Death Penalty

President Akufo-Addo noted that the abolition of the death penalty had attained global discussions with a lot of countries coming to terms with it.

"I think that the solutions they are proposing is ingenious, in that five out of six offences can be dealt with by statutory enactment," the President posited.

He gave an assurance that the ministers of justice and for the interior, and the heads of the various security agencies would brainstorm and bring some suggestions to cabinet for a decision.

He was of the view that when the issues

"I want to signal to you that definitely the ideas you have put forward on that [death penalty] are interesting, and I will have a close look and if indeed the consensus within government goes down on that path, so be it."

were laid before Parliament, it should go not as a party issue with party whips but it should go on a free vote so that people could express their views and not be driven by the whip of the majority party.

The President noted that the removal of the death penalty was a matter that should be the individual responsibility of Members of Parliament.

Prisons

President Akufo-Addo said the congestion at the country's prisons was unacceptable and noted that while resources were being sought to build new ones, moves would be made to assuage the conditions.

As of January 28, 2020, Ghana prisons' population was 14,824 as against the total capacity of 9,945.

Pardon and amnesty

President Akufo-Addo noted that the government was considering the possibility of increasing non-custodial sentences and that very soon it would make a pronouncement on it.

That, he said, was because it would not only ease congestion but enhance reforms and rehabilitation, and avoid a situation where people with minor offences were confined and exposed to hardened criminals.

Case

A member of AI Ghana, Mr Martin Kpebu, who made the case for the abolition of the death penalty, added that there had been a Supreme Court pronouncement on the issue and that the highest court of the land suggested an Act of Parliament to deal with it.

Another member of AI International, who spoke on the congestion in the prisons, Mr Samuel K. Agbotsey, commended the President for granting amnesty to 1,076 prisoners.

2 Organisations express disapproval over Ejisuman SHS students de-boardinisation

By Emmanuel Bonney &
Rejoice Lavinia Eklu

TWO organisations, Child Rights International (CRI) and Africa Education Watch — have expressed disapproval over the de-boardinisation of seven students of the Ejisuman SHS.

CRI has called on the authorities of the Ejisuman Senior High School to recall the seven students who have been de-boardinised for making some suggestive sexual comments in a video that has gone viral.

It said the students should rather be put in isolation and given counselling services for proper reformation and rehabilitation.

"Expelling them from the boarding house does not solve the problem but rather aggravates, it since they now have full access to gadgets they can use to intensify their act," the Executive Director of CRI, Mr Bright Appiah, said at a press conference in Accra on Wednesday, February 12, 2020.

Investigations

The CRI Executive Director indicated that preliminary investigations conducted by the

organisation showed that the students in question did not make the videos with their own handsets.

"Information reaching us suggests that the girls had access to a mobile phone during visiting hours which they used to take the infamous video. The circulation of the video was also not done by them," he stated.

He, therefore, urged the authorities of the Ejisuman SHS to investigate the matter properly, diagnose it and provide the needed solution.

Punitive

Mr Appiah said the CRI supported every punitive action taken by school authorities against students who indulged in acts of indiscipline.

However, he said those actions must not be tailored primarily to punish students caught to have indulged in acts of indiscipline like those seven females who were expelled from the boarding house.

"The CRI recommends that the GES, in partnership with social authorities, should focus on establishing a programme that would address the social needs of students in the senior high schools. The programmes and activities must be

designed in a way that takes into consideration the places or neighbourhoods the children come from. Many children have lost the protection they should have from their parents and society and as a result have been on their own for a long time. The formalised system we have in our educational structure cannot address these social disorders," he said.

Self-worth

Mr Appiah said most children, especially those in the SHS, were going through internal and physiological conflicts that seemed to have affected and damaged their self-worth and "so they believe that such ill behaviour would make them feel better and cause others to recognise and accept them in the way they want to be accepted".

That, he said, was where the legal framework of child protection was crucial.

"When children, regardless of their background, are consciously made to be fully aware that they are protected and given the same privileges, they would begin to demonstrate good virtues. The protection of children in Ghana is ultimate, irrespective of the

condition of the child. Therefore, in tackling these issues relating to children, protocols and conventions must be respected".

The GES, Mr Appiah said, must open the discussion on the rules and regulations in order to conform to standards, adding that many countries were reviewing their codes and looking for better ways of correcting children in a way that would make them become better and not the other way round.

"Additionally, the GES must give standards for all heads of schools to meet as a target in the promotion of discipline. This is because the CRI has observed that most students in schools that are in categories 'A' and 'B' hardly show these tendencies. So far, most of the videos are coming mostly from category 'C' schools. What are other schools doing that the rest can't do?" he asked.

Africa Education Watch

Africa Education Watch, a non-governmental organisation, has also called on the Ghana Education Service (GES) to take a second look at de-boardinisation as a form of punishment for boarding students.

A letter signed by the Executive Director of Africa Education Watch,

Mr Kofi Asare, to the Director General of the GES said the service should adopt progressive sanctions that actually reformed students.

"Our attention has been drawn to a letter from the management of Ejisuman SHS indicating the expulsion of seven of its female students from the boarding school for social media misconduct.

"We note that in as much as it is important to sanction students when they breach the rules of conduct in school, as a way of instilling discipline and deterring others, the GES must not lose sight of the fact that most of these decisions may be arbitrary, archaic and contradictory," it said.

The GES, it said, had a mandate to groom students to become literates, numerates and responsible adults, adding that "in fulfilling this mandate, secondary schools have the responsibility to teach, mentor and discipline students when they break school rules".

"It is heart-warming that the GES now has a positive discipline policy. However, the use of de-boardinisation as a tool for positive discipline has far outlived its relevance. Since the 1990s, it has ended up making students even more truant than reforming them," it said.

It said a positive discipline strategy must reform students rather than expose them to even higher levels of delinquency and truancy.

Regional Focus

2 Sunyani factories placed under 1D1F programme

From Biya Mukusah Ali, SUNYANI

THE Sunyani Municipal Assembly in the Bono Region is to retool and expand two existing processing factories as part of the government's flagship One-District, One-Factory (1D1F) programme, Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Mrs Justina Owusu-Banahene, has disclosed.

The factories which have been registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI) to participate in the 1D1F programme in the municipality are EKA Food and CHADOMA Company Limited.

The EKA Food Processing Company, located at Abesim near Sunyani, is processing vegetables into spices for the local market, while the CHADOMA Company Limited, also located in Sunyani, manufactures steel wool for the local and foreign markets.

Mrs Owusu-Banahene disclosed this at the assembly's meet-the-press series in Sunyani and explained that the two companies were waiting for a bank facility to expand their production.

"The two companies are already in production but are waiting for a bank facility to expand their production," she said.

Meet-the-Press

The purpose of the meet-the-press encounter was to interact with the media on the performance of the assembly from 2018 to 2020. Mrs Owusu-Banahene took the

participants through some of the government's flagship programmes and development projects which have been executed by the assembly from 2018 to 2020.

The projects include educational facilities in various schools, construction and rehabilitation of toilet facilities, rehabilitation of streetlights and patching and tarring of roads, among others.

She also took the participants through social intervention programmes such as the presentation of working tools and equipment to Persons Living with Disability (PLWDs) and farm inputs such as cashew seedling and fertilisers to farmers.

The MCE outlined the assembly's plans to clear heaps of refuse at the various dumping sites to keep the municipality clean.

Livelihood programme

Mrs Owusu-Banahene said a total of 2,077 people were trained in the Green Skills Project, an environmentally friendly livelihood programme implemented in 20 communities to create jobs and employment for women and youth in the municipality.

She said the beneficiaries were trained and supported in poultry and fish farming, organic vegetable production, beekeeping, rabbit, grass-cutter and snail rearing as well as afforestation.

She added that the economic development project was implemented by the assembly in collaboration with Plan Ghana and funded by the European Union to support residents with employable skills.

She again explained that 122 artisans made up of 109 females and 13 males were also trained in skills development such as mushroom production, soap making, fresh yoghurt preparation, detergent and bead making.

Mrs Owusu-Banahene explained that the assembly and Zoomlion Company were providing a door-to-door waste collection service to improve waste collection in the municipality.

She said the assembly had procured hundreds of litter bins to enhance the door-to-service and instituted sanitation day clean-up

@ a glance

The Sunyani Municipal Assembly is to retool and expand two existing processing factories as part of the government's flagship One-District, One-Factory (1D1F) programme.

Revenue performance

Mrs Owusu-Banahene, said the assembly had adopted strategies to improve revenue performance such as the enforcement of building regulations for the payment of permits, the serving of all demand notices by close of every month and improving the capacity of revenue collectors.

She explained that the assembly was also constructing market centres in some communities to improve trading in a bid to increase the assembly's revenue.

Challenges

Mrs Owusu-Banahene said the use of obsolete equipment by the assembly was affecting productivity and service delivery, especially waste management equipment.

She said there was pressure on the assembly's internally generated fund (IGF) for waste management as the municipality continued to grow in terms of population.



Mr Denis A. Asai (standing), National General Secretary of COHNAG, addressing the press conference

Community nurses demand justice for slain colleague

From Daniel Kenu, KUMASI

THE Community Health Nurses Association of Ghana (COHNAG) has demanded swift action from the Ashanti Regional Police Command to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators involved in the alleged rape and killing of one of their own, Ruth Ama Eshun, on February 3, 2020 at Ayum.

The deceased nurse, who was with the Sewua Health Centre in the Bosomtwe District of the region, was found dead few metres from her residence with her underwear pulled down in what appeared to be an attempted rape before her killing.

A police source said two people had been arrested in connection with the killing but no further information was provided.

Past incidents

The National Public Relations Officer of COHNAG, Mr Joseph Appiah-Kubi, said in the recent past, some members had been killed in cold blood yet nothing had been heard of their killers.

"As for this one, we will not allow it to pass unnoticed like the others. We call for justice now," he said.

Mr Appiah-Kubi said: "We demand an immediate action against these horrible crimes and call on all members to stay calm as we pursue the case to its logical conclusion."

While demanding justice, the association also called for increased security for all nurses, especially those who worked at night.

He urged the Ghana Health Service and all stakeholders to liaise with all security agencies in the country to find the culprits.

At a press conference in Kumasi, the National General Secretary of COHNAG, Mr Denis A. Asai, said: "The killing of our colleague nurse is by no means an isolated event but we are calling on the authorities to investigate the crime and bring those responsible for it to justice to promote and protect the community health nurses in Ghana."

He called on the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Police Service, the government, non-governmental organisations, the chief of Ayum and the entire people of Sewua community to help find the alleged killers.

Clad in red arm bands and singing war songs, members of COHNAG said they might be compelled to initiate a

number of activities including a possible boycott of the national polio vaccination exercise to drum home their demand.

Railway project on course

Asuogyaman DCE assures residents

From Ezekiel E. Sottie, ATIMPOKU

THE District Chief Executive for Asuogyaman in the Eastern Region, Mr Samuel Kwame Agyekum, has assured the people of Asuogyaman that nothing will hinder the ongoing construction of a railway line from Tema to Mpakadan in the Asuogyaman District.

He said the construction of the rail line was a government project and nobody would prevent the government from completing the project for which huge financial commitments had been made.

"This is a government project and the government has made a commitment with a huge loan facility. When it is finally completed, economic activities in the country will be enhanced and Asuogyaman

will be one of the beneficiaries because of the port to be sited at Mpakadan.

"We the people of Asuogyaman are fortunate to have the railway run through our district. We should rather be the people who should support the government in every possible way to ensure that the project is completed on schedule for us to start enjoying the benefits," Mr Agyekum stressed.

He gave the assurance in response to questions from the press at the engagement at the district assembly at Atimpoku last Wednesday.

Mr Agyekum said there was no doubt that the railway project would grow the economy of the district.

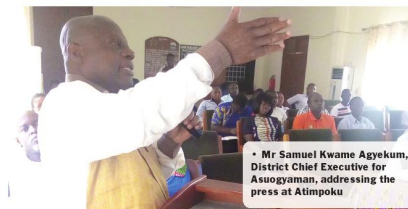
"Whatever it takes for the government and for that matter the Asuogyaman District Assembly to ensure that the project is completed will be done without any hindrance, because the government and the district assembly supersede those individuals hindering the project. I can assure you that we have cleared those impediments and the way is very clear for the ongoing project to succeed," he added.

Land litigation

Responding to a question regarding the railway construction and matters arising in the Asuogyaman District, he explained that some individuals who claimed to be land owners were putting impediments in the way of the contractors.

He said those individuals claimed that the government was dealing with the Omanehene of the Akwamu Traditional Area instead of dealing with them.

"Personally, I do not see anything wrong with the construction firm consulting the paramount chief of the area who represents the people in his traditional area and, therefore, I appeal to our people to withdraw their stance which will not help us in any way," he said.



Mr Samuel Kwame Agyekum, District Chief Executive for Asuogyaman, addressing the press at Atimpoku

Succeeded projects

The DCE said he inherited as many as

13 uncompleted projects in 2017 from the previous government which were scattered

throughout the district and were not paid for before being handed over to him.

He stated that to ensure value for the tax payer's money which was used for the project, his outfit completed nine out of the 13, including classroom blocks, which were being used now.

"So long as I am the administrative leader of the district, I shall ensure that anytime funds are available we will continue with those projects left uncompleted alongside the new ones the assembly is embarking on. My team in the Asuogyaman District Assembly cares for government funds and we shall use it judiciously as and when the funds are available to do projects in the interest of our people," the DCE added.

Ongoing projects

The DCE mentioned a good number of ongoing development projects including classroom blocks being put up by the assembly, major roads and feeder roads from Adumasa through Gyakiti and Anyaase among others which were being undertaken by the central government.

He said the district was poised to implement all the programmes and projects outlined by the government and the assembly and stressed the need for the various heads of departments and institutions within the district to help the assembly achieve the targets set.

Entertainment

Stop giving movies to TV stations for free

— Movie producer

By Kofi Duah

MOVIE producer King David Donkor is entreating his colleagues in Kumawood to stop taking their movies to television stations to show for free.

According to him, it is wrong for movie producers to give out their movies to the TV stations and get nothing in return.

"I know a lot of movie producers who take their movies to the television stations to show for free. What's the sense in doing that? How do you recoup your money after spending days on set and paying actors so much? It is just not right and I want to use the opportunity to tell such producers to stop," he said.

Reasons

King David said the low patronage of movies had led to

producers resorting to such an action. "How do you expect anyone to purchase a movie when they are getting it free from the TV stations? I wonder

why such movie producers do that."

He also blamed unprofessional producers for contributing to the slow progress of the movie industry.

"We have so many unqualified movie producers who are not members or part of the Film Producers Association of Ghana (FIPAG) yet they parade themselves as producers, making things difficult for some of us," he said.

Movies

King David, who has produced movies such as *Lil Win Nkwanhyia*, *Ghana Ammamuo*, *Kyeiwaa Vrs Ninja*, *One Time*, *The Gold Chain*, *Sumsum Mu Banbo*, *Best Ninja* and worked with actors including Nana Ama McBrown, Mercy Aseidu and Kwadwo Nkansah (Lilwin) said he paid actors well.

"I am a professional and I wouldn't want any actor to tarnish my image so I pay them well," he stated.



• King David



• Lekzy

Lekzy back with Laughline next month

By Gifty Owusu-Amoah

PATRONS who attended the *All White Comedy show*, hosted by Lekzy Decomic in December last year, clearly had a good time considering the positive feedback that flooded the social media space during and after the show.

Now, comedy enthusiasts are assured of a double dose of that treatment at the first *Laughline Comedy show* for 2020 scheduled for the Snap Cinemas inside the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) building on Friday, March 6.

The show, which has in the past featured popular comedy acts such as OB Amponsah, DKB, Khemikal, David Aglah and ID James Brown, will once again entertain patrons with rib cracking jokes.

Unforgettable night

In an interview with the *Daily Graphic*, Lekzy said the 7p.m. show will give guests a night not to be forgotten. He said unlike other events, *Laughline* will start and end on time and also deliver great value to patrons.

"We are ready to give patrons their money's worth as the show promises to be full of fireworks. This is going to be one of the best yet and I urge all comedy lovers and fans of Ghanaian comedy to come out and see the best of what we have to offer," he said.

Laughline is a Kasa Entertainment Initiative which is held on the first Saturday of every month.

According to the CEO of Kasa Entertainment, Daniel Attoh, the first *Laughline* show for the year was being held in March rather than January because of the venue not being available.

"*Laughline* is a monthly event but we are hosting the first event in March because the venue has been booked for many events and the assurance is that patrons will have three times what they enjoy every month," he said.

Lekzy Decomic has won the public's confidence with his performances at events such as the *Easter Comedy Show*, *1022 Music and Laughs series* and *MTN Music festival*.

PAYO to perform at Goethe-Institut

By John Owoo

THE Pan African Youth Orchestra (PAYO) will on Wednesday, February 19 perform at the Goethe-Institut in Accra as part of preparations for their participation in a major arts festival in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan.

Conducted by Kweku Kwakye, PAYO plays a combination of traditional rhythms that have been reworked and expanded into neo-classical pieces. Initiated by the late composer, Nana Danso Abiam, the group has

succeeded in creating a new synthesis that is both jubilant and vitally rhythmic.

Indeed, rhythms from a vast array of traditional instruments including giant ffontonfrom drums, xylophones, atentenben flutes, talking drums and a variety of shakers and bells are set to send fans on a musical journey that is definitely on the contemporary tip but with its heart and soul firmly embedded in Africa.

Wide repertoire

The orchestra's wide repertoire include works by Nana Danso Abiam and Kweku

Kwakye, as well as re-worked pieces by popular acts such as Osibisa, Stevie Wonder, Meiway, Manu Dibango, Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Prince Nico Mbaga.

PAYO has delighted audiences in Ghana, the United States and Europe and are set to perform at the 2020 edition of *Market for Performing Arts Festival* in Cote d'Ivoire, which will feature over 50 groups from Africa and beyond.

Goethe-Institut Ghana is supporting the performance which forms part of a monthly live music event dubbed: "Goethe-Kotosa", which offers a platform to music groups to showcase their artistic creations.



• PAYO

Steel Pulse, Kojo Antwi for Independence Bash

By Delali Sika

SENSATIONAL 80s Reggae band, Steel Pulse and Ghana's Music Maestro Kojo Antwi are set to headline a concert dubbed: "Independence Bash" on Saturday, March 7.

Set to come off at the Grand Arena Dome inside the Accra International Conference Centre, the concert is to commemorate the celebration of the landmark anniversaries of *Joy FM* at 25 and Charterhouse at 20.

Quality entertainment

The CEO of Charterhouse, Mrs Theresa Ayoade said there's a growing need to create quality entertainment for the capital's more mature audience to unwind and network.

"This is for the grown and funky,

an evening outing experience that the older crowd can feel comfortable to attend and enjoy for a change. Lately, most events have been designed for young audiences which many mature people tend to find a bit too boisterous," she told the *Daily Graphic*.

"The *Steel Pulse Live in Ghana Independence Bash* is designed to have an 80s party vibe, with a mixed set up of both theatre seating and VIP table setting, giving it an informal yet intimate feel.

"This set up, with a cash bar in the very spacious, fully air conditioned and secure Grand Arena, offers the opportunity for those in the corporate field to get fully serviced tables and tickets for clients and employees as appreciation gifts. Again, associations, old school year groups or even old friends get to sit together at tables to have a reunion,"

she continued.

Insight

Giving an insight into what to expect at the event, she said, "we

want people to re-live the olden days. I have those memories, it was beautiful, we loved it and we just want to bring back that youthful feeling again and have fun.

"Apart from that, we are looking

at connections or networking as well. There will be all kinds of people around so it will be an environment where people can meet and connect."

• Steel Pulse



• Rebecca Donkor — CEO, Make-Up Ghana

AMB Fair to hold in March

The fourth edition of the *Africa Make-Up & Beauty (AMB) Fair* will come off at Event Haven, Trade Fair Centre in Accra from Friday, March 6 to 8.

The three-day event, which will be on the theme: "Evolve," is intended to provide opportunities for practitioners in the beauty industry to network and promote their brands.

The annual *AMB Fair* is an initiative of Make-Up Ghana, organisers of the yearly *Make-Up Awards* that reward trailblazers and budding talents in the makeup industry and also celebrate makeup artists whose contribution to the beauty industry has not yet been recognised.

The fair was started to bring the work of budding make-up artists to light and give players in the industry the chance to meet potential clients.

Interest

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Make-Up Ghana, Rebecca Donkor, this year's fair will enhance the larger interests of both beauty practitioners and their customers.

"We are getting things ready to give beauty consumers and enthusiasts across Africa three days of beauty and fashion at *AMB Fair 2020*."

"There will be huge discounts on beauty products from leading African and global brands in make-up, skincare, hair and bridal accessories. We are inviting exhibitors who want to showcase their products at the fair to come on board," she said.

In December 2019, the organisers announced actress Zynnell Zuh as the brand ambassador for the fair and she is expected to promote the event on her various social media pages to whip up interest.

David Dontoh takes his turn at *Sanegbaa*

By Gifty Owusu-Amoah

RENOWNED actor and Chairman of the governing board of the National Film Authority, David Dontoh, will be a speaker at this year's *Sanegbaa* which will be held at the premises of the Bureau of National Languages in Accra on Friday, February 28.

Sanegbaa, which promotes Ghanaian languages, is held every year to commemorate the International Mother Language Day which promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

The day was created by the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to promote the dissemination of mother tongues and a fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world.

David Dontoh will speak on the theme, "Effective Use of Ghanaian Languages in Ghanaian movies". In a statement, the organisers said the segment was intended to help film producers use the right Ghanaian words, phrases, clauses, sentences and expressions and in the right context when working on their movies.

"By this, it is the hope of the Bureau that film producers will become good ambassadors of Ghanaian languages to the world and also play important roles in

their preservation."

Prior to the master class, there will be screening of well produced films in the Ghanaian languages. *Sanegbaa* will host the music legend, Amandzeba in a conversation on the use of Ghanaian languages in producing international standard music.

Book launch

One of the outstanding segments of this year's edition is the launch of a book of translated poems of Prof. Lade Wosornu into 11 studied Ghanaian languages.

The poems include

Desert Rivers and The Master Brewer and Raider of the Treasure Trove which has been translated into Ga, Dangme, Ewe, Fante, Ashanti Twi, Akuapem Twi, Dagaare, Dagbani, Nzema.

This is the first of the Bureau of Ghana Languages Literary Legends Works Translation project geared at translating literary works of prominent Ghanaian authors into Ghanaian languages.

The Special Guest of Honour will be Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi, Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture with Mr Abdourahamane Diallo, Head of the UNESCO office in Accra as the Chairperson.

Supporters of this year's edition are the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO and Yumvita.



• David Dontoh

UN agencies confer with Sanitation Minister on achieving SDGs

By Doreen Andoh

NINE United Nations (UN) agencies, led by the acting resident Coordinator, Ms Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, have met with the Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ms Cecilia Abena Dapaah, to discuss further collaboration to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the country.

The meeting, held in Accra last Tuesday, also discussed how the entities could collaborate to accelerate action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal 6.

SDG 6 mandates all member countries to ensure that water and good sanitation were accessible and sustainably managed for all by 2030.

Presently, Ghana has achieved a water coverage mark of 81 per cent and a sanitation figure of 60 per cent.

Highlight

■ SDG 6 mandates all member countries to ensure that water and good sanitation are accessible and sustainably managed for all by 2030.

WASH

Ms Dapaah, in her address, said WASH remained a major priority of the government and it was working seriously to ensure

that it fell in line with the UN's vision not to have any citizen left behind.

She said the government's commitment to WASH was amply demonstrated in the establishment of a special ministry - Sanitation and Water Resources - to champion a national crusade on water and sanitation for all.

She mentioned the priority areas the ministry was focusing on to include water for all, promoting good sanitation, defeating open defecation, recycling waste, proper gathering of data for planning and making capacity building of youth in WASH a priority.

Ms Dapaah said the government was currently reviewing the country's water policy to include emerging national demands and it was also making efforts to institute a national sanitation authority as a pillar on which all national sanitation issues would be mounted.

She said the ministry had operationalised sanitation to mean proper, effective and efficient ways of disposing waste and managing it.

To achieve that, she added, would require that a critical look was taken at recycling waste to produce useful



• Ms Cecilia Abena Dapaah

products such as energy and compost, while plastic waste would be turned into pellets and other building materials for export.

"We want to encourage the establishment of more waste treatment

facilities. Unlike currently when we are piling waste that could be recycled, we desire ultimately in the future to achieve a country free of landfill sites", she said.

Ms Dapaah said the ministry was rigorously pursuing a zero tolerance for landfill sites and was hopeful of achieving this in the next 10 to 15 years.

Decade of action

For her part, Ms Lopez-Ekra said 2020 was a very special year for the UN because it marked the start of the decade of action declared by the Secretary General.

"With 10 years left to achieve the 2030 targets and recognising the state of affairs if things were not done quickly, the country might miss out on a number of the UN SDG targets.

"So, our purpose for coming here is to encourage your ministry and others to form strong bonds of collaboration with us, hear your priorities and directions and look for areas where you would want emphasis placed," she said.

She said the water and sanitation for all target the minister mentioned earlier was a laudable initiative in line with a key SDG promise to carry everyone along and leave no one behind.

"The UN is solidly behind this country and we will work together to achieve the SDGs by 2030," she said.

The team presented the Sanitation and Water Resources Minister with the UN support programme regarding the government's development targets critical among which was the construction of 60,000 household toilets.

Writer's email
doreen.andoh@graphic.com.gh

Chief donates land to proprietor of Odopee Herbal Research and Learning Centre

From Samuel Kyei-Boateng, EKUMFI NANABEN

THE Chief of Ekumfi Nanaben in the Central Region, Nana Okofo Gyesi IV, has donated a six-acre parcel of land at Nanaben to Mr John Kofi Sackey, the proprietor of Odopee Herbal Research and Learning Centre at Mankessim, who is reported to have discovered a potent herbal preparation for healing blindness.

The land lies very close to the Ekumfi Juice Factory, the first factory established under the

government's one-district, one-factory initiative, and it is to be used by Mr Sackey to establish a branch of his eye healing centre in the Nanaben community.

Nana Gyesi formally and publicly presented the land to Mr Sackey, a native of Nanaben, last weekend, in recognition of the sterling work he was doing in restoring the sight and bringing relief to many visually impaired persons in the country and beyond.

He said the Ekumfi Juice Factory and the herbal centre in the community would not only bring jobs to the unemployed youth in the area, but they would also boost the local

economy and make the area a centre of attention.

Appeal

Nana Gyesi appealed to other prominent citizens of Ekumfi Nanaben to also invest in the area to help solve the unemployment situation in the community.

Mr Sackey, who was accompanied by his son, Mr Samuel Sackey, and daughter, Ms Martha Sackey, thanked Nana Gyesi for the honour and promised to set up the first branch of his herbal centre on the land given

him.

He said he intended to put up a modern herbal centre with consulting rooms, hostels, public places of convenience and vehicle parking lots at Nanaben, to ease pressure on the centre at Mankessim which was currently congested with people.

Meanwhile, many more people with visually impairment continue to visit the Odopee Herbal Centre at Mankessim.

Among the latest to have regained his sight is Mr Owusu Antwi, 56, from Kumasi who became blind three years ago through glaucoma. He said a reverend sister who had read about Odopee in the *Daily Graphic*, directed him to the herbal centre to seek cure.

According to Mr Antwi, he had sought for cure to his ailment from many hospitals but to no avail.

Another sufferer, Mr Victor Fiadonu, 43, from Tarkwa, said he had been blind since 2018 and went to the herbal centre last two weeks and could now see and walk unaided.

Fifty-five year old Mr Justice Ekow Baidoo from Takoradi, who had suffered from glaucoma for six years and had attended many hospitals without success, said he had also experienced marked improvement with his sight.

They all appealed to the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), corporate bodies and philanthropists to help Mr Sackey with logistical support to enable him to cater for more people with visual impairment.



• Mr John Kofi Sackey (2nd right) exchanging pleasantries with Nana Okofo Gyesi IV. With them are Mr Samuel Sackey (right) and Ms Martha Sackey (left).

Regional Focus



On the move. Tricycles are now the choice of many commuters

'Pragyas' push Berekum taxis out of business

From Biya Mukusah Ali, BEREKUM

THE use of motor tricycles, popularly referred to as "Pragya" has become the preferred means of transport by commuters in and around Berekum in the Bono Region. Even a newcomer will attest to this fact on arrival as the riders toot their horns to draw attention to their services.

Their operation has become a nuisance to taxi drivers as they have virtually pushed them out of business.

One can count about 50 of these motor tricycles at a go on the Berekum Main Station street either dropping off or picking up passengers who usually wait for them at the shoulders of the road.

They charge GH1, no matter one's destination within the Berekum main town and the adjoining suburbs, and make an average of GH50 daily.

Residents at Berekwa, Mpatapo, Mpatasie, Amankwakwa, Adom, Domlete, Biadan, Sofokyerre and Kutre No. 1 and 2, who used to pay more than GH2 to get to their destination now pay only GH1 for the use of "Pragya".

Transportation

Until the arrival of the "pragya" transport business about five years ago, the taxi business was thriving as they were virtually the only means of transport for visitors and other commuters in and around the town.

Commuters standing at the shoulders of the road watch empty taxis pass by but as soon as they spot "pragyas" at a far distance, they rush to board it.

It is, however, not safe to use the motor tricycles which are mostly driven by unlicensed individuals, particularly teenagers. Some of the riders do not observe rules

and regulations on the road, making it very dangerous for the patrons.

Last year, the Berekum Magistrate Court slapped various fines on some operators of tricycles while one of them was remanded into prison custody for various offences but

that has not deterred them.

Taxi business folding

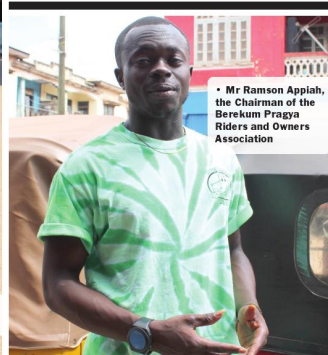
A 47-year-old taxi driver, Mr Samuel Asare-Mensah, told the *Daily Graphic* that activities of the "pragya" operators in the



A line-up of pragyas along the Berekum main station street. Pictures: BIYA MUKUSAH ALI



Some of the tricycles come in fanciful designs



Mr Ramson Appiah, the Chairman of the Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners Association

NUMBER CRUNCH

1,000

The Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners Association currently has over 1,000 registered members.

area were collapsing the taxi business.

He said the daily income of taxi drivers kept reducing each day as passengers now patronised the services of "pragya" more than the taxis.

Mr Asare-Mensah explained that he was considering selling his taxi cab to enter into the "pragya" business since it was clear that residents in Berekum and its environs preferred using "pragya" to taxis.

Employment, tax

The Chairman of the Berekum Pragya Riders and Owners

Association, Mr Ramson Appiah, told the *Daily Graphic* that the pragya business had created employment for about 3,000 young people in the area.

He said the association had over 1,000 registered members, explaining that there were about 2,000 other riders who had refused to join the association.

Mr Appiah said most of the riders were university and college graduates who did not have jobs and believed that the pragya business was offering them decent jobs.

"All pragya riders pay their taxes to the Berekum Municipal Assembly and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) just like commercial vehicles," he stated, adding that they had also acquired riding licenses.

Mr Appiah said members of the association would continue to honour their tax obligations to support the development of the municipality.

Challenges

He said the main challenge facing the operation of the pragya business in Berekum was the continuous seizure and the arrest of members of the association by the Motor Transport and Traffic Directorate (MTTD) of



With GH1 one is able to go anywhere in Berekum on board the pragya



The pragya takes two passengers

the Ghana Police Service (GPS).

"Because our activities are not regularised, the police seize our tricycles and extort monies from us. I'm not happy about the way the police treat us. The police say the government has not yet legalised or regularised the use of Pragya for commercial purposes in the country," he said.

Mr Appiah accused the police of extorting GH3 from every pragya operator daily and

appealed to the government to legalise the operations of motor cycles and tricycles for commercial purposes to help address the conflict between the police and their operators.

He again raised concern about the deplorable nature of Berekum town roads, explaining that the roads were riddled with potholes which made riding on them very dangerous.

Tourism Minister presents gifts to Graphic on Chocolate Day

By Emmanuel Quaye

THE Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi, has commended the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) for putting the spotlight on regional reporting, which promotes domestic tourism in the country.

She said the Regional Spotlight, a pullout in the *Daily Graphic*, the flagship newspaper of GCGL, was a good initiative to promote the countryside, particularly domestic tourism.

Surprise visit

Mrs Oteng-Gyasi gave the commendation when she led a delegation from the Ghana Tourist Authority (GTA) to the offices of the GCGL, as part of a tour of 17 media houses in the country to create awareness of the promotion of domestic tourism and the health benefits of cocoa products in order to increase patronage.

Aside from the Graphic Group, the delegation also visited the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Multimedia, *Citi FM*, *Peace FM* and the *Ghana News Agency*.

Mrs Oteng-Gyasi, who presented a basketful of chocolates produced in the country to the Managing Director of GCGL, Mr Ato Afful, said the focus on domestic tourism was part of efforts to promote locally made products, including food and textiles. The minister said her outfit and the GTA would, this month, launch the: "Beyond the Return" initiative as a follow-up to the successful Year of Return held last year.

Mrs Oteng-Gyasi said the Beyond the Return was a 10-year project on the theme: "A decade of African Renaissance — 2020-2030" and will be

"Ghana should be the preferred chocolate destination, there is, therefore, the need to promote Ghana's chocolate, especially as a leading producer of cocoa, because Ghana is cocoa and cocoa is Ghana."



• Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi (right) presenting some locally produced chocolates to Mr Ato Afful. Looking on is Ms Akosua Ohenewa Boakye, Public Relations Officer of the Ghana Tourism Authority. Picture: EMMANUEL QUAYE

built on several pillars.

She explained that it would provide a platform for engagements among the people of African descent, wherever they may be living.

The minister, who once served as the head of administration and legal department of Export Development and Investment Fund (EDIF), urged Ghanaians to consume made in Ghana chocolate and appreciate its health benefits.

"Ghana should be the preferred chocolate destination. There is, therefore, the need to promote Ghana's chocolate, especially as a leading producer of cocoa, because Ghana is cocoa and cocoa is Ghana," the minister, who is also the Member of Parliament for



• Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi (3rd left) presenting chocolates to Mrs Mavis Kitcher (right), Director News, Graphic Communications Group Limited, during her visit to the newsroom. Those with them are some members of the Graphic Editorial team. Picture: EDNA SALVO-KOTÉY

Prestea Huni-Valley and former Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, stated.

GCGL

For his part, Mr Afful commended the minister for holding a successful Year of Return programme.

On supporting the local industry, he said he was a passionate chocolate consumer and proud Ghanaian who had passion for supporting the growth of the tourism industry in the country.

The GCGL managing director said besides the Regional Spotlight, the Graphic Group had introduced other initiatives and regional programmes to

promote Ghana's tourism sector.

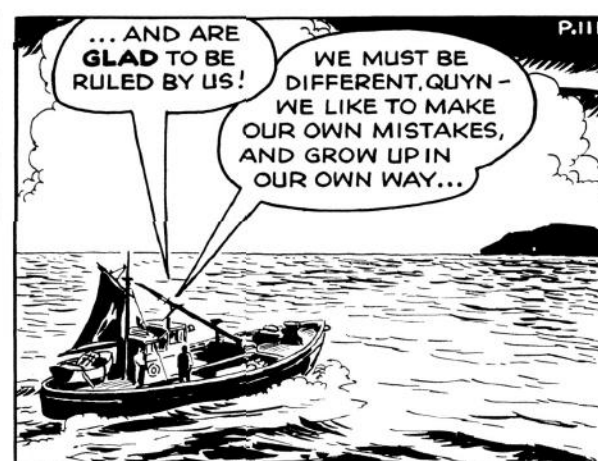
He said the company had linked up with some external persons with insight into the tourism industry to go round the country to review some tourist hotspots, including restaurants and places of interest.

Mr Afful observed that for the government to promote the Tourism Ministry to a Cabinet rank was strategic and appealed to the ministry to extend its activities to various parts of the country.

The managing director expressed the GCGL's preparedness to support the Tourism Ministry in the promotion of its activities.

GARTH - THE FANTASTIC DOCTOR QUYN

Script: Jim Edgar
Art: Martin Asbury



CHANGE OF NAME

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Charles Yaw Mensah.

All documents bearing my former name still hold valid.

**ADDENDUM NO.1
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**POSTPONEMENT OF TENDER
CLOSING DATE**

With reference to our tender invitation dated on 24th January, 2020 for the supply of Consumables, Mercantile and Domestic Food Products, we wish to inform prospective tenderers that the closing date has been changed from 11th February, 2020 at 10:00am to 21st February, 2020 at 10:00am. All other information remain unchanged. Thank you.

**Signed
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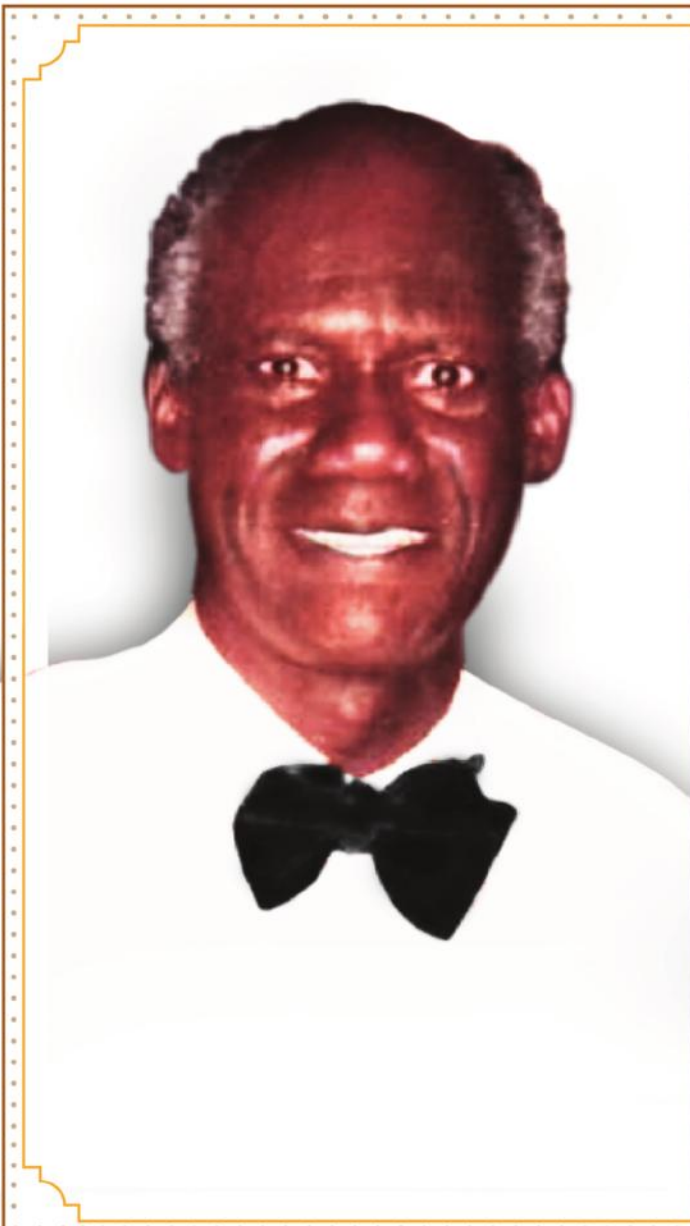
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From Awo, children and family

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, Even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus"
1st Thessalonians 4:14

Education

Prominent Ghanaians pledge to promote school enrolment at right age

By Severious Kale-Dery

APPROXIMATELY 26 per cent of pupils in the Kindergarten (KG) are either over-aged or under-aged, the Minister of Education, Dr Matthew Opoku Prempeh, has said.

He said although Ghana had made significant progress regarding universal enrolment with a Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of 113.9 per cent at the KG level, "it is important to note that one of the major challenges plaguing the KG subsector is the issue of over and under-aged enrolment evidenced by a Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of 73.8 per cent at the KG level according to the Education Management Information System (EMIS 2018/19)."

The campaign

Addressing the second Right Age Enrolment Campaign (RAEC) National Influencers' banquet in Accra, Dr Prempeh commended the USAID and UNICEF for their immense support in helping Ghana to roll

out the RAEC in the media.

The RAEC is one of government's interventions aimed at ensuring that all children, including those with special needs, do not only enrol in a nearby KG at age four but are retained until they complete basic education.

Influencers

The RAEC National Influencers include Dr Prempeh, the Second Lady, Hajia Samira Bawumia; the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service (GES), Prof. Kwasi Opoku-Amankwa; the Minister for Gender, Women and Social Protection, Mrs Cynthia Morrison; the Deputy Minister of Education, Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum; the Executive Director of the Salt and Light Ministries, Dr Joyce Aryee, and the Chief Executive Officer of Logistical Ghana, Ms Farida Bedwei.

Others are the Spokesperson of the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Armiyao Shaibu; the UNICEF Country Representative to Ghana, Madam Anne-Clare Dufay; the First and Second Deputy Speakers of Parliament, Mr Joseph Osei Owusu and Mr Alban Bagbin, respectively, and

the Okyenhene, Osagyefuo Amoatia Ofori Panin.

Government's commitment

Dr Prempeh, who is also one of the RAEC National Influencers, pledged his unflinching support to the campaign, saying that the World Bank's assertion that education was a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability could not have been apt.

He said government was committed to strengthening Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the country, adding that a technical working group had been tasked to put together a National Early Childhood Education Policy and Costed Implementation Plan for consideration.

"Government is committed to creating a conducive environment to ensure all children at KG level four and aged five years fulfil their dreams," he said, adding that the government demonstrated that commitment by increasing

"It is important to note that one of the major challenges plaguing the KG subsector is the issue of over and under-aged enrolment."

investments in pre-primary education.

"Nearly six per cent of the domestic education budget since 2017 have been allocated to the pre-primary subsector. This places Ghana almost at par with the global average and it is higher than the regional average of 2.5 per cent among the countries in Western and Central Africa," Dr Prempeh explained.

He said the government had also increased the number of KGs, especially targeting primary schools which did not have KGs attached, and that the construction of 1,171 model KGs had been planned between 2018 and 2021 and were under construction in a phased

approach, with nearly 80 completed.

Pledges

In a statement, Dr Aryee noted that the phenomenon of children at age four not in school should, "cause us great pain", and tasked the influencers to intensify the campaign.

"Our duty is to let others know how critical it is to let children know they are to be in school," she added and expressed her readiness to continue to support the campaign.

For his part, Mr Bagbin pledged that after bowing out of active politics, he would devote the rest of his time to the cause of the campaign.

Mrs Morrison, for her part, said children with special needs were a critical and important component of the society, stressing "if we touch them, the world will be a better place for all of us."

She challenged all to rise up for those with disabilities because they had a part to play in national development.

All the influencers at the banquet were made to sign a campaign form.

ANSECO '99 donates to alma mater

From Romeo Torkornoo, ANLOGA

THE 1999 year group of the Anlo Senior High School (ANSECO) has pledged to undertake more projects in its alma mater to enhance teaching and learning.

The members of the group made the pledge after donating sports and first aid kits worth GH¢16,000 to the school to support the development of sports.

The items included 60 tracksuits, 25 football jerseys, 30 basketball jerseys, 20 football hoses and 10 footballs.

The rest are a set of table tennis balls, four table tennis bats, 10 volleyballs, two boxes of first aid kits and five basketballs.

Presentation

Presenting the items on behalf of the year group, its Chairman, Mr Dickson Kudzo Agbemordzi, said the sports project would not only equip the school but would also help produce well-trained and experienced sports men and women for the country in future.

"We by this project have the hope that ANSECO shall also produce an internationally recognised sports icon," he stated.



• The '99 year group and some students of the school after the presentation

Support

Mr Agbemordzi urged old students to be relentless in providing support for students who had interest in pursuing sports, stating that "we cannot continue to see talents produced by ANSECO go waste. I urge all old

students to leave their doors open and be ready to help any product of this school whose ambition is to pursue sports, football especially," he stressed.

He also encouraged other year groups who would celebrate their various anniversaries to

always give back to the school that played a part in their development.

"We the 1999 year group celebrated our 20th anniversary last year. Even though we didn't come around, we remained committed to giving something back to our alma mater and this is what we are all witnessing today," he added.

Results

The Assistant Headmistress of the school, Ms Nutifafa Kwawukumey, who received the donation on behalf of management and students of the school, commended the year group for its move to boost sports in the school.

She stated: "This donation is truly godsend as we are currently preparing to host the annual Inter-Schools Competition in a few weeks".

She mentioned that the items would be effectively used to achieve the desired results.

Also present at the short but impressive ceremony were some executive members of the Anlo Senior High School Old Students Association (ANSSOSA), namely Messrs Gayheart Kumedzro and Selorm Deyegbe, Media Relations Officer and Assistant Media Relations Officer, respectively.

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Business

Over the medium-term (2020-2023), Total Revenue and Grants are projected to grow at an average of

14.8%.

Source: Ministry of Finance

GRA rolls out strategic plan to increase tax revenue

By Justice Agbenorsi

THE Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has rolled out a three year strategic plan to rake in more revenue for the state. In what is also expected to expand Ghana's tax base, it has set a target to increase the contribution of taxes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the current 13.2 per cent to 17.5 per cent by the year 2022.

As a result, it intends to increase the tax contribution by two per centage point each year to meet its target.

The acting Commissioner-General of the GRA, Mr Ammishaddai Owusu-Amoah, announced this in a speech read on his behalf at the Ghanaian-German Economic Association

(GGEA) forum last Wednesday on the theme "Ghana's Economic Outlook for the year 2020".

Specific strategies

In explaining further how the GRA intends to meet its target, Mr Owusu-Amoah said the authority was taking steps to enable businesses and individuals pay their taxes through the banks and the various mobile money platforms.

He explained that the initiative would relieve taxpayers of the burden of joining long queues at tax offices to honour their tax obligations.

On moves to increase domestic tax collections, the Assistant Commissioner of the GRA, Mr Joseph Oduro-Yeboah, indicated that the GRA this year intends to increase compliance level from 60 per cent to 90 per cent, adding that the GRA would

embark on a mass campaign on various media platforms to sensitise the public.

"We want to ensure that

everybody who is supposed to pay taxes do so and if they do not pay, the necessary sanctions will be imposed so we are looking at making sure that a lot of people come into the tax net this year and beyond," he added.

Tax Clearance Certificate

Mr Oduro-Yeboah noted that aside the Tax Identification Number (TIN), the GRA was also exploring options of introducing a Tax Clearance

Certificate (TCC) to indicate that one has performed his or tax obligation.

He further explained that without the (TCC), one would not be able to access a public facility. "Introducing such initiatives would help us achieve our targets," he said,

Ghana's Economic Outlook

In a speech read on his behalf, the Finance Minister, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta said Ghana's GDP growth had increased from 3.4 per cent in 2016 to 6.3 per cent in 2018 and 6.2 per cent in 2019, adding that fiscal deficit had reduced from 6.5 per cent in

"We are currently leveraging on strategic partnerships and addressing challenges in the business environment."

2016 to 4.8 per cent as at the end of 2019.

"We are currently leveraging on strategic partnerships and addressing challenges in the business environment to increase trade and rake-in more private investments to consolidate the gains made so far," he stated

He further called on the business community to take advantage of the opportunities available in the country to pool resources together in order to consolidate Ghana's gains in the area of trade cooperation.

GGEA forum

The forum, which is an initiative of the GGEA, is a series of dialogues that feature selected topics and is aimed at influencing government policies in favour of businesses.

It brought together players in the private sector, policy makers and people from government to deliberate on the Ghanaian business environment.

This year's forum had speakers such as the President of the GGEA, Mr Stephen Antwi, Tax expert with KPMG, Mr Kofi Frempong-Kore among other speakers.

SSNIT launches tool to track, measure performance

By Severious Kale-Dery

THE Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) launched a business analytics tool to track and measure performance at the Pension House in Accra on Tuesday, 11 February, 2020.

The tool, known as the Operational Business Analytics, will help the Trust measure performance and improve upon areas where they are not doing so well.

"It will also support us to track if we are on course for the goals and targets we set for ourselves, and it will assist us to ensure that our staff perform at the highest level of productivity," the Director-General of SSNIT, Dr John Ofori-Tenkorang, stated at the launch.

Efficiency

He stated that businesses the world over were now consistently looking for solutions that would positively impact their operations so they could function more efficiently, save money, time and provide convenience for their clients.

"SSNIT is no different. We are determined to run our business in the most efficient manner so that the members of the scheme ultimately benefit from our enhanced processes. It is in this light that the Trust continues to invest in relevant and cost-effective technologies such as the Business Analytics tool," Dr Ofori-Tenkorang explained.

Data

He explained that the Trust collected a lot

of data: actuarial data, compliance data, financial data and that the data was a reservoir of information which, when mined and analysed, could unveil what areas SSNIT was doing well in and where they needed to pay more attention in the running of their business.

Dr Ofori-Tenkorang indicated that such data could be used to predict, inform and shape projections going into the future, adding that tools like the Operational Business Analytics could help the Trust achieve the objective.

He stated "using this results-based monitoring system will lead to greater diligence, high performance and hopefully an increase in the enthusiasm of staff in the Operations and Benefits Divisions which will lead to an increase in their output."

Merit-based organisation

The SSNIT boss entreated staff to join management to build a merit-based organisation where diligence, hard work and results were rewarded.

He stressed that such a tool would be critical in measuring performance and outcomes, adding that the implementation and roll out of other upcoming initiatives such as the reviewed performance management system, automated attendance system and a feedback system that measured service delivery and customer satisfaction within the Trust would help support the agenda of building a merit-based institution.

Goal of initiative

The Deputy Director-General, Operations

and Benefits, Mrs Laurette Korkor Otchere, mentioned that the goal of the initiative was to change staff culture toward work by discarding the traditional methods of monitoring and evaluation and replacing it with a results-based approach that focused on the outputs, outcomes, impact (the results of what you do) rather than the inputs and activities (the resources and procedures).

She said the introduction of analytics in the monitoring and measuring of operational activities and performance would assist managers and supervisors with the necessary know-how to evaluate the performance of their direct reports in real-time and position them to make informed decisions based on the individual staff output.

Impact of tool

She further disclosed that the introduction of the tool had positively impacted the performance in the various key result areas in the Operations and Benefits Divisions of the Trust.

"There was an exponential increase of 42.81 per cent in last year's inspection performance as compared to the previous year's performance.

"This performance also translated into the amount that was collected for 2019 which saw a 15 per cent increase as compared to that of 2018, 5.95 per cent growth in active contributors as at December 31, 2019 and improved member statements, which had an impact on benefits processing.



• Dr John Ofori-Tenkorang

Sports

Kotoko's hegemony under threat

• As Ashgold storm Baba Yara

By Albert Tetteh Wayoe Jnr



• Justice Blay — Kotoko

ASANTE Kotoko Coach, Maxwell Konadu, is optimistic of victory against rivals Ashantigold (Ashgold) in their fierce Ghana Premier League (GPL) Week 10 regional derby at the Baba Yara Stadium tomorrow.

Coach Konadu said his side was not intimidated by the current performance of Ashgold but remained worried about honouring the match behind closed doors.

"Our match against Ashgold on Sunday is going to be cool, but the only difference is that we will be playing without our supporters, which is very bad.

"In fact, this ban has really affected my team's performance. We are happy that we will be getting our supporters back after this match," he told the media in a pre-match interview last Thursday.

The Porcupine Warriors and the Soccer Miners are joint leaders with Aduana Stars, Medeama and Berekum Chelsea on 17 points but are separated only on goal difference, making their respective 10th week ties tricky.

Ahead of the match, the Porcupine Warriors defeated Division Two club Jachie Academy 11-3 in a friendly at Adako Jachie last Thursday.

Players to watch

Konadu is expected rely on Kotoko's player of the month, Justice Blay, returnee Songne Yacouba who scored twice in the

friendly, Kwame Opoku, teenage sensation Matthew Anim Cudjoe, Christopher Nettey, Augustine Okrah and Naby Keita, among others to torment the visitors.

In the absence of their skipper and goal poacher, Shafiu Mumuni, Ashgold's stand-in coach Yakubu Mambo will bank his hopes on Appiah McCarthy, James Akaminko, Mark Agyekum, Leonard Owusu, Latif Anabila, Kwadwo Amoako, Amos Addai and Eric Donkor to create problems for their opponents.

Statistics

Kotoko have scored 10 goals this season as against eight by Ashgold, an indication that the attacking machinery of both sides is clinical. But it remains to be seen whether Ashgold can turn the situation around without the influential Mumuni, whose absence has affected their scoring rate of late.

In the other matches, ninth-placed Hearts of Oak need a home win badly against Bechem United at the Accra Sports Stadium to move up the ladder, while Aduana Stars can get at least a point against Liberty Professionals at the Carl Reindorf Park, Dansoman.

At the Cape Coast Stadium, bottom clubs Ebusua Dwarfs and Karela United will battle it out for the three points at stake, while Medeama SC have the edge over Elmina Sharks in their clash at the Tarkwa Akoon Park, Tarkwa.

Wafa will play host to Dreams FC at the Redbull Arena at Sogakope in another tight encounter, and later today, Berekum Chelsea welcome Inter Allies to the Berekum Golden City Park.



• Yusif Basigi — Head coach of Hasaacas Ladies

Basigi happy with Hasmal Ladies' progress

By Isaac Ashietey

THE head coach of Hasaacas Ladies, Yusif Basigi, has attributed his team's current form to the availability of all his key players who were cleared by the registration process before the start of the Women's Premier League season.

The absence of some key players at the start of the season saw Hasaacas Ladies losing 1-2 to Police Ladies and 0-1 to Samaria Ladies in their first two games.

In an interview with the *Daily Graphic*, Coach Basigi said he was excited about the transformation of the team and the players' effort to put the club back on the winning track after a bad start.

According to Basigi, even though they had back-up, it did not yield the needed results for the club.

Good scoring form

After finding their rhythm, the former champions produced 13 goals in their last two games in the Southern Zone of the Ghana Women's Premier League.

They thrashed Lady

Strikers 9-0 in a week three fixture, followed by a 4-0 walloping of Immigration Ladies to move to the third position on the league log with six points.

Coach Basigi believed the club's achievement came from the all-attacking system adopted by the team and gave an assurance that there would be no turning back.

Target fourth title

Hasaacas Ladies have won the league three consecutive times, and Basigi anticipates a fourth title triumph at the end of the season.

With a game on hand against leaders Soccer Intellectuals at the Essipong Stadium tomorrow, Coach Basigi was hopeful his ladies would put up another good performance to ensure victory and close the gap between them.

Other fixtures

In the other Southern Zone matches today, Halifax Ladies will play host to Lady Strikers at the Tema Stadium, Samaria Ladies encounter

Home

Starlets C'ttee visits team in Cape Coast

THE Management Committee of the national U-17 male soccer team, Black Starlets, paid a visit to the team's training camp in Cape Coast last Thursday.

The delegation, which was led by the Committee's vice chairman, Mr John Ansaah, interacted with the players and the technical team.

Coach Ben Fokuo and his team have been in Cape Coast for the past two weeks preparing for some upcoming assignments.

Immigration Ladies at the McDan La Town Park.

Northern Zone

League leaders in the Northern Zone, Prison Ladies, have a date with Ashtown Ladies at the Sunyani Coronation Park, Kumasi Sports Academy face Fabulous Ladies in a local derby at the Kumasi Paa Joe Park, Ampem Darkoa play host to Supreme Ladies, and Northern Ladies lock horns with PearlPia Ladies at the Aliu Mahama Sports Stadium.

Table Tennis: Quarcoo sure to retain Chairman's Cup title

By Samuel Amoesi

ERNEST Mawutor Quarcoo, men's title holder, has promised to retain his title ahead of today's 'Chairman's Cup' table tennis championships which commences today at the Fantasy Dome, Trade Fair Centre, in Accra.

Quarcoo told the *Daily Graphic* in an interview that his vision was to keep the title one more time and he hoped to do much better than he did last year.

"I am hopeful of retaining the title. I do not

expect to lose it anytime soon. I have prepared very well to compete today and I realise I keep improving and that has made me very confident," he noted.

Preparation

The former national Under-18 champion underlined the preparation he had made towards the championship. "I have not relented in my bid to retain the title. In January this year, I competed in the Ghana University Students Association (GUSA) Games and won four medals (two gold and two silver)

for my institution, the University of Cape Coast. Because of that, I was awarded the best player of the sport at the GUSA Games."

"This achievement came as a result of hard work and determination and I intend to put the same effort into the competition," he assured.

Opposition

A Leading Fire Officer of the Ghana National Fire Service, Quarcoo said though he believed he had to compete against other top players such as Emmanuel Commey,

Emmanuel Asante, Samuel Akayode, Isaac Baiden and other stars, he would still stand tall against every opposition

"Indeed, there are other top players in the sport currently. Also, everyone is trying to improve but none of them scares me. I believe I will stand firm and beat any player I meet on my way to the final. I believe in myself and I am confident my hard work will give me victory."

Quarcoo has hopes of competing in top local and international competitions this year to win laurels for the nation.

MoFA to destroy contaminated chicken on Monday

From Benjamin Xornam Glover,
TEMA

THE Veterinary Services Directorate (VSD) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) has ordered the destruction of contaminated chicken products seized from some importers in Tema.

The products are deemed hazardous to public health as it is said to be infected with salmonella bacteria.

They were seized by the MoFA through an operation mounted at the port after MoFA received a health alert from the Embassy of Brazil in Accra.

Alert

Briefing journalists at the Kpone landfill site, where the products will be destroyed on Monday, the Director

of the VSD, Dr Kwabena Asiedu-Baah, said his outfit got a health alert from the Embassy of Brazil in Accra, about the country of origin of the imported

gizzards from where two companies, Perfect God Enterprise and Perez Frozen Company, had imported four 40 footer containers of chicken products into Ghana.

He said the VSD was informed that the consignment were found to have been contaminated with salmonella bacteria.

Dr Asiedu-Baah said as soon as they received the alert, officers moved

in and informed the port authorities in Tema, adding that the port authorities revealed that indeed the containers had arrived but,

unfortunately, three out of the four containers had been released to the importers who, in turn, informed the VSD officials that the gizzard content had already been sold to the public.

Detention

Dr Asiedu-Baah said his outfit got alarmed and asked the port authorities to detain the fourth container.

He said samples of contents of the detained container were sent to the

VSD's laboratory where tests confirmed the presence of salmonella bacteria.

He said the container was seized and subsequently sent to the Kpone refuse dumping site for safe disposal.

Inspection

Dr Asiedu-Baah advocated the inclusion of the VSD onto the Joint Inspection Management Information System (JIMIS) platform to help monitor and inspect animal products imported into the country.

He said the Veterinary Services was the only institution mandated to inspect animal products imported into the country and their exclusion on the JIMIS at the port should be a cause for concern for the country

Writer's email: benjamin.glover@graphic.com.gh

The health alert from the Embassy of Brazil in Accra triggered the Veterinary Services Directorate to move in to confiscate the container.

NADMO presents relief items to Ghanaian community in Togo

News Desk Report

THE National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) last Thursday presented relief items to some Ghanaians at the Port de Perch (Fishing Harbour) in Katanga, Lome in the Golfe Region of Togo.

A fire outbreak, which happened at dawn of January 3, 2020, destroyed the property of over 2,500 Ghanaians and other nationals living in Katanga.

Situation assessment which was carried out by the Civil Defence in Togo, working in close collaboration with NADMO and the Ghana Mission in Togo, revealed that properties such as fishing nets, outboard motors, fridges for the fish mongers, sewing machines and home appliances and

other belongings were completely destroyed.

Delegation

A delegation made up of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Mr Mohammed Habib Tijani, the Deputy Minister for the Interior, Mr Henry Quartey, the Director General of NADMO, Mr Eric Nana Agyemang-Prempeh, and a team of NADMO officials joined Ghana's Ambassador to Togo, Mr Kofi Mensah Demetia, to present food and non-food items to the victims.

Assurance

Mr Tijani said the government was moved by the plight of the victims to make the donation.

He assured them of the government's commitment to her citizens both home and abroad to improve their lot.

Appreciation

The head of the Ghanaian Community in Lome, Nana Gyedu, assisted by the head of the Katanga community, Mr Mawuko



• Nana Agyemang-Prempeh (3rd right) making the presentation to Mr Mawuko Avino Blabo (left) and Nana Gyedu. With them are Mr Henry Quartey (arrowed) and some members of the Ghanaian community in Lome

Avino Blabo, received the items on behalf of the victims.

Nana Gyedu thanked President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for

coming to their aid in this time of need.

He said the 39 years that he had been living in Togo had seen many

disasters befall the Ghanaian community but this was the first time a government had come to their aid.

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READ



Some Ghanaians in Togo whose properties were destroyed in a fire outbreak have been supported with relief items from NADMO.