

ECONOMY FACES TOTAL COLLAPSE

...Over Rising Cost Of Goods And Services
...Price Of 50 Kg Cement Now Sells For GH¢73



President Nana Akufo-Addo

Ghana's economy which appears to be teetering for months now is now in complete shambles as the managers of the economy seem to have lost complete control. The depreciation of the cedi has now resulted in rising cost of goods and services affecting every facets of items in the market. As at last Thursday, some cement manufacturers increased the prices of their final produce - cement to almost GH¢73. The price of a 50kg bag of cement which sold at GH¢50 in November 2021 has been increased to GH¢73 at some major manufacturing shops.

Cont. on page 3

Alleged Financial Malfeasance... SPECIAL PROSECUTOR CLEARS ATTA AKYEA



Samuel Atta Akyea

Kissi Agyebeng, Special Prosecutor

Former Works and Housing Minister, Samuel Atta Akyea has been cleared by the Special Prosecutor's Office over an allegation that he was involved in a financial malfeasance which has to do with the award of over \$4 billion housing contracts without parliamentary approval. It would be recalled that in a petition to the Special

Prosecutor, Kissi Agyebeng dated Tuesday December 14th 2021 titled – "PETITION: Malfeasance/Financial Loss To The State By Hon. Samuel Atta Akyea", one Daniel Kwasi Amponiy, the petitioner, cited a confidential document in his possession as the basis for his action. However, a report by the Office of the Special Prosecutor

Cont. on page 2

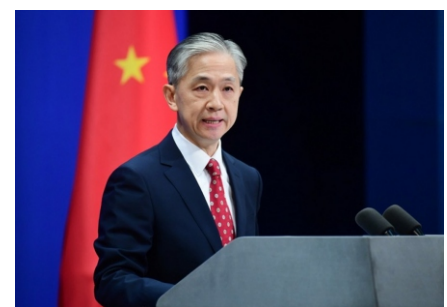
Peasant Farmers Reject One Village One Dam Project

...Says It Cannot Even Sustain Backyard Farming



Executive Director of the Peasant Farmers Association, Charles Nyaaba, has stated that the government's flagship One village One dam programme is not serving its intended purpose. According to him, the dams are not even able to sustain as small as backyard farms.

Cont. on page 3



China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin

**China's Foreign
Ministry Rubbishes
OHCHR Assessment
Report On Human
Rights Abuses In Xinjian**

pages 6&7

The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

END THE BLOCKADE!

For nearly 20 years now the United States of America (USA) has refused to heed to the United Nations (UN)

General Assembly (GA) Resolutions which call for the ending of trade sanctions against Cuba. In all the resolutions passed it has been explicitly stated that the United States' action is clearly against international law and must be stopped.

The Obama Administration attempted to normalize diplomatic relations and was on the verge of easing all trade sanctions until it exited office.

Regrettably, however, all the diplomatic gains made by the Obama Administration was squandered by the former Trump Administration, as it shockingly decided rather, to unilaterally tighten the existing sanctions by introducing new ones.

Clearly, this conduct is unacceptable and must be resisted by all Progressive Forces of the world.

The United States need to be told that its flagrant abuse of international law can no longer be countenanced.

The people of Cuba have the right to self-determination and to choose which political system and policy they deem fit and favourable.

The US simply has no choice but to respect the will of the Cubans as to who leads them and which political and economic path they champion.

It is their will and must be accepted by all including the US.

The time to lift the Trade Embargo without any precondition is now.

Alleged Financial Malfeasance... SPECIAL PROSECUTOR CLEARS ATTA AKYEA



Samuel Atta Akyea

Kissi Agyebeng, Special Prosecutor

from front page

titled 'Half Yearly Report' August 1 2022 said regarding the petition against Samuel Atta Akyea that, "In July 2022, the Office terminated investigation into a complaint of alleged financial malfeasance filed against the Member of Parliament for Abuakwa South for lack of evidence.

The complainant admitted that he filed the complaint without any basis and that he was paid to fabricate the content of the complaint. The complainant and his accomplices are under investigation for filing the complaint with the singular aim of tarnishing the reputation of the respondent'.

Roads Minister Unhappy About Lack Of Support For E-Levy

The Minister for Roads and Highways, [Kwasi Amoako-Attah](#), has stated that the electronic transaction levy would have aided the construction of roads in the country if the due support was given. The minister bemoaned the lack of funds as a contributing factor to the sector's inability to embark on construction projects. According to myjoyonline.com reports, the minister made the comments when he appeared before Parliament's Government Assurances Committee on August 30, 2022. "One of the key areas of the E-Levy was the road sector. So, if it had been, for instance, supported it could have helped," he said. Data from the Finance Ministry revealed that the electronic transaction levy raked in ₵93.7million as of July 25, 2022, away from the projected ₵4.7million target. The roads minister also added that his outfit had not received all amounts allocated to them in the 2022 budget.

THE INSIGHT

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ECONOMY FACES TOTAL COLLAPSE

...Over Rising Cost Of Goods And Services

...Price Of 50 Kg Cement Now Sells For GH¢73

from front page

A price list by GHACEM, a leading manufacturer of cement, whose prices have been increased effective August 30, 2022 showed that a 50-kilogram bag of cement of Super Rapid is now selling at GH¢64.59 while its Super Strong brand is selling at GH¢68 per bag, with GHACEM Extra selling at GH¢72.91.

According to myjoyonline reports, the increase has been attributed to the rapid depreciation of the cedi which has resulted in the increase in the cost of operations in the past few months.

“When the factory price (wholesale price) of a 50 kilogram was about ₵59.00, it was based on an exchange rate of around ₵7.60 in June this year,” a manufacturer whose name is withheld is quoted by myjoyonline.com.

However, the prices are slightly different in Accra from prices in other regions.

“Based on the fact that most of the manufacturers have to import some of the raw materials at a dollar rate of more than ₵9, someone has to take care of this sudden increase in cost”, another manufacturer stated.

Meanwhile, members of the Good Brothers Shoe Sellers Association (GBSSA), the biggest shoe hub in Kotokoraba, Cape Coast, are afraid they will soon be out of business if the government fails to do something significant about the high cost of living in the country. In an interview with online portal GhanaWeb, the traders mentioned that the recent increase in the exchange rate is highly affecting the price of their goods; hence, a big obstacle to the progress of their business. Mr. Evans Nana Addo, president of the association, revealed how he now has to pay more than twice the price he was paying for the same quantity of goods just a few months ago.

With seven workers under him, he further bemoaned how it is now difficult to pay his workers. “I’ve been here since 1992 and this’s the job I do. It used to be very lucrative, but for now, the business is collapsing. Look, we’re really struggling! A few months ago, I used to buy a sack of shoes for GH¢900, but it’s now GH¢1500. The agent tells me that because of the dollar, he now pays almost twice the amount for the same goods. Even the Omo (washing powder)

that we buy for Ghc90 is now Ghc370 so things are becoming very difficult. If care is not taken, I’ll either stop selling or fire some of my workers because, whether we make good sales or not, I’ve got to pay them.”

Mr Daniel Amoah, who has three workers, stressed that sales have become slow as compared to some months ago.

He recounted how, on some occasions, people come around wanting to buy shoes but the moment he mentions the price, they go away without buying anything.

“I’ve three workers under me and I pay them daily and weekly. Now the market is not good, people come here and go without buying anything. It is not easy for us, the exchange rate is killing our business. Government must do something for the Cedi to be stable.”

Meanwhile, Nana Kwame Gyan, a worker for one of the masters expressed the difficulties he goes through to sell shoes he sends to the market. Although he is not planning of quitting despite the low patronage, he hopes things will soon become good.

“This is the truck I use to sell (pointing at a nearby truck), I push it all over the market and sometimes I sell less than five pairs of shoes in a day. It’s not easy though, and I won’t stop selling, but we’re praying that soon, the market will be good.”

The shoe hub serves as the depot where people from other

parts of Cape Coast and the central region come to buy their goods to go and sell at their respective places.

They sell second-hand and brand-new shoes, and the association has over seventy members.

This is the price list of GHACEM cement:

HOEHLERBERG CEMENT Group
...The Nation Builder

AUTHORIZED CONTROLLED COPY

29th August, 2022

To: Ghacem Distributors and Direct Customers.

PRICE ADJUSTMENTS FOR GHACEM BAGGED CEMENT PRODUCTS.

Management announces price review of our bagged cement products with effect from **30th August, 2022** as follows

	Price in Ghana cedis	Tema Factory	Takoradi Factory
Super Rapid 32.5R per 50Kg bag	Ex-factory	54,109	53,919
	Add 5% NHIL & GETFL	2,708	2,696
	1% CHRL	0,542	0,539
	Base price for VAT	57,419	57,154
	VAT 12.5%	7,177	7,144
	Price as from 30/08/22	64,596	64,298
	Price in Ghana cedis	Tema Factory	Takoradi Factory
Super Strong 42.5R per 50Kg bag	Ex-factory	57,100	56,849
	Add 5% NHIL & GETFL	2,855	2,843
	1% CHRL	0,571	0,569
	Base price for VAT	60,526	60,261
	VAT 12.5%	7,566	7,533
	Price as from 30/08/22	68,092	67,794
	Price in Ghana cedis	Tema Factory	Takoradi Factory
Ghacem Extra 42.5N per 50Kg bag	Ex-factory	61,148	60,697
	Add 5% NHIL & GETFL	3,057	3,045
	1% CHRL	0,911	0,905
	Base price for VAT	64,816	64,551
	VAT 12.5%	8,102	8,069
	Price as from 30/08/22	72,918	72,620
	Price in Ghana cedis	Tema Factory	Takoradi Factory
Super Cool 32.5N per 50Kg bag	Ex-factory	51,190	50,130
	Add 5% NHIL & GETFL	2,559	2,507
	1% CHRL	0,512	0,501
	Base price for VAT	54,251	53,138
	VAT 12.5%	6,781	6,642
	Price as from 30/08/22	61,032	59,780

This price list overrides the previous one dated 6th July, 2022 and subject to change.

Yours faithfully,
For and on behalf of
GHACEM LIMITED


STEFANO GALLINI
MANAGING DIRECTOR


EBENEZER SORIANO
CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER

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Stefano Gallini (Managing Director)

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Peasant Farmers Reject One Village One Dam Project

...Says It Cannot Even Sustain Backyard Farming

from front page

Speaking at a GIZ-IMANI reform dialogue on August 24, 2022, he stated that the main challenge that farmers face is irrigation. “Our problem has to do with irrigation. Nobody is talking about that. How will an IMF program address the issue of farmers not getting water? When you go to some of the areas there are

people who are willing to invest but they won’t do it because this year many farmers abandoned their farms.”

“We did a program 1 village 1 dam, and when you go there and those dams cannot even be used for backyard farming,” he said. Nyaaba who bemoaned the lack of government support for the sector asked that the enabling

environment is created to allow investments for the sector’s development.

He said, “I have investors who are willing to invest in the agriculture sector without any support from the government, but because of policies, cultural norms, and traditional rules those people are not able to do it.”

Charles Nyaaba concluded by stating that Ghana has the potential to produce most of the

goods it imports if the right environment is created.

“I organized my groups to approach the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to take some of the government-subsidized tractors that came in. One is GH¢257,000. Many farmers are not able to afford it. We were willing to pay half but the Ministry said it was not ready. How will the IMF program make it possible for farmers to get access to credit to able to expand their activities?” he

questioned.

“We have more potential to produce tomatoes. We used to do it. The reason we were able to do it is that we were promised that the Northern Star tomato factory was being revamped in 2008. At the end of the day, the farmers were not able to consume, farmers had to commit suicide. We have to create an enabling environment for investors to invest,” he stressed.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Transport Workers Across France Gear Up For Strikes

Transport workers and unions in cities across France have issued notices for strikes and mobilizations from September 1 onwards as they intensify their protest against low wages, poor working conditions and chronic understaffing. The call for the strikes and mobilization was given by workers affiliated to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), CFDT, CFTC, Workers' Force (FO), SUD, and other unions. Workers of school transport and bus, metro and tram services are likely to participate in the strikes, protests and other mobilizations planned in the cities of Bordeaux, Nantes, Lille, Pau, Dijon, and others. They are demanding better wages at par with the soaring inflation in order to cope with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis.

Workers across Europe have been reeling under an acute cost of living crisis marked by skyrocketing fuel and food prices. The workers of the

transport sector, already severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, are now finding it hard to make ends meet due to rising inflation. Transport companies and their subcontractors, which are operating the public transport in several cities, have over time reduced their services, terminated staff, used temporary workers and scrapped permanent contracts, denied workers rights, and slashed wages and bonus and overtime benefits. Even in places where companies offered a pay rise, the hike has been nominal and insufficient compared to the rising rates of inflation.

According to *L'Humanite*, transport workers in Pau will go on strike on September 1, while workers in Lille will start their strike on September

3. Workers and unions in Nantes have also issued protest alerts and are gearing up for a massive mobilization by workers of Semitan, the company in charge of the public transport network in the city. The Keolis group, which operates public transport networks in several French cities including Bordeaux, Dijon, Lille, Lyon, Orléans, and Rennes, has also been criticized for reducing services and not addressing the workers' demand for a pay rise. The CGT union at Semitan stated that "the situation has already been tense for a long time. The summer has been complicated, the services are modified on a daily basis, this upsets the organization of the employees.



(Photo: via *L'Humanité*) Workers of public transport providers in French cities have decided to intensify their protest against low wages, poor working conditions and chronic understaffing

And as in all transport companies, recruitment is not happening."

The union also denounced subcontracting as the subcontracted drivers in

chartered lines are paid between €400 (401 USD) and €500 (USD 501) less than Semitan drivers.

Over One Million Bolivians Mobilize In Support Of President Luis Arce's Government



Over one million Bolivians mobilized in support of President Luis Arce and Vice President David Choquehuanca's government and its socialist economic policies on August 25. (Photo: Luis Arce/Twitter)

Under the banner of 'March in Defense of Democracy and Economic Reconstruction', over one million Bolivians last Thursday mobilized in support of the government of President Luis Arce and Vice President David Choquehuanca and its socialist economic policies. Workers from diverse sectors, peasants, students, and members of various Indigenous organizations and social movements from all nine departments of the country arrived in capital La Paz to ratify their support for the national government of the ruling Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party. The call for the march was given by the Pact of Unity (PU), a national alliance of grassroots organizations,

and the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), the country's trade union center, in the face of attempts by far-right opposition sectors and capitalists to destabilize the national government and the country's economy. Recently, the governor of the Santa Cruz department and one of the main opposition leaders, Luis Fernando Camacho, called for national strikes and other protest actions against the MAS government, although protests were only registered in a few cities. He demanded that the Population and Housing Census be carried out in 2023 and not in 2024, as defined by the government in a meeting with the National Council of Autonomies which was attended by eight of the nine governors of the country, except Camacho. In this regard, President Arce warned that the census was being used to discredit the work of his government, regroup the right, and divide the democratic, cultural, multiethnic and multinational unity of the country to oust him. Nevertheless, he affirmed that the national survey will be carried out in a professional and technical manner and without any political influence in 2024.

Men, women, senior citizens and children who participated in the march vowed that they would not allow another coup in the country, like the one that was carried out in 2019 against former President Evo Morales. The demonstrators condemned Camacho for promoting and provoking a coup d'état against President Arce. The march began from the neighboring city of El Alto and was led by former president and the current head of MAS party, Evo Morales. In the capital, it joined another march led by President Arce and Vice President Choquehuanca, and concluded at the San Francisco plaza in La Paz. Addressing the multitudes, President Arce expressed his gratitude to the people for their overwhelming support and for joining the march. He ratified his government's commitment to continue working for the benefit of all Bolivians. Previously, he stated in a tweet that "this is the unity of the Bolivian people, who today march stronger than ever to tell the right-wing coup plotters that democracy must be respected." In another tweet, recalling the 2019 coup and the popular struggle that

followed it and continued until the 2020 general elections, Arce said that "the unity and conscience of the Bolivian people, mobilized in the streets and then at the polls, gave us back democracy. Today, it is our historic duty to defend it." "Here we are, stronger and more united to continue working for Bolivia. Respect for democracy is what we demand. We say to the oligarchy that never won elections that if they don't respect the popular vote at the polls, we will make it respect it in the streets," wrote the head of state in another tweet. Arce stated that "once again, the maturity and wisdom of the Bolivian people prevail to defend democracy in this historic march. The Bolivian men and women do not want more coups, they want to work and industrialize the country. Thank you Bolivia! The coup-plotters shall not pass!" Meanwhile, Morales stressed that "unity is the triumph of the people and the defeat of the empire. Our task and responsibility is to guarantee the unity of our social organizations in the face of the divisive desires of the internal and

external right-wing that, under external guidance, seeks to provoke (people) and destabilize (the government)." He had earlier said that "defending democracy means defending the people's vote, the nationalization of natural resources, and other great achievements of our cultural democratic revolution." The executive secretary of the COB, Juan Carlos Huarachi, said that "all over the world, capitalism wants to destabilize progressive governments that protect the wealth of nations. Meanwhile, the oligarchies play into the Empire's game." Huarachi warned that "the COB will not allow a new coup in the country." Last November, social movements and trade unions associated with the government organized a similar massive march to boost President Arce's morale. Under the banner of 'March for the Homeland,' thousands of people undertook a 180-km and seven-day-long journey on foot from the town of Caracollo in the Oruro department to La Paz to express their approval of the Arce government.

Reverse Decision To Abolish JCR System – KNUST Students Petition University Council

As a matter of urgency, the JCR executives of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) have petitioned the University Council to reverse the decision to scrap the JCR system. In a letter dated August 30, 2022, and copied to the University community, the executives said the decision guarantees no long-term solution to the problem at hand, calling for a reconsideration of the abolishment.

“Again, we state and emphasize that no senior member of the Hall Council resides in the Halls and that it takes the JCR to respond to late-night welfare, health, and emergency matters. The JCR is the student's first point of call to matters, health complications and other

pressing issues at odd moments. This also justifies the argument that scrubbing student representation at the Hall level will only expose the student to more danger and vulnerability,” the petition said. Management of the University announced the scrapping of the JCR system following a recent violent clash between members of the Katanga and Conti halls on campus. The decision means there will be no election of hall leaders by the students as it used to be in the University.

Background

On Thursday, August 18, 2022, residents of University Hall clashed with affiliates of the Unity Hall when the students of University Hall were said to have attempted to use a route in front of the Unity Hall during their “Zulu Processions”.

Videos of the clash showed scores of rival students pelting stones at one another. In the chaotic scenes, vehicles were smashed, and other properties were destroyed, too.

About eleven students were injured, and twelve of them were arrested, including an old student.

This caused the University to take some measures against the happenings, including the suspension of Hall Week and SRC Week celebrations on campus indefinitely.

According to the Council, any student who participates in the organization of what is termed as 'morale' and/or 'procession' shall be summarily dismissed. But the decision to scrap the JCR system has been appealed by the student body as they called on the



Council to reconsider it in the best interest of the University.

The JCR Executives rather want the Council to, among other recommendations, consider the creation of a system at the Office of the Director of student affairs to recognize these Traditional Councils and bring them to the discussion table.

“We shall take charge to engage these councils, draft

and check the enforcement of disciplinary undertakings, provisions, and regulative instruments. This will help management in handling delinquent student behaviour much easier. We shall avail ourselves to carry on these engagements with these councils to make sure the best interest of the University is preserved.”

Source -- starrfm.com.gh

SMG STATEMENT OF CONDEMNATION

The Socialist Movement of Ghana strongly condemns the assassination of Comrade Lindokuhle Mnguni, the Chairperson of the eKhenana Commune and Youth League of the Shack Dwellers Movement Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM). We send our deepest sympathies to his family, close friends, and all of our ABM comrades.

Our Comrade, Lindokuhle Mnguni was an exceptional intellectual with a real vision and commitment to the struggles of the oppressed. A young man with a bright future in leadership, he was always modest and gave the people his time. Not Lindokuhle or the past 23 leaders of the ABM, nobody deserves these gruesome attacks meted out to the people's activists. We condemn the violent repression of the eKhenana commune and the assassination of members of the ABM. From the murder of Ayanda Ngilla, Nokuthula Mabasa, Lindokuhle Mnguni, and all our many fallen comrades of the ABM whose vision and commitment to struggle for the occupation of the commune, oppose imperialism, banish patriarchy, ensure urban

farming projects and the collective living of the people must never be in vain. We urgently demand justice for the brutal murder of Lindokuhle Mnguni.

How can we say "Free South Africa" when our comrades, when the working class, when activists are gunned down by assailants? How can we say we resisted and defeated apartheid when violent repressions leave movements, families, comrades, and friends bereaved, when it has left heavy burdens on the people of the eKhenana commune and largely most South Africans?

For how long can we continue like this? The political killings, and death, have cut short the lives of many irreplaceable comrades. We know their lives and what they stood for will serve as an opening for many men and women to emerge, form, and train as cadres - pick up from where they left off in the struggle. Our fight for socioeconomic justice and equality, for land, for dignified employment, and afterward for social justice continues and will only intensify. "The artist may die, especially when he is an

artist of such dangerous art as the revolutionary struggle, but what will not die in any way is the art to which he dedicated his life and to which he devoted his intelligence." (Fidel Castro) The SMG calls for the ANC and the ruling government to investigate Cde Lindokuhle Mnguni's assassination, including the 23 leaders of the ABM whose lives have been cut short. These investigations should lead to prosecution, conviction, and punishment of the perpetrators and their sponsors, the cowards who hide under cover to commit such atrocities.

We also urge all revolutionary and progressive organizations to support and solidarize with Abahlali baseMjondolo in its fights and uphold the fundamental human and democratic rights of all South Africans by standing with them in their struggles. Comrade Lindo, our hearts are in pieces! Comrade Lindo, rest in power! Comrade Lindo, the struggle definitely continues!

Signed.
Kafui Kan-Senaya
Ag. Convener

Ashanti Region Leads HIV/AIDS Prevalence



Over 4,000 out of the 23,495 persons who tested positive for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome for the first half of this year (January to June) in Ghana are from the Ashanti Region. The Regional Coordinator of HIV/AIDS, Dr Thomas Agyako-Poku, told Accra based Class FM's Elisha Adarkwah in an interview that the region's figure is one-fifth of the national figure. Dr Agyarko noted the Ashanti Region is one of the leading regions in the country in terms of people living with HIV/AIDS, adding: "We've been hovering around three per cent". He said, not only have the Ashanti and the Greater Accra

regions always led the rate when it comes to the national count of people living with the disease but also the Ashanti Region does not go beyond the fourth position. He attributed the prevalence rate of the disease in the region to it being an economic centre of the country. He said if the region could bring down its figure, it would go a long way to reduce the national figure. Dr Agyarko, therefore, advised the public to protect themselves against the disease while urging those with it to take their medication to reduce its spread.

How Inadequate Funds Led To Suspension Of Work On National Cathedral Project

Work on the National Cathedral project has been suspended, the Executive Director of the project has disclosed.

Dr Paul Opoku-Mensah said the Secretariat has run out of capital to finance the construction.

He made this revelation on Tuesday when the Redeem Christian Church of God donated to the Secretariat.

“We have the contractors and their staff on site, but the work has been suspended. We are hoping that within the next couple of weeks, as part of our fundraising and other initiatives we can begin work again,” he stated.

According to him, “our ability to complete this work keenly depends on Ghanaians supporting it.”

The much-talked-about project resurfaced in the media space earlier this year after controversies surrounding the financing of the project heightened.

The Finance Minister had announced that an amount of €25 million had been released to the project consultants in May 2022.

This was the second time money tagged as “seed money” was being released except that in the first instance the amount involved was \$25million and it was said to have

been paid in November 2020.

Despite the issuance of about three press statements, many were still unclear in their minds about the financing arrangements for the construction of the Cathedral which had been described by the President as a “priority of priorities”.

However, Dr Opoku-Mensah has urged Ghanaians to support the cause.

According to him, the ambition can only be actualised if the populace unites and contribute to the building of the edifice.

“The money might be big in terms of volume but if indeed we have 21 million Christians and a million can give us €100 a month for a year, we can easily complete this in time.

“I refuse to believe that we can't get a million Ghanaians out of the 21 million Christians to support this. I still have faith in the Ghanaian and I am confident that we will do this,” he said.

Controversies

The populace started questioning the project's source of financing when the North Tongue MP, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, put out documents showing that an

amount to €200 million has been dished out towards the construction of the project.

These monies, he said, were dished out without recourse to parliamentary processes or strict public procurement practices.

According to Mr Ablakwa, the Akufo-Addo administration first proclaimed the project as a private and personal pledge; however, public funds are now siphoned to facilitate the task.

He added that the inclusion of the National Cathedral's Executive Director on the roll of Presidential Staffers also flies in the face of the law.

“When you go through the list of Board of Trustees, this gentleman [Dr Paul Opoku Mensah] who has been enlisted here as the Executive Director of the Secretariat, a Secretariat presented as a private entity, has also been enlisted as a Presidential staffer and his position there is an overseer of the National Cathedral.

“Why is the Ghanaian taxpayer paying somebody who works for a private board of trustees?” he quizzed.

His revelations has since gotten many influential individuals and



pressure groups questioning the transparency and accountability of government.

Genesis of National Cathedral

The building of the Cathedral fulfils a pledge President Akufo-Addo revealed he made to God before winning the 2016 elections.

In 2019, the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, said the construction of the National Cathedral is estimated to cost over \$100 million.

It has since been amended to \$340 million.

The government has already demolished all structures on the proposed site to construct the National Cathedral at Ridge in

Accra, and work is progressing.

It is also scheduled to be commissioned on March 6, 2024.

The 5,000-seater auditorium project will also bequeath to the country a gracious national park for all Ghanaians, bring new skills, technology and jobs, and act as a beacon to national, regional and international tourists.

Are You 'Observing How The President Continues To Pack Our Courts With Partisan Judges?' – NDC Replies Justice Douse



Retired Court of Appeal Judge Justice Isaac Douse

According to the party, Mahama's view that the image of Ghana's judiciary has deteriorated, is shared by many and studies conducted by research agencies in the country have indicated the decline.

The party added that rather than faulting Mahama for his views, Justice Douse should be speaking about the wrong happenings in the judiciary, 3news.com reports.

“There is sufficient evidence, both scientific and anecdotal, available to prove that citizens' trust in the judiciary which also includes the Supreme Court is on a gradual decline,” a statement issued by NDC General Secretary, Asiedu Nketiah said.

“Is Justice Douse observing how the president continues to pack

our courts with partisan judges?

As an experienced jurist, does he fully appreciate the implications of such acts on justice delivery and for that matter the image of the judiciary and its independence? If so, has he made any comments about it?” the NDC questioned.

The Party added that Mahama as a citizen of Ghana and a former president of the country has every right to comment happening in the country.

“We wish to state that the judiciary should take the advice of HE John Mahama seriously and reflect on it each time it is called upon to do its work.”

Addressing a conference of NDC lawyers last weekend, the

former president lamented the fact that the judiciary has now become the butt of jokes, as a result of its biased rulings and decisions on cases with a political tinge.

He observed that the country's judiciary is “broken” under the leadership of Justice Anin-Yeboah, and hoped that a “new Chief Justice” will lead an image-cleansing crusade in the future, since, in his view, the current Chief Justice cannot lead such a process.

But responding to Mahama's comments Justice Isaac Douse, warned the former president not to drag the image of the Supreme court in the mud because such an act can be a threat to the country's

democracy, and will not only affect the apex court but every Ghanaian as well.

“The constitution the way it is made, will make it very difficult for any new government to reshuffle the Supreme Court as it is.

“I'll caution the ex-president to be very careful about some of these things because if an attempt is made to demolish the supreme court because of one or two cases, it can be a very big disaster for our democracy. Democracy depends on the efficiency and respect and the trust people have in the Supreme Court,” he warned.

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) has replied retired Court of Appeal Judge, Justice Isaac Douse, for saying that ex-President John Dramani Mahama's comment on the judiciary is a threat to Ghana's democracy.

Where JCPOA, Oil Conjoin Stands Vis-A Vis OPEC+

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

The news that made the headlines last Thursday is that the Joe Biden Administration may have inched closer to restarting the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. Meanwhile, it escaped attention that Iran's oil minister Javad Owji said just a day earlier in Tehran following a meeting with Igor Levitin, Russian President Vladimir Putin's senior aide that the two countries have finalized their talks on "gas purchase and swap" and a contract is going to be signed in Moscow. Owji disclosed that Iran and Russia are negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for developing another 14 Iranian oil and gas fields in addition to the seven for which contracts already exist as decided in July in an earlier MoU, according to which Russia agreed to invest \$40 billion in Iran's petroleum industry. The highlights of the July MoU included the development of Iran's Kish and North Pars gas fields and six oil fields and completion of LNG projects — and, importantly, swap of gas and petroleum products, and construction of gas transfer pipelines. Owji added that the Iran-Russia joint economic commission will meet in Moscow within the next two months to continue their discussions on the expansion of cooperation in the energy, transport, trade, amongst other areas. A western narrative has gained ground that Russia opposes the Iran-US nuclear deal, since Iran will be replacing Russian oil in the lucrative European market and in the process drive down the high oil price too by flooding the world market with its increased up oil production, which would erode Moscow's income out of oil exports, the mainstay of its economy. In reality, though, there is no contradiction here as far as Iran and Russia are concerned. The expert opinion uniformly is that this is far from a situation that Iran completely replaces Russian oil from the global energy

market. Conceivably, Iran could add as much as 900,000 barrels a day of production within three months of sanctions being eased, and potentially pump near its full capacity of about 3.7 million barrels per day within six months.

According to Goldman Sachs, even if a deal were agreed, Iran would take around 12 months to fully ramp up its oil production. The bank also estimates Iran would increase its output to 3.7 million barrels a day, but exports would likely take several months to pick up. At best, Iran's return to the market will have a temporary effect in the near term, because a part of Iran's oil is already available in the market.

Hidden charms of oil swap

There are three key factors playing out here. First, expectations need to be tempered, considering that the understanding between Russia and Iran is at an all-time high level today and it is hard to see Tehran challenging Russia's core interests in the current geopolitical conditions — leave alone, collaborating with a Western enterprise. Iran understands that any significant improvement in its relations with Europe or the US will be a long haul, while on the other hand, the shelf life of a nuclear deal may turn out to be limited, since all bets are off in US politics beyond 2024. For European energy market too, the present time is a period of transition to green energy. Given these parameters, Iran is rapidly stepping up its economic cooperation with Russia, with energy and transportation being two main hubs. Iran announced on Tuesday that the rial-rouble payment system has begun working and is being handled by the Russian Central Bank's Mir system. Last month, [Tehran Stock Exchange launched rial-rouble trading](#). The strategic intention, clearly, is to bypass the US-dominant global financial system. Second, there is a strong possibility that Iran could step up oil exports to Europe via a "swap" mechanism with Russia.

A swap arrangement is quite viable whereby Russian oil meets the needs of Iran's northern Caspian regions while Iran exports (on Russia's behalf) the surplus oil freed from meeting its internal demands. Russian and Iranian officials have been fleshing out the idea of a "swap" arrangement.

Now, since their payment system is out of the SWIFT and dollar trade, outsiders will be left guessing about any Russian-Iranian swap deal. The EU is in no position to spurn Iranian oil. Again, Iranian oil present on the market today is almost all in the form of mixtures, which are often transported by tankers of other states.

Third, Iran has a convergence of interests with Russia (and with Saudi Arabia) as regards the prices in the global market. It is a matter of time before Iran joins the OPEC+ (the oil alliance between Saudi Arabia and Russia at its core) in some form. Saudi Arabia is increasingly more aligned with Russia than with the US on the global stage. And both need higher oil prices. The Saudi Oil Minister Prince Abulaziz bin Salman recently spoke of the "self-perpetuating vicious cycle of very thin liquidity and extreme price volatility" in oil markets, and how it has been "amplified by the flow of unsubstantiated stories about demand destruction, recurring news about the return of large volumes of supply, and ambiguity and uncertainty about the potential impacts of price caps, embargoes, and sanctions."

The Saudi Prince was alluding to the Biden Administration's rampant intervention in oil markets. From the Saudi perspective, President Biden's climate-first policies have thwarted upstream investment since he took office in early 2020.

The butterfly effect

The Saudi Prince's remarks were even more telling when he was asked by *Bloomberg* about the future of OPEC+. He stated in a written reply:



Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) and then Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at G20 summit, Hangzhou, Sept. 5, 2016, where they planned an oil output task force that fructified as OPEC+. From Iran's viewpoint also, it will be desirable to become part of the OPEC+ cartel with Russia and Saudi Arabia

"In OPEC+ we have experienced a much more challenging environment in the past and we have emerged stronger and more cohesive than ever. OPEC+ has the commitment, the flexibility, and the means within the existing mechanisms of the Declaration of Cooperation to deal with such challenges and provide guidance including cutting production at any time and in different forms as has been clearly and repeatedly demonstrated in 2020 and 2021. "Soon we will start working on a new agreement beyond 2022 which will build on our previous experiences, achievements, and successes. We are determined to make the new agreement more effective than before. Witnessing this recent harmful volatility disturb the basic functions of the market and undermine the stability of oil markets will only strengthen our resolve."

Plainly put, Riyadh, a key regulator of the global oil market, plans to maintain or even increase the restrictions on the production and total supply of oil for the world market and to this end, will work towards a new OPEC+ agreement, which limits production in the participating countries. The implications are: one, Russia can consider its revenues from oil exports relatively protected for the conceivable future; and, two, if a new OPEC+ agreement is worked out to make it "more effective than before," Iran in all likelihood have to be brought on board. From Iran's viewpoint

also, it will be desirable to become part of the OPEC+ cartel with Russia and Saudi Arabia.

Fundamentally, Saudis understand that the ousting of Russia from the Asian markets may not take place, given the positions of China and India. That is, any increase in the presence of Gulf oil in Europe will happen by itself as Russian supplies turn to the east — and therefore, there is no reason to ruin the OPEC+ with Russia. Oil Minister Prince Abulaziz bin Salman has made this very clear.

Therefore, a significant decline in world prices due to the growth of production in Iran should not be expected. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran primarily care about the welfare of their states, therefore, their position will be formulated in such a way that the current prices are comfortable and their companies keep increasing quarterly profits.

The OPEC+ was the brainwave of President Vladimir Putin and then Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Sultan on a Sunday in Hangzhou, China, six years ago. (See my article [Pay heed to the butterfly effect of Putin-Salman oil deal in Hangzhou](#), Asia Times, September 7, 2016)

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China's Foreign Ministry Rubbishes OHCHR Assessment Report On Human Rights Abuses In Xinjian

from page 7

a shift of China's position of opposing the so-called "assessment." Should the OHCHR release the "assessment of the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," it is requested that the OHCHR release together and in full-text this Note Verbale and the report attached to it.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Fight against Terrorism and Extremism in

Xinjiang: Truth and Facts

Information Office of the People's Government of

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

August 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
I. Xinjiang's fight against terrorism and extremism is both necessary and just.	2
Terrorist and extremist activities were rampant in Xinjiang.	2
People of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang suffered greatly from the scourge of terrorism and extremism.	8
Fighting terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang is a pressing need.	10
Fighting terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang is endorsed and supported by people of all ethnic groups.	12
II. Xinjiang's fight against terrorism and extremism was all along conducted on the track of the rule of law.	17
China has a clear-defined legal and policy framework on counter-terrorism and de-radicalization.	17
Xinjiang is always committed to respecting and protecting human rights fighting terrorism and extremism.	30
Xinjiang handles criminal cases involving terrorism or extremism in a just manner in strict accordance with law.	33
The law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities in Xinjiang have established a strict access system and systematic training mechanism to ensure the professional competency of law enforcement and judicial personnel.	41
Public security institutions in Xinjiang exercise investigative power in strict accordance with law.	42
The exercise of the power of investigation by Xinjiang's public security authorities is subject to the supervision of the whole society.	43
III. Vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang are schools attended for de-radicalization established in accordance with the law.	47
Xinjiang carries out vocational education and training in strict compliance with laws.	47
Vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang provide courses in accordance with the law on standard spoken and written Chinese language, law and vocational skills, with a focus on de-radicalization.	52
Vocational education and training in Xinjiang is in line with internationally accepted principles, concepts and practices.	56
IV. Vocational education and training in Xinjiang fully respects and safeguards human rights.	60
The principle of respecting and protecting human rights is fully embodied in the management measures of Xinjiang's vocational education and training centers.	61
Vocational education and training in Xinjiang has achieved remarkable results.	70
Trainees have found stable employment and are living a normal life after graduation.	74
The de-radicalization efforts of Xinjiang provide useful experience for	