

CONTRACTORS SUFFERING

Chamber Of Construction Industry Laments Over Govt Indebtedness



Kwasi Amoako Atta, Minister Of Roads

Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry (GhCCI) has said most construction firms are folding up due to the failure by government to pay the huge debts owed contractors in the country. According to the Chamber the continuous failure of government to

make payments for awarded road contracts is having dire consequences on the construction industry.

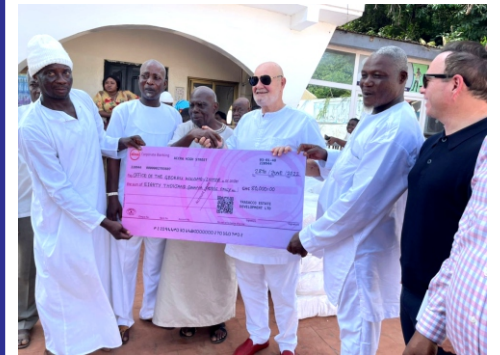
Vice Chairman of the Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry, Dr Adam Bona claims that about 90%

of road contractors have had to abandon their sites due to a lack of funds.

In an interview with GhanaWeb, the Vice-Chairman of GhCCI stated that while the government

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Trasacco Group Supports Nungua Homowo Festival With Cash, Others



R real estate giants, Trasacco Group has supported this year's Homowo Festival celebration by the people of Nungua.

On Wednesday, June 29, the renowned estate developer presented a cheque for GHC80,000 and other items to the Gborbu Wulomo-Shitse of Nungua, the overlord of Ga Adangme state at his Palace in Accra.

The items included hundred bags of rice, two bags of maize, two fat cows and four rams worth several thousands of Cedis.

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The INSIGHT

EDITORIAL

THE FREE SHS CRISIS

The concerns raised recently by the Ghana Association of Private Schools regarding the imminent collapse of their schools should be a matter of worry to all especially government and tackled with urgency.

It is worthy of note that this is not the first time that the private school owners have raised the alarm.

Most of these concerns came up during the government's hurried decision to implement the Free Senior High School programme.

Even though the programme is necessary and its implementation commendable because Ghana's first President and Founder, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah first initiated such a policy with a broader scope that encompassed even those in the tertiary institutions, the mode of its implementation under this regime has been a subject of concern to most people especially stakeholders in education. It is the hope of many that the several teething problems of finance and enrolment challenges including the collapse of many private schools as a result of the policy would only compel the government to sit back and soberly reflect over the available options being advised for the programme to be successful.

Already, several educationists and stakeholders in academia have made their views heard on the matter and proposed some ideas all intended to assist with the smooth running of the programme.

It is the expectation of many that this and many other pieces of advice would be heeded to and acted upon accordingly.

'Na Lie'

Agric Minister Exposed On 1.8 Million-Maize-Production Claim



Dr Afriyie Akoto

By Seth J. Bokpe

On Tuesday, June 21, 2022, the Minister of Food and Agriculture, Dr Afriyie Akoto, appeared on Joy FM to discuss topical issues concerning his sector.

The ministry's flagship project, Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), became the most dominant topic of the conversation.

He praised the achievement of the Akufo-Addo-led administration in the agriculture sector, scoring the PFJ a 100%.

"Going back into the history of government expenditure, there's no government that has spent so much on Agriculture and farmers as the Akufo-Addo government and has had this magnificent impact and it has been internationally acknowledged that this [PFJ] program is running successfully," he said.

The minister proceeded to make claims about supposed unparalleled achievements of the policy since 1950.

Fact-Check Ghana has verified the claim Dr Akoto made and presents the facts below.

Claim: "We have never been able to produce so much food. You go to the records from 1950, till now...Maize, until we came to office, we have never been able to produce 1.8 million metric tonnes. Don't forget I was the ranking member of agriculture and cocoa affairs for eight years, so I know the statistics. Last year, we produced 3.1 million metric tonnes."

Verdict: Completely false

Explanation: Through a right a right to information (RTI) request to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), *Fact-Check Ghana* has established that 12 years ago, under the Mills administration, the country produced more than 1.8 million metric tonnes of the grain. Ghana has since produced more than 1.8 million metric tonnes without any special initiative such as the PFJ, contrary to the Agric Minister claim.

Below is a table showing the annual maize production figures from 2010-2021

871,69520111,683,98420121,949,89720131,764,47720141,768,57720151,691,64320161,721,91120172,011,17920182,306,38420192,911,88420203,031,6912021

(Provisional)3,584,501Source: MOFA, 2022

This is not the first time Dr Akoto has made false claims on food production, contrary to figures from his ministry.

In February this year, he misrepresented soyabean and rice production figures before the Akufo-Addo came to power during a meeting with potential investors at a breakfast meeting in Accra.

The one-day event, organised by the *Tony Blair Institute* for Global Change, was meant to woo investors into Ghana's agriculture sector.

When Dr Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Minister-designate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, appeared before the Appointment Committee of Parliament on February 19, 2021, he made some claims about the government's PFJ programme.

Specifically, the claims he made related to the food security, production of maize, and quantities of fertilizer supplied under the PFJ programme.

"Before we came into office in 2017, the highest amount of production of maize in this country was 1.8 million metric tonnes. And I am talking about 2016, which was the last year before we took over."

Again, *Fact-Check Ghana* found that claim and others to be full of falsehood and contradictions.

THE INSIGHT

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from front page

between 2017 and 2020 fulfilled such financial commitments to road contractors, it has since 2020 failed to meet the commitments.

"I will say for the whole of this year and probably for a while, some of them haven't had payments. You have different categories. The payment regime improved between 2017 to 2020 but from 2020-2021 upwards you would want to say payments to contractors has been very bad," he said.

According to the vice-chair, this coupled with the current rise in the cost of operations is threatening the survival of several construction firms in the country.

"That is affecting contractors, just look at the price of cement today. Look at how much a litre of fuel cost. Most of these contractors depend heavily on fuel and other raw materials to be able to build roads and schools for this country. So just imagine. Inflation has moved from less than 10% to about 28% almost 30%. Look at the exchange rates and payments still aren't coming, it's terrible," he bemoaned. Dr Bonaa, therefore, implored the ministry of finance and its associated banks to take pragmatic measures to ensure the struggling industry is saved from collapse.

"If you have certificates that have been forwarded to the

finance ministry and subsequently forwarded to Fidelity (Bank) and other supporting banks and payments aren't coming, obviously you will not be able to do the work. So Ghanaian contractors are suffocating. Most of them have actually shutdown their plants, bitumen plants and quarries. Some of them have laid off staff, largely [because] most of them can't pay salaries and this is not somebody telling me. At the Chamber we deal with them, that is how bad the situation is."

"So mine is that the ministry of finance and Fidelity Bank, the other supporting banks must come clear. They must



Amoako Atta, Minsietr Roads

come clear and make sure as soon as possible the payments come. If not at the end of the rainy season, most of the very good roads that have been fixed and would have needed a bit of maintenance would have

been badly damaged. And we go back to zero, we will have to go back again and begin to construct the same roads that we would could have just maintained to keep them going," he

Thousands Partake In Arise Ghana Demo Day 2



Various individuals thronged the El-Wak Sports Stadium on Wednesday morning to join protests

Thousands of people yesterday joined the Arise Ghana Day 2 and final demonstration in protest against economic hardship and increasing fuel prices in the country. Clad in red and black attires with placards bearing different messages about challenges and hardships facing the country, the crowd

moved from the converging point at El-Wak towards the Finance Ministry and subsequently to the Parliament house in Accra. It would be recalled that Day 1 of the Arise Ghana demonstration did not go as planned as chaos, violence and tear gas greeted the protestors even before

takeoff at the convergence point at the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in Accra.

The demonstration on Monday turned violent with the police officers and protestors clashing following a disagreement over the route to take for the demonstration. The police and the organisers of the demonstration, through press releases and conferences blamed each other for the violence seen during the demonstration.

The clash was a result of the insistence of the protestors to use a route contrary to the one ordered by a High Court on Monday.

An Accra High Court, following an application by the police, ordered the demonstration to

commence at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle, through Farisco Junction to TUC and end at the Independence Square in Accra.

But the protestors, claiming to have secured a stay of execution against the court's order, sought to march towards the Flagstaff House as they had initially announced.

The police preempting the movement of the protestors formed a human shield to block the marching protestors from heading towards the Ring Road Central instead of the Independence Avenue. Incensed by the police action, the protestors resorted to pelting stones at the police

who responded by firing several rounds of tear gas. Many were injured including several protestors and police officers.

The police subsequently indicated that they will arrest the organisers of the demonstration for the destruction caused to national properties, but the organisers were adamant, saying they will not be intimidated by the actions of the police.

Most Ghanaians expect this tension to be carried into the second and final day of the Arise Ghana demonstration however the Day 2 protest ended successfully.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov Resigns After Losing No-Confidence Motion

Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov has formally resigned from office after his government lost a no-confidence vote last week. The government fell after it lost the support of the populist There is Such a People (ITN) party which disagreed with its policies on budget spending and the question of North Macedonia's European Union (EU) accession. The coalition government consisting of Petkov's pro-EU We Continue the Change (PP) party, the center-left Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), Democratic Bulgaria, ITN, and others had the support of 123 legislators in the 240-seat National Assembly. With the ITN withdrawing support, the government lost the vote with 123 votes against and 116 in favor.

Petkov now has one week to form a new government. If he fails, it is likely that fresh elections will be held – the fourth in nearly a year-and-a-half.

Petkov came to power following the parliamentary elections in November 2021 in which the conservative coalition government led by GERB leader Boyko Borisov was

ousted. Borisov was in power in Bulgaria from 2009 till 2021. Under the Borisov regime, attacks on the press, racism, xenophobia, corruption, and organized crime spiked in the country. Anti-corruption protests which started in July 2020 demanding Borisov's resignation continued in April 2021 when the four-year term of his cabinet ended with the formal resignation of the third Borisov government. In the two consecutive elections held to the National Assembly in April and July 2021, the ITN led by Bulgarian television celebrity Slavi Trifonov emerged as the single largest party but failed to form a majority government. However, ITN suffered setbacks in the election held in November 2021 when Petkov's PP emerged as the largest party. The ITN then agreed to cooperate with the PP-led coalition.

Ruptures within the coalition emerged following the start of the Russia-Ukraine war. Prime Minister Petkov, who extended

strong support to Ukraine, fired his Defense Minister who was seen as pro-Russia. Petkov was accused of toeing the EU's line and following its diktats against Russia. The question of North Macedonia's EU membership also played a big role in the government's collapse. Petkov, at the urging of prominent EU countries, was working to remove the veto Bulgaria has placed on North Macedonia's joining the EU.

Observers have pointed out that ITN switched sides as part of a political gamble anticipating snap elections in order to improve its ratings by garnering the support of nationalistic sections that do not favor lifting of the Bulgarian veto on North Macedonia's accession. According to ITN leader Trifonov, North Macedonia should only start negotiations after it has implemented the 2017 good neighbor agreement between Bulgaria and North Macedonia.

Meanwhile, on June 24, PP's



proposal to lift the Bulgarian veto on North Macedonia's EU accession and continue bilateral talks was passed with the support of the GERB and minority parties in the opposition. Legislators from the ITN voted against the plan while the BSP abstained from voting. The GERB-led government had earlier stalled negotiations between Bulgaria and North Macedonia. The BSP leadership has slammed the ITN and the opposition for conspiring to

destabilize the country and breaking apart the government's policies to create a welfare state. Journalist Kadrinka Kadrinova opined in *Baricada.org* that “without a left-wing movement, Bulgaria will always spin in a closed circle between Kiril and Boyko as there is no choice in Bulgaria because all the politicians offered to us are increasingly right-wing – whether they are thugs or perfumed to Western standards.”

US Supreme Court Robs Women Of Nationwide Right To Abortion



Photo by Vincent Tsai Almost two months after the draft decision was leaked to US media, Supreme Court rules 6-3 to overturn historic Roe decision

By Natalia Marques

On Friday, June 24, the United States Supreme Court ruled 6-3 to overturn the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision, robbing women of the nationwide right to abortion. This ruling comes almost two months after the draft of the decision was leaked by an unknown source to *Politico* on May 2.

The decision was part of the *Dobbs v.*

Jackson Women's Health Organization case, which was a challenge to a Mississippi law that banned abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with no exception for rape and incest. The law was never put into effect because it was stalled in the courts, as the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision of 1992 protected the right to abortion before 24 weeks. Today's ruling upholds the Mississippi law. The *Dobbs* decision overturns both the *Roe* and *Casey* decisions. *Roe v. Wade* was a historic 1973 ruling that placed federal protections on a woman's right to abortion for the first time. *Roe* was a result of decades of feminist organizing by groups such as the Redstockings group in New York City or “Jane”, an underground abortion service that provided safe

abortions to thousands of women. The 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision weakened the abortion protections in the *Roe* decision, but ultimately upheld the right to an abortion.

The overturning of *Roe* immediately strips women in over a dozen states of the right to an abortion. 13 states have passed “trigger laws” since the *Roe* decision, laws which stipulate that they will ban abortion immediately after *Roe* protections are overturned. An analysis by the Guttmacher Institute predicts that, the trigger laws combined with existing abortion bans on the books that have been stalled by *Roe*, means that 26 states are likely to soon or immediately ban abortion. Right-

wing groups, emboldened by the recent attacks on abortion rights, have proposed legislation as extreme as criminalizing discussing abortion.

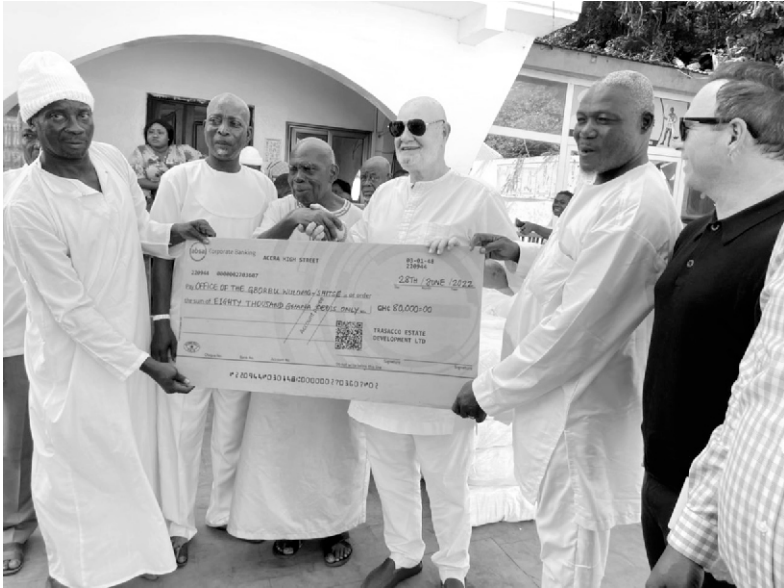
72% of people in the United States oppose the overturning of *Roe*. But public opinion has no bearing on the Supreme Court's decision, as all nine justices on the court are unelected, serving lifetime terms. Many social movement organizations are calling not only for the protection of abortion rights, but the abolition of the Supreme Court, citing the undemocratic nature of the institution.

“Today's ruling proves that the Supreme Court does not exist to

protect the rights of the American people, it does not exist to foster and protect equality and constitutional rights,” said Elizabeth Birriel, feminist activist and managing editor of *Breaking the Chains*. “It exists to push forward the reactionary right wing agenda.”

“I just hope that people aren't deterred from the struggle,” she continued. “That people use their rage, their anger in a way to push forward the fight back, and the revolutionary struggle, and to unite across all movements to fight for a better world.”

Trasacco Group Supports Nungua Homowo Festival With Cash, Others



from front page

Managing Director of Trasacco Valley, Mr Ian Morris in a post-presentation interview said "This is just a token to support the event because of the long standing relationship with Nungua

since 1997. This is one of the several Corporate Social Responsibilities we embark on the quiet. "We don't only offer quality products for our numerous clients, but support the

community where we operate, we wish the people of Nungua a fruitful anniversary celebration. We will continue to support our communities."

Gborbu Larbia, Bortier Peppefo for the Gborbu Wulomo-Shitse expressed gross thanks to management of Trasacco Group for the gesture saying on behalf of the Gborbu Wulomo-Shitse "We are indeed grateful for this support, it will go a long way to make this year's Homowo Festival celebration an epoch making one. We promise to support the Trasacco Group in all their endeavors."



SARIO INNOVATION MEETS THE PRESS TODAY ON GA DAMGBE ECO – TOURISM INNOVA CONCEPT PROJECT LAUNCH 2022

The Ga Damgbe are the indigenous people from the Greater Accra Region of the Republic of Ghana. The Eco – Tourism Innova Concept Project is strategically anchored on Trado – Cultural Order. Relevant on the History Heritage of their ancestral Famed Accomplishment(s) to rekindle its impacts for the Youths, Posterity and Significantly for Touristic attention and attraction, including Festivities, Ceremonial, Performing Arts, Cultural Drumming and Dancing, Food, Fashion all encompassing Traditional initiatives of the Ga Damgbe Tribes whose homeland is the GATE WAY of the Republic The Innova Concept Project seeks to enshrine modernized Trado – Cultural impacts on NICHE EQUITY MARKETS of ECO – TOURISM through the ERECTION and MOUNTING of

ICONIC SCULPTED PORTRAIT IMAGES to IMMORTALIZE and INDIGENISE TRADO - CULTURAL LEADERS OF IMMERSSED ATTAINMENT(S) at PRIME and HYBRID VISIBILITY PUBLIC LOCATION(S) thus ; By the HIGHWAYS ,INTERCHANGE ROUTES(S), ROUND ABOUTS, GATE WAY TO MAJOR COMMUNITIES and TOWNS, including TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS(TDA's) through – out the Greater Accra Region of the Republic of Ghana. Trado – Culturally this Ga Damgbe Eco - Tourism Innova Concept Project is rooted and relative to the GA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, OSU TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, LA / TESHIE TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, NUNGUA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, TEMA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, KPONE TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, PRAMPAM TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, ADA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, others and the SUPREME GREATER

ACCRA REGIONAL HOUSE OF CHIEFS in DODOWA. Significantly, this GA DAMGBE ECO – TOURISM INNOVA CONCEPT PROJECT is endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and the National Commission on Culture respectively.

UPDATE ALERT
GA DAMGBE ECO – TOURISM INNOVA CONCEPT PROJECT PRESS BRIEFING LAUNCH 2022.

Venue: Accra Tourist Information Centre, opp. Afrikiko Gardens
Date: 30th June, 2022 (Thursday)
Time: 12 noon prompt

Consequently, Community ECO – TOURISM PARKS shall be developed to culturally avail the rich and distinctive Trado – Cultural Oligarchy of the Ga Damgbe peoples cum the sustenance of the natural habitats in the semi – urban and rural areas of Greater Accra Region to the admiration and attraction of global tourism interest, including Visitations on Expeditions from

Collectors, Institutions of Cultural and African History, Investors – Corporate, Groups and Individuals, all and Sundry.

The intrinsic ECO – TOURISM values is structured on ECO – TOURISM PARKS categorization of indigenization to create a variety of unique ambiance which will fascinate global tourists enthusiasm and exclusivity of Trado – Cultural diversities of authentic and undiluted cultures of this great Heritage of the Ga Damgbe peoples whose geo – demographic location of Greater Accra Region is perfect and most suitable for NICHE EQUITY MARKETS for COMMUNITY ECO – TOURISM PARKS. A new ECO – TOURISM, Touristic attraction and Cultural activities embedded in modernised SOCIO – ECONOMIC engagements, indicative of a global taste and leisure for a HUB DESTINATION based on the peaceful and stable environs of Greater Accra Region and our beloved nation GHANA.

This ECO – TOURISM project is of

paramount importance for the upsurge and Development of our National Touristic advancement and values. All are cordially invited including visiting tourists, the diaspora, Beyond the Return activities booster, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies of the Greater Accra Region, Corporate, Private and Individual partners are all welcome. Your Contributions, Interests, Enquiries and others shall be forwarded to SARIO INNOVATION. Email: isario2013@gmail.com or you follow us on facebook : @SariolInnovation, twitter : @SariolInnovation, Instagram : sario_innovation. Contact us on +233 554 88 3678.

Regards

SARIO ANOKOTETTEH
CEO
INNOVA CONCEPT EXPERT
MULTI - FACET SECTORS

Lithovit-Sprayed Farms Bloomed – Witness Tells Court



Chief State Attorney Evelyn Keelson (L) and Justice Clemence Jackson Honyenuga (R)

A retired chief technical assistant at the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) at Assin Fosu in the Central Region, Mr Samuel Tsatsu Adigler, has testified to the efficacy of lithovit liquid fertiliser. His testimony was made when he took the stand as the fifth defence witness for former CEO of the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod) Stephen Opuni, the first accused person who is standing trial along with businessman Seidu Agongo. The two accused are facing a GHC271 million financial loss case in connection with the procurement of the fertiliser from Agricult, Mr Agongo's company by state-owned cocoa company. Mr Adigler told Justice Clemence Honyenuga's court on Monday, 27 June 2022 that: "As the general supervisor, I had the chance of visiting some of the farms that were sprayed with Lithovit and, in honesty, almost all the farms visited had flashy leaves, produced a lot of flowers and cherelles and pods and the beneficiary farmers were all praising the Lithovit [fertiliser] for efficient result". "Before I left Assin Fosu, our management team also came around in April 2015 for farm visits and the results we saw were all worthy of praise", he told the court while being led in evidence by Dr Opuni's lawyer, Mr Sam Cudjoe. "The leaves of the trees were flashy", he stressed, crediting it to the use of Lithovit liquid fertiliser. "It is as a result of the efficiency of the Lithovit. This is because, according to the farmers, that had not been the first fertiliser they applied on the farm, therefore, any change on the ground is as a result of the application of the Lithovit fertiliser". Mr Adigler, who said he was among a CHED management team from the Accra head office that visited the farms sprayed with Lithovit fertiliser, said: "As usual, in all their tour duties, they write a report to the effect of their findings on the field..." He said the report, which he "chanced" upon and "read when I was transferred to Adabokrom in

2015, said – "If my memory will serve me right" – that "they confirmed what we saw at Assin Fosu".

The case has been adjourned to Wednesday, 29 June 2022. Just a few weeks ago, a former Chairman of the Board of Directors of Cocobod, Mr Daniel Ohene Agyekum, told the same court that not a single farmer ever complained about any agrochemical, including Lithovit, procured by the company. Put to him by Mr Nutifafa Nutsukpi, counsel for Mr Agongo and Agricult, as to whether he received any complaints from farmers about any agrochemical that Cocobod purchased during his tenure as board chair, Mr Ohene Agyekum, the fourth witness for Dr Opuni, said: "My Lord, during the time, I, personally – and I can speak for my board members also – never received a single complaint from any farmer from a farming group". Several witnesses from both the prosecution and defence sides have also made similar testimonies to the court in the four-year-long trial. The second prosecution witness in the case, Dr Alfred Arthur, while under cross-examination by Mr Benson Nutsukpui, the counsel for Mr Agongo on Wednesday, 17 April 2019, affirmed that in 2014, 2015 and 2016 when Agricult's lithovit liquid fertiliser was distributed to farmers in the cocoa regions, no complaint ever came to either Cocobod or the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) regarding the use of the product. According to him, in the 3-year period, no farmer even mentioned the product, nor did any office or officer of Cocobod lodge any complaint against the product. Dr Opuni and Mr Agongo are facing 27 charges, including defrauding by false pretences, willfully causing financial loss to the state, money laundering, corruption by a public officer and contravention of the Public Procurement Act. They have both pleaded not guilty to the charges and are each on a

GHS300,000 self-recognisance bail.

Below are excerpts of Mr Nutsukpui's cross-examination of Dr Alfred Arthur:

Q. Dr Arthur, while working at CRIG during 2014, 2015 and 2016, did it come to your knowledge that Lithovit was being distributed to farmers in the cocoa growing regions?
A. No my lord.

Q. And while working in the cocoa fields on your operations in 5 of the 6 cocoa regions, it did not come to your knowledge that Lithovit fertiliser was distributed to farmers?

A. No...but in terms of cocoa regions, we have 7... Western North and Western South.

Q. Indeed, Dr Arthur, your operations covered both Western North and South.

A. Yes my lord.

Q. It is true that throughout 2014, 2015 and 2016, there was no complaint from you in respect of Lithovit.

A. Yes...during those periods, as I have already told the court, there was no re-evaluation of Lithovit foliar fertiliser.

Q. It is your position that during these 3 years, you never saw the product Lithovit Liquid fertiliser on any of your field visits.

A. Yes my lord.

Q. Your attention was never drawn to the product by any farmer in the three-year period.

A. Yes my lord.

Q. So, the first time you had an opportunity to discuss or comment on the Lithovit fertiliser that was supplied by Agricult was at the police station.

A. It was EOCO on July 4, 2017. That's when I saw Agricult Lithovit Foliar Fertiliser plus 5% Urea. On the bottle was indicated 1litre indicating that the product is a liquid substance, so, I told the officers that the Lithovit fertiliser that I worked on in July 2013 was in a powdery form from Germany.

Q. So, in the 3 years, materials were supplied on Lithovit. You, Dr Arthur never complained about the product.

A. No...I never saw the product during the periods under review.

Q. Tell this honourable court if you know, again, in the 3 years, there is no correspondence from CRIG complaining about the product.

A. Not that I know of.

Q. Do you know of any complaint from any office or officer of COCOBOD on the product in the material years of 2014, 2015 and 2016?

A. No my lord.

Q. And there is also no complaint from the procurement department on the product for the 3 years.

A. No my lord.

Q. As an officer of CRIG, and at your meetings, has any complaint from any farmer in relation to Lithovit been brought to your attention as officers of CRIG?

A. No my lord.

Also, under cross-examination in April 2022 by Mr Nutsukpui, Dr Opuni's first defence witness, Mr Charles Tetteh Dodoo, told the court that not a single farmer ever complained about lithovit liquid fertiliser.

"For a fact, between 2014 and 2016, when you served on the board, there was no farmer complaint or adverse performance against Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser that came to the attention of the board. That is correct?" Mr. Nutsukpui asked.

"Yes, my Lord," Mr. Dodoo responded.

Still in early April 2022, Mr Dodoo told the court that lithovit liquid fertiliser was recommended for procurement by revered scientists from CRIG, whose integrity and expertise were never, for once, questioned by the Board and management of the Ghana Cocoa Board.

Under cross-examination on Monday, 11 April 2022 by Mr Nutifafa Nutsukpui, counsel for Mr Agongo and Agricult Company Limited, who are the Second and Third Accused Persons in the case, Mr Dodoo, who is Dr Opuni's first defence witness, told the court: "There was not any single instance where an adverse report was made on Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser which would have informed the ETC's approval of further purchases of Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser over the years".

Also, asked by Mr Nutsukpui: "Sir, what will be your reaction if it was suggested that in buying and paying for Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser, Cocobod paid for a worthless product for which it received no value?" the witness answered: "My Lord, I will treat it with the contempt that it deserves".

Read excerpts of the cross-examination below:

Q. And when Cocobod is procuring for the season, it procures the agrochemicals that are determined by the scientist as required for application for that particular season. That is correct?

A. Yes, my Lord but I want to add that more specifically by the CODAPEC HI-TECH Unit.

Q. You told this court that the CODAPEC HI-TECH Unit was made up of scientists from CRIG. Is that correct?

A. Yes, my Lord.

Q. And it is these scientists that determined the agrochemicals, including fertilisers and their prices which Cocobod must procure for any particular season.

A. Yes, my Lord, up to 2013/2014

financial year.

Q. Now, these scientists are the only persons who will determine the suitability of an agrochemicals including fertilisers on use on cocoa.

A. Yes, my Lord, in conjunction with CRIG.

Q. Now, this determination of suitability of agrochemicals for use on cocoa is not made by the Board or Management of Cocobod; that is correct?

A. Yes, my Lord.

Q. While you served on the Board between 2014 and 2015, the Board had no reason to doubt the integrity of these scientists?

A. No, my Lord, the Board had no reasons to doubt the integrity of these scientists.

Q. As a result, the Board will not question a recommendation made by these scientists to procure particular agrochemicals; that is correct?

A. Yes, my Lord.

Q. And, sir, because of the process of recommendation by the scientists, no individual board member or individual member of management could have gotten Cocobod to procure a particular fertiliser outside of these recommended by the scientists. Is that correct?

A. No, my Lord, nothing of that to my knowledge.

Q. And, in fact, Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser got recommended by the scientists for procurement, as far as you are aware. That is correct?

A. Yes, my Lord.

Q. Now, sir, it was suggested in this court by PW7 on the 1st of March 2021 that when both the ETC, on which you served as well as the Board approved the procurement of Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser, they did not know what they were doing. What do you say to that?

A. My Lord, this assertion is not correct and it is an affront to the members of the ETC. If I may go further, CRIG has inspectors who follow up to the field and report on the performance of the various agrochemicals being applied on the field. There was not any single instance where an adverse report was made on Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser which would have informed the ETC's approval of further purchases of Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser over the years.

Q. Now, sir, from 2014 to 2016, would you remember whether the Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser was bought by Cocobod and applied by the farmers in all of the cocoa seasons of those years?

A. My Lord, any time Lithovit Liquid Fertiliser was procured, I have personally signed letters to haulage companies for the distribution of Lithovit Liquid Fertilisers from various warehouses to the district offices and they have been utilised.

Source: [classfmonline.com](https://www.classfmonline.com)

Multidimensional Crisis Of Food Insecurity In Sri Lanka, Warns UN

The World Food Programme's (WFP) situation report on Sri Lanka has presented some alarming details on the ongoing food security crisis in the island nation. With almost 4.9 million out of Sri Lanka's 22 million population currently facing food insecurity, the economic crisis in the country is threatening the life and livelihood of the masses.

According to the Sri Lanka situation report released by the WFP on June 14, an estimated 5.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 25 districts across the country after months of economic meltdown. The United Nations (UN) and the WFP have jointly launched an emergency response called 'Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Plan' targeting assistance for 1.7 million people in the country. Another report, released on June 9 by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), has highlighted the country's "multidimensional crisis" marked by high levels of food security coupled with a debt and balance-of-payments crisis. At the peak of the political upheaval in Sri Lanka in April, the WFP and the Sri Lankan government conducted a



(Photo: via JDS Lanka/Twitter) With nearly 5.7 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, Colombo faces a serious challenge with food shortages, fall in agricultural production and destruction of livelihoods

joint rapid food security assessment surveying the poorest households which revealed alarming trends in consumption patterns. To tackle the rising food costs, people in Sri Lanka have switched to "coping mechanisms" like eating less nutritious food or limiting portion sizes. The study also found that nearly 66% of the population was reducing their daily number of meals.

Fall in domestic production of food
Food inflation in the country – currently at 57.4% – is driven by rising prices of food and fuel globally, forex shortage, and a nearly 40-50% fall in agricultural production at home.

Without adequate planning and preparation, the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government had introduced a 100% ban on chemical fertilizers in April 2021, severely impacting the local production of key crops like paddy and tea. Although the ban was lifted in November, the decision impacted the produce of the Maha season (October to March), and its impact is likely to continue up to the next cultivation during the Yala season (May to September). The food crisis in Sri Lanka has long been in the making. A recent study conducted by researchers from the

International Food Policy Research Institute, WFP, and John Hopkins University on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and livelihoods of small farmers in Sri Lanka concluded that "normal crop cultivation and harvesting was adversely impacted due to being advised to stay home, being unable to purchase inputs and poor demand in the market despite having had a relatively low number of infected cases as compared to other countries." Being a primarily an agriculture-dependent import economy, Sri Lanka has around 2.1 million households currently engaged in farming and livestock production, who find their livelihoods threatened by the present crisis. With production costs rising and no aid coming from the government, farmers are abandoning cultivation. The UNOCHA report highlighted that only 24% of the total available land has been cultivated for the upcoming season.

The hunger and starvation from the lack of availability and access to food has pushed

many people from poor households towards migration and even suicide.

Children impacted by food shortages

Children, the most vulnerable but demographically crucial participants in the national population, have been especially hit by the economic crisis. A survey conducted by UNICEF in April concluded that at least 62% of the households have experienced a fall in income, which has significantly impacted their diet and their ability to afford nutritious food. The monthly cost of a nutritious diet has gone up by 156%.

The rising prices of food come with the halting of the national nutrition program due to lack of funds, thus significantly impacting access to nutritious food for children from marginalized households. Food security and other shortages of essentials like fuel have put children at risk of dropping out of school, directly impacting their learning.

Ukraine War: UK Joins Ban On Imports Of Russian Gold

The UK, US, Canada and Japan will ban imports of Russian gold in an effort to hit Moscow's ability to fund the war in Ukraine. The UK PM said the move would "strike at the heart of Putin's war machine". Gold exports were worth £12.6bn (\$15.4bn) to Russia in 2021, and the UK says their importance has increased since the invasion as oligarchs rush to buy bullion to avoid sanctions. It comes as the G7 group of the world's richest nations meet in Germany. US President Joe Biden suggested the other G7 nations - Germany, France

and Italy - would also join the ban.

"Together, the G7 will announce that we will ban the import of Russian gold, a major export that rakes in tens of billions of dollars for Russia," he said in a tweet.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson added: "We need to starve the Putin regime of its funding. The UK and our allies are doing just that." With London a major global trading hub for gold, the UK government said the move would have a huge impact on President Putin's ability to raise funds. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, Western countries have introduced a range of

sanctions targeting wealthy individuals, banks, businesses and state-owned enterprises. The US, European Union, UK and other countries have sanctioned more than 1,000 Russian individuals and businesses so far. The latest measure will mean UK import restrictions will apply to Russian exports worth around £13.5bn. The UK said the gold import ban would come into force shortly, with legislation introduced in Parliament in the coming weeks. It will apply to newly mined or refined gold, and does not impact gold previously exported from Russia.



There are no plans to extend restrictions to Russian gold purchased legitimately before the import ban was put in place. Discussions at the G7 summit in Bavaria are expected to focus on the international

response to the war in Ukraine, as well as soaring prices and the global food crisis.

CHRAJ Orders GCB To Compensate, Re-Instate Defunct UT And Capital Bank Staff



The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has ordered the Ghana Commercial Bank (GCB) to pay compensation and re-instate some 37 ex-staff of defunct UT Bank and Capital Bank for wrongful termination of contracts.

The Commission directed that the Complainants should be compensated within three months of the receipt of its decision with three months' net salary for each complainant at the current salary for each grade that the Complainants were on before the termination for the traumatic experience of losing their job.

Ms Eleanor Tetey and 36 other Complainants who are ex-staff of GCB Bank Ltd, (UT Bank and Capital Bank) lodged a complaint against the bank on May 29, 2019, after they were laid off.

The complaints allege discrimination, unfair and wrongful termination of appointments by GCB Bank Ltd (Respondent).

The Reliefs sought by the Complainants include among others; a declaration to the effect that the probation, issuance of new appointment letters, reduction of their salaries and the termination of their appointments were wrongful and in breach of their collective bargaining agreement; an order directing the Respondent to pay compensation to all the affected ex-staff.

In a 21-page decision on the matter signed by the Commissioner Joseph Whittal signed on June 20, the commission also directs that "those who entered tertiary institutions as mature students should be considered for reinstatement because they did not require credit passes in English and Mathematics after passing the entrance examination to those tertiary institutions."

Complainants' position

According to the Complainants, some of whom were ex-staff of UT Bank, and Capital Bank, on August 14, 2017, GCB Bank took over the operations of UT and Capital Bank in a "Purchase and Assumption Agreement" (PAA) approved by the Bank of Ghana (BoG).

The Complainants aver that, per the takeover, GCB Bank assumed responsibility for the Staff of UT and Capital Bank, the Branches of the two Banks as well as their customers.

They contended that, by letters dated August 31, 2017, the Receivers for UT and Capital Bank sought to terminate their employment with UT and Capital Bank when they were already employees of GCB Bank.

They said that some of the workers of UT and Capital Banks were not absorbed into GCB Bank and were issued letters terminating their appointment without reason.

They added that some others who were absorbed served illegal probation and subsequently had their appointments terminated.

They noted that, from the 13th of February 2019, GCB Bank issued letters to them indicating that they were going to terminate their appointment "at-will".

According to them, one of the reasons for the action of the Bank was that they did not possess the requisite pre-university qualification whereas those who were employed in the year 2017 with similar challenges were given a year to re-write their pre-university exams.

This action they believe constitutes discrimination since they were not given any hearing before the termination which is a breach of the principles of natural justice. They indicated that several attempts to get the Bank to give them a hearing proved futile.

They brought a complaint before the Chief Labour Officer who invited the parties to the meeting but the Respondent failed to honour the invitation.

They added that among those whose

appointments were terminated were national service personnel who were posted by the National Service Scheme to do their national service.

In view of the foregoing, the Complainants sought the following reliefs among others:

"A declaration to the effect that the probation, issuance of new appointment letters, slashing of their salaries and the termination of their appointment was wrongful and in breach of their collective bargaining agreement

"An order directing the Respondent to pay compensation to all the affected ex-staff."

GCB's response

In its response to the allegations, the Respondent (GCB) stated that; the Bank of Ghana revoked the operating license of UT Bank and Capital Bank (all in Receivership).

It argued that, on August 14, 2017, GCB Bank signed a PAA with the Joint Receivers with approval from BoG.

The Respondent intimated that under the terms of the PAA, GCB Bank selected some branches, purchased some assets and assumed selected liabilities of the two banks under receivership.

They stated that; "GCB Bank at no point in time assumed control and takeover of the operations of UT and Capital Banks".

The Respondent stated that, the two Banks in receivership were later liquidated and the Joint Receivers wrote to the staff of the two liquidated Banks explaining to them their current status and their appointments were terminated by the Joint Receivers and a severance package given to them after negotiations by the respective Unions of the employees of the two Banks.

The Respondent proceeded to offer employment to some selected staff of the two banks in receivership.

The appointment letter contained terms and conditions of employment

which were accepted by the staff. The Respondent added that, the offer of appointment was subject to satisfying reference checks, academic certificate verification, criminal record check as well as medical fitness.

They maintained that the Complainants were engaged as new staff and either party could terminate the appointment by giving the requisite notice or payment in lieu of notice.

GCB Bank stated that in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment they terminated the appointments of some of the staff after their checks revealed that they did not possess credits in either English Language or Mathematics after completion of their secondary education or both in contravention of the "Bank's long-standing policy in recruitment".

The Respondent averred that whilst the termination of appointment was ongoing, some staff of the Bank issued a writ to stay the exercise and out of deference to the courts in order not to be cited for contempt, have halted the termination exercise.

The Respondent is of the view that, that action should not be interpreted as discrimination since some staff who had issues with English and Mathematics had their appointments terminated, whereas others with the same issues are still in the employment of the Bank.

Furthermore, the Bank noted that, the Complainants were recruited as new employees, hence were placed on the requisite grades and mapped to the Bank's salary structure which they accepted, thus it was not the case that their salary was slashed.

In addition, the Bank denied that it forcibly assigned the employees to the Workers Union and was deducting dues for the Union from their salary thereby violating their right to association.

CHRAJ decision

Pursuant to Section 18 (1) of the CHRAJ Act, 1993 (Act 456) which requires the Commission after investigation to report its decision and the reasons for it to the appropriate person, Minister, department or authority concerned and shall make any recommendations that it thinks fit and in view of the above findings, the Commission's decision is as follows:

"That the Complainants should be compensated within three months of the receipt of this decision with three months' net salary for each complainant at the current salary for each grade that the Complainants were on before the termination for the traumatic experience of losing their job when they had a legitimate expectation of being in the employment of the Respondent after successfully passing all checks and being issued an appointment letter and a confirmation letter after they had worked for the requisite period of probation.

"Those who entered tertiary institutions as mature students should be considered for reinstatement because they did not require credit passes in English and Mathematics after passing the entrance examination to those tertiary institutions.

"That those who re-wrote their Mathematics and English papers and passed and submitted same to GCB, the Respondent herein should be considered for re-appointment.

As stated in the introduction to this Decision, this Decision is applicable to Sandra Dede Kumi and 38 Others pending before the Commission but whose investigation was stayed in consultation with the parties in the present case. The Commission accordingly so directs.

Source: starrfm.com.gh