



((Editorial))

Let's make positive use of social media

THE world is now described as a global village because of internet. This has become possible through the worldwide web otherwise known as (www), which allows information to be passed on and received almost instantaneously.

FOR instance, people in different countries on different continents are able to communicate with one another through social media platforms such as Skype, Pinterest, Instagram, Foursquare, Tango, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Call Up, Imo and many other applications and platforms.

THE social media has presented opportunities for people to connect easily with long-lost acquaintances, family members, friends and admirers.

HOWEVER, a section of society has turned the various social platforms into sites of nudity, vulgarity and obscenity where peeved or jilted lovers post pornographic photos of their lovers, with the intent to disgrace them.

OTHERS also use the platforms for Internet fraud, popularly referred to as 'Sakawa', and dupe unsuspecting people.

NONETHELESS, we at Today believe we can make the best use of the social media as other countries are doing. Social media now has become a vehicle for development so we can't afford to let such a golden opportunity pass us.

WE must use the powerful social media platforms that are available to us to develop ourselves and country.

IT is time we, as a people, stopped looking up to the government to provide all our needs, even when we have the power to mobilise forces and resources to provide them.

TODAY believes that Ghana can have many positive things done, and within a short period, if we all learn from how some countries have made good use of the social media.

LET us all use the various social media platforms positively to make our society a better place to live in.

Former Pope Benedict XVI dies at 95

Source: BBC

Former Pope Benedict XVI has died, aged 95, almost a decade after he stood down because of ailing health.

He led the Catholic Church for fewer than eight years until, in 2013, he became the first Pope to resign since Gregory XII in 1415.

Benedict spent his final years at the Mater Ecclesiae monastery within the walls of the Vatican where he



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passed away at 09:34 (08:34 GMT) on Saturday. His successor Pope Francis will lead the funeral on 5 January. The Vatican said the body of the Pope Emeritus will be placed in St Peter's Basilica from 2 January for "the greeting of the faithful".

Bells rang out from Munich cathedral and a single bell was heard ringing from St Peter's Square in Rome after the former pope's death was announced.

The head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, said Pope Benedict was "one of the great theologians of the 20th century". In a statement he said: "I remember with particular affection the remarkable Papal Visit to these lands in 2010. We saw his courtesy, his gentleness, the perceptiveness of his mind and the openness of his welcome to everybody that he met."

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called the former pope "a great theologian whose UK visit in 2010 was an historic moment for both Catholics and non-Catholics throughout our country".

French President Emmanuel Macron said Pope Benedict "worked with soul and intelligence for a more fraternal world" and said his thoughts went out to Catholics in France and around the world.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Pope Benedict "was a giant of faith and reason".

"He put his life at the service of the universal Church and spoke, and will continue to speak, to the hearts and minds of men with the spiritual, cultural and intellectual depth of his Magisterium."

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said for many, not only in Germany, Pope Benedict was "a formative figure of the Catholic Church, a controversial personality and a clever theologian".

Irish President Michael D Higgins said the former pope will be remembered for "his untiring efforts to find a common path in promoting peace and goodwill throughout the world".

Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said Pope Benedict was "one of the greatest theologians of his age - committed to the faith of the Church and stalwart in its defence".

Benedict: The Pope who resigned from the papacy

Following news of the former pope's death people began gathering in St Peter's Square in Rome.

Annamaria, 65, and Patrizia, 64, visiting from the northern Italian city of Bologna, said they went there immediately as soon as they heard about the death.

"We came here to pray. He was a great pontiff, certainly very different from Francis, he was a great intellectual and scholar. Like the rest of the Church we will always remember him," Annamaria told the BBC.

Barbara Bernadas, a tourist from the Spanish city of Barcelona, said she and her boyfriend felt a sense of bewilderment when they heard the news.

"We learned of his death just as we were in St Peter's Square. A tourist guide was just telling us where Benedict lived, it feels surreal. What will happen now? This situation is unprecedented; there are no protocols to follow for what will happen now. Certainly it is an unprecedented historical moment," she said.

Although the former pontiff had been ill for some time, Vatican authorities said there had been an aggravation in his condition because of advancing age.

On Wednesday, Pope Francis appealed to his final audience of the year at the Vatican to "pray a special prayer for Pope Emeritus Benedict", whom he said was very ill.

Born Joseph Ratzinger in Germany, Benedict was 78 when in 2005 he became one of the oldest popes ever elected.

For much of his papacy, the Catholic Church faced allegations, legal claims and official reports into decades of child abuse by priests. Earlier this year the former pope acknowledged that errors had been made in the handling of abuse cases while he was archbishop of Munich between 1977 and 1982.

World leaders, Football legends Pay Tribute to Pele

Source: BBC

Tributes have poured in for Brazilian football legend Pele, who died aged 82 on Thursday. Considered by many to be the greatest player of all time, Pele won the World Cup three times during his remarkable career – the only man ever to achieve the feat.

Pele's passing was confirmed by his family and officials at the Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo, where he had been admitted for treatment at the end of November as part of his battle with colon cancer.

Pele's daughter Kely Nascimento, one of his seven children, shared a social media message of members of the family joining hands with the football icon in his hospital bed.

"Everything we are is because of you. We love you infinitely. Rest in peace," Nascimento wrote. The news of Pele's death prompted a wave of mourning in his homeland and far beyond.

Current Brazilian star Neymar – who shares the record with Pele as all-time top scorer for the national team on 77 goals – praised Pele's transformational impact on football.

"Pele changed everything. He transformed football into art, entertainment. Football and Brazil elevated their standing thanks to the King! He is gone, but his magic will endure. Pele is eternal!" Neymar wrote in a message to his 199 million Instagram followers.

READ MORE: Pele: From humble beginnings to football's first global superstar

Cristiano Ronaldo also paid tribute to the man known as the 'King'.

"My deep condolences to all of Brazil, and in particular to the family of Edson Arantes do Nascimento (Pele)," wrote the five-time Ballon d'Or winner.

"The love you always showed me was reciprocated in every moment we shared even from distance."

"He will never be forgotten and his memory will live forever in each and every one of us football lovers."

"Rest in peace King Pele."

The Argentina team were recently congratulated by Pele for their World Cup success in Qatar, and captain Lionel Messi shared a tribute with photos of himself alongside the Brazilian great.

"Rest in peace," read a message from Messi.

Like Pele – who famously fired Brazil to their first World Cup title in 1958 aged just 17 – French star Kylian Mbappe is another player to have illuminated the tournament while still a teenager.

Mbappe shared a touching tribute on Twitter with a photo of himself and Pele smiling.

"The king of football has left us but his legacy will never be forgotten. RIP KING," wrote the French forward.

In Russia, the national football team's social media accounts shared an image of Pele alongside the late Lev Yashin – a man considered by many to be the greatest goalkeeper ever to play the game.

At political level, Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva paid tribute by noting Pele's impact on promoting his nation worldwide as football's first global megastar.

"Few Brazilians have taken our country's name as far as he did... He didn't just play. He put on an all-out show. Thank you, Pele," wrote the leader.

One of Brazil's most famous landmarks – the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro – was illuminated in national colors on Thursday as a mark of respect to the late football icon.

Brazil has announced three days of mourning.

GRASAG Opposes 15% increment

...In fees in all public varsities for 2022/2023 academic year

Story: Kwadwo Owusu ADUOMI

Graduate Students' Association of Ghana (GRASAG) has rejected the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission's (GTEC) 15% increment in fees in all public universities for the 2022/23 academic year.

GTEC last week directed tertiary institutions to review fees for the next academic year by a maximum 15 percent increment.

A statement issued by GRASAG said, "GRASAG members all over the country have been hit hard by the economic downturn, and an increase in university fees, we believe will exacerbate the situation".

According to GRASAG, some tertiary institutions have released provisional fees above the approved 15% increment, adding that some members of the Association are likely to drop out of school over their inability to pay the fees.

To this end, GRASAG called on the government and GTEC to engage stakeholders including student unions before implementation of the approved fees.

"Some universities have increased their fees above the 15% approved rate by Parliament.

GRASAG is by this release calling on government and GTEC to halt the implementation of this increment indefinitely to allow for further engagements with relevant stakeholders including students unions," the statement stressed.

It, therefore, threatened to oppose any attempts by any university management to impose the increment fees on students without extensive stakeholder engagements.

Read [GRASAG's full statement](#)



**GRADUATE STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF GHANA**

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Partners in National Development through Research and Practice

We would like to state unequivocally that GRASAG will oppose any attempt by the any University Management to impose the increment on our members without extensive engagements with all relevant stakeholders.

Finally, we want to encourage our members to remain calm while we take steps to intervene in this matter.

Signed:

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Cc:
Ministry of Education
Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
All Local GRASAGs
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**GRADUATE STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF GHANA**

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Partners in National Development through Research and Practice

Our Ref: GRA/NAT/2022/025

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GRASAG REJECTS 15% INCREMENT IN UNIVERSITY FEES

For immediate Press:

Friday, December 30, 2022

The Graduate Students' Association of Ghana (GRASAG National) wishes to express its displeasure about the decision to increase university fees by the Management of the Public Universities, which also affects postgraduate students.

The Association is displeased with this decision because it comes at a time when Ghanaians are experiencing worst economic conditions.

GRASAG members all over the country have been hit hard by the economic downturn, and an increase in university fees, we believe, will exacerbate the situation.

The GRASAG National leadership has received a lot of disturbing news from our members on how this increment will negatively impact their finances. Many also spoke on the possibility of them dropping out of school due to their inability to deal with the increment. We are aware that provisional fees of some universities have already been released and students are expected to begin payments. Some Universities have increased their fees above the 15% approved rate by the Parliament.

GRASAG is by this release calling on Government and Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) to halt the implementation of this increment indefinitely to allow for further engagements with all relevant stakeholders, including Student Unions.

The government should also ensure that all fees charged by universities are standardized in order to avoid the problem of individual university administrations unilaterally deciding on the margin of fee increment without recourse to the Parliament-approved fees.

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International News

The Gambia details plan of alleged coup plotters

In a press briefing in Banjul on Thursday (Dec. 29), The Gambia's newly appointed national security adviser provided new details of last week's coup bid. He also presented the government's response to the foiled scheme. "Also the reports are pointing to the suspected involvement of sponsors, for the coup plot, from civilian collaborators who are both within and outside of the country. The investigations are seriously looking into this angle."

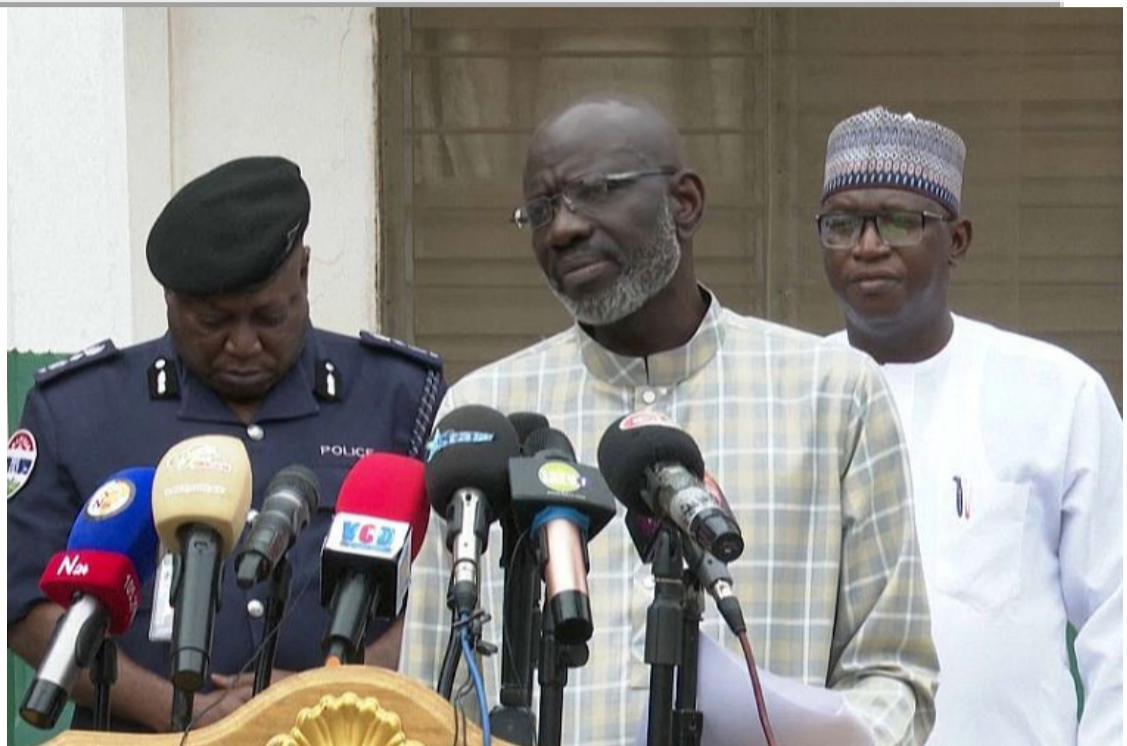
Abubakarr Suleiman Jeng also revealed that alleged coup plotters wanted to detain ministers and senior officials to prevent foreign interventions.

7 soldiers have been arrested and at least two other people accused of playing a role in the coup bid are still at large.

"Consequently, in accordance with the laws of the Gambia and in line with international best practice, the Gambian government has constituted a joint investigation team to investigate the alleged coup plot", Jeng added.

The panel will have 30 days to report back on the coup attempt that targeted president Adama Barrow's government.

The 11-member inquiry group includes members from the justice ministry and military forces.



Zimbabwe bans all lithium exports

Zimbabwe has banned all lithium exports after the government said it was losing 1.7 billion euros from exporting it as a raw mineral and not processing it into batteries in-country.

Lithium is so valuable as a component of electronic batteries - mostly for cars mobile phones and computers - that it's known as "white gold." The price has gone up by 1,100 percent in the past two years alone.

Zimbabwe has the largest amount of the mineral in Africa and has enough of it to supply a fifth of the world's needs, the government says.

Whilst it's on track to become one of the world's largest lithium exporters, the government says it should start its own battery industry rather than allow foreign companies to dominate battery production.

If it succeeds it will mark a sea change for Zimbabwe's economy.

Like many other mineral-rich African states, it has allowed its raw minerals to be extracted by multinationals for decades without developing local industries that could process them, and create many jobs.

The Zimbabwean Ministry of Mines and Mining Development said it would also clamp down on the artisanal miners digging up lithium and smuggling the mineral across borders.



Mozambique about to join UN Security Council



From January 1st, Mozambique replaces Kenya as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The country was elected in June this year by 192 votes. Joining Mozambique are also Ecuador, Japan, Malta and Switzerland, all five countries taking up non-permanent seats for the next two years.

Mozambican president Filipe Nyusi has called in the past for two permanent positions for Africa in the Security Council.

The fight against terrorism is also high on the agenda for the Mozambican president.

Since 2017 that the country has faced extremist violence in the oil and gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado.

An estimated four thousand victims have lost their lives as a result of the violence.

There are an estimated one million internally-displaced individuals, some of whom are living in camps and unofficial settlements.

Bu\$ine\$\$

GRA announces reversal of 30% discount ...on imported goods, vehicles from Jan. 1

Story: Peace AWUKU

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has announced the reversal of 30% discount on import values of general goods and 10% discount on Home Delivery Value of vehicles effective January 1, 2023.

The reversal according to GRA follows the government's 2023 budget statement and economic policy.

In a statement issued by the GRA, it said, "following the budget statement and economic policy of the government of Ghana for the year ending 31st December 2023, dated 24th November 2022, the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) wishes to inform the trading public of the complete reversal of the 30% discount on import values of general goods and 10% discount on home delivery value (HDV) of used vehicles effective 1st January 2023". The statement stressed that valuation of all goods will continue to be done in line with World Trade Organisation (WTO) valuation agreement.

"Valuation of all goods will continue to be done in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) valuation agreement, WCO Customs valuation compendium and the Customs Act 2015 (Act 891) section 60 (used motor vehicles) and section 67 (general goods).

Government introduced discounts on imported goods in 2019 in a bid to help reduce the prices of imported products in the country.

In that year, the discount on general goods imported was 50% while the discount on imported vehicles was 30% to bring respite to citizens.

It was later reviewed several times following agitations by manufacturers and firms that produce goods locally.



GRA

Debt Exchange...

***No haircut on principal- Ofori-Atta**

Story: Business DESK

Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, has stated that the 'Invitation to Exchange' to individual bondholders under the Debt Exchange does not embed any principal haircut on eligible bonds. According to him, it rather involves an exchange for new Government of Ghana bonds with a coupon that steps up to rates ranging from 9.15% to 10.65% (depending on the specific series of new bonds) as soon as 2025 and longer average maturity.

In an Amended and Restated Exchange Memorandum to individual bondholders, Mr. Ofori-Atta said this domestic debt exchange was part of a more comprehensive agenda to restore debt and financial sustainability.

He however said the external debt restructuring parameters will be presented in due course.

"The successful completion of this domestic debt exchange is a critical component of both the debt reduction programme and the International Monetary Fund programme discussions; it will contribute to unlocking the support of the international community and will allow Ghana to reach debt targets agreed with the IMF. We need the full participation of all bondholders in this transaction. Anything less will not make us eligible for assistance. There can be no exception", he said.

The Finance Minister further said contingency plans had been prepared with applicable regulators to assist certain sectors of the economy (including the financial sector) after its participation in the exchange, to minimise negative spill-overs and

safeguard the domestic economy including the establishment of a financial stability fund to provide a backstop for liquidity.

The alternative to the debt exchange, he mentioned, would be a far worse economic crisis, with protracted closure from international markets including imported goods and services and further domestic economic instability both for the real economy and the financial sector, adding, "It would also mean depleted fiscal resources to support the neediest."

"We are acutely aware of the upfront cost of this transaction, and other aspects of our adjustment programme, to participating holders. To that end we are carving out from this exchange treasury bills (up to one-year maturity) typically held by retail investors", he continued.

"Further, there is also a positive trade-off for debt-holders as a group: this transaction, though resulting in reduced coupon payments from 2023, will make a positive contribution to a safer and brighter future for all Ghanaians", he added.

This invitation is to exchange certain domestic notes and bonds of the Republic of Ghana, E.S.L.A. Plc, and Daakye Trust Plc (collectively, the "Eligible Bonds") for new bonds of the Republic of Ghana.



Gov't Statistician dodges question on inflation

Story: Eunice KENYENO

Government Statistician, Professor Samuel Kobina Annim, says he cannot tell whether inflation has peaked or not.

Speaking on PM Express which was monitored by Today, he said, it was only the historical data that could tell whether inflation had reached its highest limit.

"It's a conversation everyone wants to have, whether we've peaked or not. Anytime we do the release, we get journalists asking these questions. Again, it's not in my place to say yes or no. Just for three or four reasons anytime you want to talk about we've peaked, you need to ask yourself what does the historical data suggest?"

"We do it for internal purposes with a lot of caution based on what I said to you earlier, having seen a 9.9% jump [November inflation to 50.3%], I'll be hesitant in saying that we've exhausted all the pass-through effects. This is exactly what I am saying", he explained. Continuing, Professor Annim also said despite the cedi gaining some grounds to the dollar in the month of December 2022, it does not mean inflation will come down in the month under review.

"I've heard people talking about why inflation is still going up when the exchange rate has slowed down. This is exactly what I tried explaining to you. If the cedi appreciates as we saw, it doesn't automatically translate into the sellers bringing down the prices. It takes time for that to happen and that is what we mean by the pass-through effect and the other dimension is the multiple pass-throughs".

Again, he said, "it takes time, and the other one is if the exchange rate drops, which commodities are affected and what are the weights of these commod-

ties? When you have more than one item having an effect on the exchange rate, it gets complicated because you cannot exhaust the pass-through effect from only the 'spare parts' point of view. If diesel [price] drops, you don't expect only 'trotro' fares to automatically go down".

Inflation hit 50.3% in November 2022, the biggest jump since the year 2000.

This was as a result of a significant increase in transport fares, utility tariffs and the exchange rate fluctuation.



Cont'd from page 2.....

World leaders, Football legends Pay Tribute to Pele

Pele's body will be taken from the Albert Einstein hospital at dawn on Monday, and his coffin will then be placed in the center of the field at the Vila Belmiro Stadium. The stadium is home to football club Santos – where Pele spent the vast majority of a career in which he scored more than 1,200 goals.

Pele's body will remain there for 24 hours as fans pay their respects, before a parade will carry his coffin through the streets – including past the home of his 100-year-old mother, Celeste – for a private burial at the Memorial Necropole Ecumenica in Santos.





Nduom inspires Ghanaians

*As country readies to usher in New Year

Founder and President of Groupe Nduom, Dr Papa Kwesi has urged Ghanaians to continue to have faith in the country despite the current economic challenges facing the country. According to the business mogul, although things are difficult now, he is hopeful that the coming year (2023) will be much better.

Sharing his New Year message with Amansan Television (ATV) during his visit to the Accra-based television station, Dr Nduom noted that Ghana was endowed with so many natural resources and abundance of talents.

To this end he further urged Ghanaians to give up their best in 2023 "so that we will all feel proud as Ghanaians".

"We can make it happen if we all commit ourselves to push Ghana forward in a positive way", he added.



Police nab 3 suspects

*In mobile money robbery at Kasoa

Story: Eunice KENYENSO

Police intelligence operations have led to the arrest of three suspects for their involvement in a mobile money robbery at Kasoa, on December 20, 2022.

Police investigations so far indicate that the suspects, armed with a pump-action gun, concealed in a baby diaper sack, attacked and shot a mobile money merchant, at his business centre.

According to the police statement, the suspects were so heartless that as the victim attempted to flee for his life they pursued him, shot him from behind and robbed him of an unspecified amount of money.

Investigation and intelligence operations led to the retrieval of a pump-action and the arrest of suspects, Michael Otu, alias Rider, Godfred Okine and Asaa Faisal alias Commander, who has been described by the other suspects as the mastermind behind the robbery and provides the gang with weapons.

Suspect Godfred Okine, later complained of ill health and was rushed to the hospital but died while receiving medical attention.

His body has since been deposited at the Police Hospital morgue for preservation and autopsy.

An initial investigation into his demise by the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) established that the deceased suspect was handled professionally by the officers from the time he was arrested until his passing. The PPSB has also made contact with the family of the deceased suspect as part of its investigation.

The two other suspects, Michael Otu and Asaa Faisal were put before the Ofaakor District Court on December 29, 2022, and were remanded into Police custody to reappear in court on January 12, 2023. The injured victim is receiving medical treatment and is in stable condition.

Meanwhile, efforts are underway, to arrest the other suspect who is on the run.



Churches advised to be circumspect on noise

*In celebrations crossing over to 2023

Story: News DESK

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has advised religious bodies to be circumspect on their noise levels in their celebrations crossing over to 2023.

The agency began a monitoring and sensitization exercise before the yuletide by deploying officers to sanction event centres that exceed the required noise levels.

Throwing more light on the plans of the agency to regulate noise pollution on Saturday night, the Executive Director of EPA, Dr. Henry Kwabena Kokofu, explained, "we are looking forward to 31st December 2022, which is a traditional period of outgoing. "Fortunately, much of the night of 31st December 2022 will be church services and all that. We do expect some level of noise, but we will continue to monitor and ask people, particularly those who will be organising church services to moderate the noise".

Ofori-Atta bemoans importation of rice into Ghana

Story: Yaw TAKYI

Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, says it's heartbreaking for Ghana to import rice in excess of two billion dollars a year while the country is strategically positioned to grow its rice and become a net exporter.

He made the statement when he received a delegation of investors from Thailand led by the Chief Executive Officer of Jospong Group of Companies, Dr. Joseph Siaw-Agyepong.

Mr. Ofori-Atta noted with concern that "it's actually quite criminal for the country to continue to import rice while we're endowed with arable lands, water, and favourable weather conditions for growing crops to mitigate any possible food crisis."

The Ghana Cares Obatanpa programme, according to the minister, was a key initiative by the government as an intervention to the current economic woes.

He expressed optimism about Thailand's partnership with the private sector to commercialize rice production to cut imports in the next three years.

"Since 2017, we've spent over a million dollars importing rice. What's more embarrassing is that a country like Ukraine exports about 74 million tons of grains despite current conflicts, and you wonder why Ghana and Africa have fallen asleep."

It's the vision of the president to use a well-capitalized development bank to push such initiatives he added.

The CEO of Jospong Group asserted that venturing into rice production needs skills and the technical knowledge to increase yields, hence the need to woo investors with the right experience and mechanical assets into Ghana.

The Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, on his part encouraged private investors to bring in more collaboration and establish industries in the country.

According to him, the ministry's target is to make Ghana self-sufficient in rice production, which has seen some significant gains. He was quick to add that more needs to be done to bridge the deficit.

Local news

GUTA seeks GHS's advice

* Ahead of lifting of travel ban to China

Story: Kwabena AKYEANA

The Ghana Union of Traders' Association (GUTA) is called on the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to evaluate the COVID-19 situation in China and advise Ghanaians ahead of the lifting of travel restrictions to China. China is set to lift its travel ban on January 8, 2023. China introduced travel restrictions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

GUTA in a statement said COVID-19 was still prevalent in China, and thus, called on GHS to "examine and evaluate the situation and advise Ghanaian travellers."

"From the information we gathered, China will on the 8th of January 2023 remove all restrictions on travel to the country".

"As we all know, China is a major destination of import for many Ghanaian traders, and as a result of the long wait, most Ghanaian businesses will want to resume their business trips to this productive and beautiful country," the statement signed by GUTA President, Dr. Joseph Obeng said.



Ghana Makes Peace with Burkina Faso

* After Akufo-Addo's Wagner comment

Ghana's Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Boniface Gambila has confirmed he was summoned by Burkinabe authorities over President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's recent comments on the operations of the Wagner group in Burkina Faso. Boniface Gambilla confirmed that, the summon turned out to be a good one and was worth the courtesy of diplomatically seeking clarifications on the president's comments.

He said his Burkinabe counterparts were glad to learn the president meant well with his comments because the sub-region was currently and collectively battling a common enemy which was terrorism.

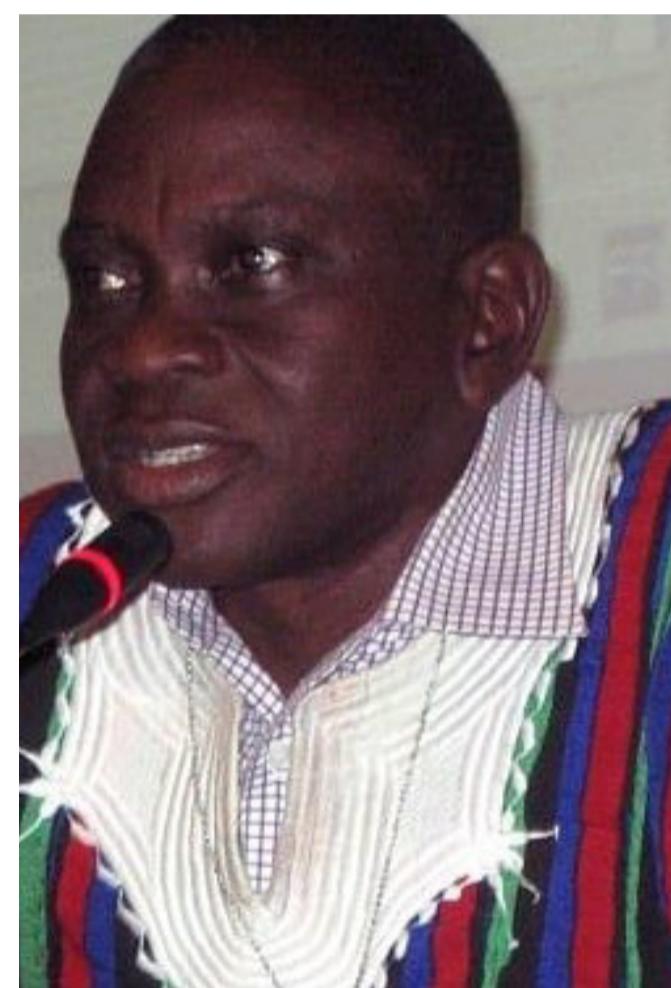
"They called me to express their displeasure but at the end of it, it was rather a pleasurable thing for them because the intent of the message as presented by President Akufo-Addo was about seeking the support of parties in the battle against terrorism." Mr. Gambilla added that the Burkinabe authorities perfectly understood the weight and objective of the comments president Akufo-Addo made in his capacity as the chairman of the Accra Initiative and said it might have had different interpretations without his explanations.

"The president, being the chairman of the Accra Initiative took the initiative to comment on the happenings in the sub-region to be able to tell partners that they need to move in to help Burkina Faso fight the insurgency, so my invitation was to explain the intent behind the message."

The Accra Initiative aims to prevent a spillover of terrorism from the Sahel and to address transnational organized crime within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

It is an African-led, African-executed initiative that would depend solely on the armed forces of its member states.

President Akufo-Addo during a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of a US-Africa Leaders Summit alleged that the government of Burkina Faso had given Russian mercenaries a mine as payment to help fight an insurgency in their country. Akufo-Addo remarked during the meeting that "Russian mercenaries are on our northern border" and "Burkina Faso has now entered into an arrangement to go along with Mali in employing the Wagner forces there." His comments were widely condemned and resulted in Burkinabe authorities issuing a summon to Ghana's ambassador to the country.



Former toll workers accuse Road Minister

* Of being insensitive

Story: Kwadwo Owusu ADUOMI

Former toll booth workers across the country have expressed disappointment in the Minister of Roads and Highways, Kwasi Amoako-Atta accusing him of turning a deaf ear to their plights after he announced the cessation of toll collection in the country a year ago.

Most of the workers who are persons with disabilities accused the Minister and the Government of neglect, breach of trust, and insensitivity, for kicking them out of dignified employment.

Speaking to the media, Secretary of the Ghana Toll Workers Union, Edward Duncan said the Union had on three occasions, attempted to have a meeting with the sector minister but to no avail.

"On two occasions, we were told that he was not around, and on our third visit to his office, he was actually there but he, unfortunately, didn't see us."

He said it is, therefore, "very unfortunate when people in authority say that the Government didn't have any contractual agreement with us."

"Even if you didn't have any contractual agreement with some of us, but your citizens are suffering under a private contractor, would it not have been best to mediate to make things better," he retorted rhetorically.

Mr. Duncan further said, they no longer want to indulge in the usual mass protest rhetoric but want to have a sit-down dialogue with the Government and the Roads and Highways Ministry to find an amicable solution to the tumultuous year of no employment.

"Going forward, we will want to dialogue with the Government and the Ministry because it is not in our interest to embark on any mass action, and all we want is for the authorities to speak to us about a possible roadmap to get us re-engaged or paid off if our services won't longer be needed."

The Ministry of Roads and Highways on November 18, 2021, hurriedly directed for the immediate discontinuation of the collection of tolls on all public roads and bridges across the country after the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta gave a hint on a similar exercise in his 2022 Budget Statement.

The Finance Minister said the measure was to help prevent congestion and pollution in and around the vicinities in which toll booths were situated.

But many Ghanaians, including former toll workers, said the measure had not only worsened the economic well-being of people that depended on the booths for their source of income through selling but has also caused financial loss to the state because the booths are wasting away while the nation has to continue to pay loans contracted to build them.



Health

NACP launches HIV Self-Test Kits

Story: Nana Akua AMPONG

The National AIDS/STI Control Programme (NACP) has pre-launched a pragmatic national campaign focusing on HIV Self-Testing as a weapon to empower Ghanaians to know their status.

The HIV Self-Test Kits pack contains an instruction manual for use written in both English and Twi, a test device, a preservative, a developer vial, and a test stand.

The instruction manual also has simply 11 steps to follow with graphic pictures to guide the individual to self-administer without the help of any other person.

He said the national campaign would be launched next year, but the pre-launch was to galvanize the citizenry to patronise the HIV self-test kits.

Speaking at the pre-launch event at the Ghana News Agency Tema Industrial News Hub Boardroom Dialogue Platform Dr. Ayisi Addo, urged the public to break barriers and know their status with the use of HIV self-test kits which would be available at selected pharmacy shops across the country.

He said self-testing has come to empower Ghanaians to take control over their HIV status “knowing your status is powerful but walking in the dark is dangerous”.

Dr. Ayisi Addo said the test kits had been made available in some designated pharmacies as part of efforts to control national HIV infections.

He explained that the results of the self-testing were not final saying “if you are reactive, you must go to a health facility and we will confirm it for you”.

Demonstrating the use of the HIV self-test kit process with the staff of Ghana News Agency Tema who voluntarily agreed to participate, Dr. Ayisi Addo advised the public to read the instructions thoroughly and follow suit and visit the nearest health facility for clarification or treatment.

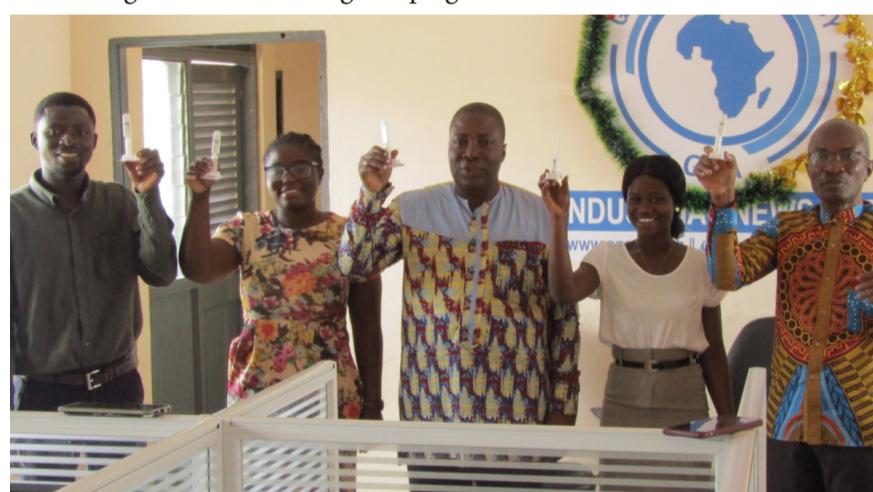
He said the initiative had been programmed in a way that the health facilities would collate data for positive cases as people who test positive still needed to report to a facility for confirmation and treatment.

He said the self-testing was private and required only consulting the health specialist for advice and noted that the phase of HIV had changed because there was treatment.

Mr. Ameyibor called on the media to join the campaign to stimulate self-testing and also upscale the fight against HIV and AIDS stigmatization and discrimination.

He said that even though progress has been made in promoting knowledge of HIV large number of the population was still unaware of their status, thus underscoring the urgency of closing the testing gap.

He said late diagnosis of HIV infection was the most substantial barrier to scaling up HIV treatment and reducing new infection rates and commended the National AIDS/STI Control Programme and other stakeholders for embarking on the self-testing campaign.



Gov't committed to reproductive health - Foreign Minister

Story: News DESK

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ms Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey has said that the government is committed to tackling issues of adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality and youth empowerment in the country.

She indicated that the government would therefore continue to collaborate with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to realise sexual and reproductive health for every Ghanaian.

“The Government of Ghana is interested and thus, the Ministry will be committed to supporting the work of UNFPA in Ghana,” Ms Botchwey added.

The minister said this when the new Country Representative of the UNFPA, Dr. David Wilfred Ochan presented his credentials to her at her office in Accra.

She congratulated Dr. Ochan on his appointment and for assuming duties in Ghana and welcomed him to the country.

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Dr. Ochan expressed his appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for its recent assistance in the approval of the UNFPA's eighth Country Programme (2023–2027) and for supporting the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)+25 review processes and the on-going tracking systems with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC).

He further commended the Ministry for the strong support provided to UNFPA in Ghana; and in facilitating participation of Ghanaian delegates to international and regional fora organised by UN agency.

Dr. Ochan affirmed that UNFPA would continue to invest in promoting the wellbeing of the Ghanaian population through the approved eighth Country Programme and extended the regards of the UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem to the people of Ghana through the Foreign Minister.

He stated the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has been very helpful to us. We pledge to continue doing our best to achieve zero maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices in Ghana with your support.”

The UNFPA Representative stressed the need to deepen work in these areas by working with government entities, the private sector, faith-based and cultural institutions, and women-and youth-led organisations, as well as taking advantage of opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation.



China must share covid data impact-WHO

Chinese officials must share more real-time information on Covid in the country as infections surge, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

Many of the country's strict restrictions have been lifted over the last few weeks, but cases have soared and several countries are now screening travellers from China.

WHO officials say they want to see more data on hospitalisations, intensive care unit admissions and deaths.

It also wants figures on vaccinations.

The United States, Spain, France, South Korea, India, Italy, Japan and Taiwan have all imposed Covid tests for travellers from China, as they fear a renewed spread of the virus.

And passengers arriving in England from China will have to provide a negative test before they board a flight.

In a statement issued after talks with Chinese officials the UN health agency said: “WHO again asked for regular sharing of specific and real-time data on the epidemiological situation... and data on vaccinations delivered and vaccination status, especially in vulnerable people and those over 60.”

The agency said it was willing to provide support on these areas, as well as help with addressing the issue of vaccine hesitancy.

It also stressed “the importance of monitoring, and the timely publication of data, to help China and the global community to formulate accurate risk assessments and to inform effective responses”.

WHO's technical advisory group on the evolution of Covid-19 is set to hold a meeting on Tuesday. The agency says it has invited Chinese scientists to present detailed data on viral sequencing.

It says it is “understandable” that some countries are imposing fresh restrictions on people travelling from China.

The sudden lifting of many of China's restrictions follows November's protests against the government's management of the disease.

Until then, China had one of the toughest anti-Covid regimes in the world - known as a zero-Covid policy.

It included strict lockdowns even if only a handful of cases had been found, mass testing in places where cases were reported, and people with Covid having to isolate at home or under quarantine at government facilities.

Lockdowns have now been scrapped, and quarantine rules have been abolished. People are now free to travel abroad again.

Cases have since been on the rise, with the Chinese government reporting about 5,000 a day. But analysts say such numbers are vastly undercounted - and the daily caseload may be closer to one million.

Officially there have only been 13 Covid deaths throughout December, but UK-based health data firm Airfinity said on Thursday that around 9,000 people in China are probably dying each day from the disease.

OPINION

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Kwamena Ahwoi's 'Working with Rawlings – Martin Amidu's critique VI'

By: Martin Amidu

The writing of this critique was interrupted by the necessity to conduct and produce the Analysis of the Risk of Corruption and Anti-corruption Risk Assessment Report of the Agyapa Royalties Limited Transaction Documents. The demise of the leader of the 31 December Revolution, and founder of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, Flt Lt. Jerry John Rawlings who gave each cadre of the revolution the opportunity to serve this country, happened during this period. This segment of the critique of Kwamena Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings is being continued today to commemorate the anniversary of the 31 December Revolution tomorrow and in salutation to all genuine comrades of that revolution who never betrayed its ideals and leadership.

Previous publications of this critique demonstrated that at any level of a critical analysis of Kwamena Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings, the author failed woefully in his avowed purpose of writing a scholarly work to teach present and future leaders the skills of good governance and human relation as a leadership trait (see Parts IV and its sequel). It was also contended that ethical scholars "....do not fabricate data or falsify results in their publications" (See Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fourth Edition, 1998, which is a classic for most scholars of other disciplines as well). It was concluded based on the analysis and exposition of the author's work that after reading, reviewing and editing such a crass betrayal of trust by the author to our motherland Ghana who was narrating events that happened when he was acting as a public officer, "Professor Emerita, (Mrs.) Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, PhD/FGA had the pretence of the courage of integrity and honesty of judgment to adjudge Kwamena Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings publishable to teach present and future leaders in Ghana leadership skills". It was shown that Kwamena Ahwoi was not a revolutionary Engels revealed to Chairman Rawlings (as he then was) as the messiah for the PNDC's "power to the People" and decentralization programme (see Part V and its sequel). Research data whether qualitative or quantitative used for academic or scholarly writing intended to teach present and future leaders in Ghana leadership skills as stated by Prof. Emerita (Mrs.) Opoku-Agyemang or in the words of the author "to teach present and future leaders the skills of good governance and human relation as a leadership trait" must be capable of verification and replication to stand the test of being a scholarly work.

Unfortunately, when the author's narrative was measured against the existing data it showed that there was only one month or less between his removal as CORCIT which he so decried and made a fuss about in his book, and his reassignment to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Checks against verifiable sources for his acclaimed scholarly work, exposed the author as suffering from the most grievous sin of any researcher adopting the qualitative methodology of research. For instance, "The District Political Authority and Modalities for District Level Elections, 1987, (Assembly Press, Accra, Wednesday, 1st July, 1987) known as the Bluebook was approved in 1987. Kwamena Ahwoi was reassigned to the PNDC Secretariat in March 1988 and appointed the PNDC Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development on 5th April 1988. There was, thus ten whole months between Wednesday, 1st July 1987, the day on which the Bluebook was published and March 1988 when the author was reassigned to his annoyance whilst he was in Zimbabwe to the PNDC Secretariat. The author was reassigned to a full Ministry as PNDC Secretary on 5th April 1988. The author's penchant for data fabrication for purposes of falsely claiming his indispensability to Ghana's decentralization and other falsehoods was shown by extensive quotations from an international interview the author granted one Itumeleng Makgetla on 8th September 2009 in Accra. The verification and replication of the qualitative data allegedly forming the basis of the author's rhetorical narrative of his indispensability to the PNDC's decentralization and democratic process showed the author doctoring his data to achieve his messianic objective. The analysis and exposition on the author's fabricated data concluded by stating that:

"The bluebook was not sitting idle in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development since 1st July 1987

when it was published awaiting Kwamena Ahwoi, the messiah. The Political directives which became part of the Local Government Law, 1988, PNDCL 207 such as (a) the number of districts to be created (100), (b) the average representation ratio (1:500-1,500); (c) the manner of consultation for the PNDC appointment of the one-third membership of the District Assemblies; (d) the sectors of public administration to be decentralized; and (e) the mode of financing the District Assemblies had gone through the Joint Committee of Secretaries and approved by the PNDC before the messiah arrived in the Ministry after 5th April 1988. The Local Government Law, 1988 (PNDCL 207) was gazetted on 11th November 1988. It does not take only five months from April 1988 to 11th November 1988 to translate an important policy document such as the bluebook into legislation such as PNDCL 207. I was the Deputy Attorney General running the Ministry with the Attorney General in hospital when PNDCL 207 was passed and I say that Kwamena Ahwoi is as usual again appropriating the collective efforts of several dedicated members of the Joint Committee of Secretaries and its political and legislative sub-committee and the PNDC as his messianic property." The sequel to the foregoing analysis and critique concluded that the author suffers from a messianic mental outlook which gives him a false sense of knowing everything and without whom nothing succeeds in any social or political group of which he becomes a member. It was contended that the messianic mental outlook or figment of the author will become more apparent and incrementally glaring as the critique of Kwamena Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings unfolds.

RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE

The author of Kwamena Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings continued to make himself an indispensable messiah of the transition to and return to constitutional rule in chapter 3 of his discourse which was also endorsed by the writer of the foreword and editors of his supposedly scholarly works. The author was the fourth signatory to the NCD's "Evolving A True Democracy – Report Presented to the PNDC" issued in Accra on March 25, 1991 and should have known the content of that report when writing his scholarly book, Kwamena

Ahwoi's Working with Rawlings. The author apparently wished away the existence of the report to present his messianic views which are inconsistent with the NCD report. The preface to the National Commission for Democracy's, "Evolving A True Democracy – Summary Of NDC's Work Towards The Establishment Of A New Democratic Order – Report Presented To The PNDC" dated March 25, 1991, states, amongst other things that:

'...In 1988, PNDCL 208 consolidated the functions of the Commission. In pursuit of its functions, the NCD, from 1984, invited the public to submit papers/memo-randa on the future form of government for the country. Several papers have been submitted to the Commission by a cross section of the public. Seminars, symposia, and durbars were held to discuss the "effective realization of a true democracy in Ghana". As a result of these and other efforts the "Blue Book" – the document of the "Creation of District Political Authority and Modalities for District Level Elections" was published and this culminated in the District Level elections and the establishment of District Assemblies.

The Blue Book also stated in paragraph 1.7 that "the establishment of the District Assemblies is an important step in the PNDC's programme of evolving national political authority through democratic process. The National Commission for Democracy (NCD) has been charged with the responsibility of working out the steps in the programme and also the relationship between the District Assemblies and the ultimate national political institutions".

It is in light of this mandate that the NCD teamed up with the Ministries of Local Government and Information to run the series of regional seminars on "District Assemblies and the Evolving Democratic Process". The rationale was to invite the views of the public on "what next after the District Assemblies, in fulfilment of the PNDC's commitment to involving the people in working out programmes for the evolution of the country's democratic process beyond the district level.

The seminars which were held in all the ten regional capitals of the country began in Sunyani on 5th July and ended

at Wa on 9th November 1990.

Thereafter in his New Year broadcast to the nation, the Chairman of the PNDC requested the NCD to expedite work on its report and to present it, at the latest by the end of March, this year [1991],

"to enable the PNDC convene a broad-based national consultative body which would use the report as well as the 1957, 1960, 1969 and 1979 constitutions and other consultations and discussions on the content and form of the future constitution."

This report is in response to the PNDC Chairman's request.

By January 1991, the transitional process to democracy had so advanced that the Chairman of the PNDC was urging the NCD under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice D. F. Annan to expedite work on the report of the seminars held in the ten regions to enable the broad-based national consultative body to discuss the content and form of the future constitution. It is important to note that Chairman Rawlings' New Year broadcast of January 1991 pre-dated the submission of the NCD report of 25th March 1991 and shows clearly that the PNDC's way forward was for the establishment of a consultative body to chart the constitutional path for the future. Chairman Rawlings' broadcast had to be strategically ambiguous in the contentious political climate of the day within and outside the PNDC.

In spite of these undisputable facts of the programme of the PNDC for the transition to constitutional rule, the author goes back in time to 4th March 1985, prior to the PNDC Chairman's New Year broadcast to offer evidence and proof that there was in 1991, a disagreement in the PNDC as to "whether the national political structure should be partisan or not". The fact that the author was massaging his facts is shown in his rhetoric:

'...some academic writers and critics insisted there was a hidden agenda behind the regional fora and that the true intention was to use the non-partisan District Assembly system to develop a non-partisan system of government on Muammar Gaddafi's Libyan "Green Book" or Yoweri Museveni's Uganda "Movement" system.'

The contention that the author decided to go back in time to create evidence and proof for this assertion of controversies that did not exist within the PNDC by January 1991 is vindicated by the evidence deployed by the author to support his rhetoric about academic writers and critics when he says in the next sentence following his above-quoted arguments that:

'The London-based Ghana Democratic Movement, for example, in a Press Statement issued on 4th March 1985, had stated as follows:

"What are we to make of all this talk of elections, National Assembly, constitutional rule – Let us not be deceived. Rawlings has no intention of giving up power today or tomorrow. The aim is to legitimize the rule of the factions that are now in power. There will be no fundamental departure from the present programme nor will any serious debate about issues be permitted."

How the distinguished Professor could not realize that he was quoting a 4th March 1985 Press Statement of the Ghana Democratic Movement to justify controversies he was creating during the regional seminars and fora for which the NCD held between 5th July 1990 and 9th November 1990 and the presentation of the report of the NCD to the PNDC on 25th March 1991 after the PNDC Chairman's New Year broadcast of January 1991 should be everybody's conjecture.

A content analysis of the author's chapter 4 brings out the fact that he had to doctor the facts and the available data to conclude that before the NCD submitted its "Evolving a True Democracy" report to the PNDC "no options were foreclosed"; the foreclosure only came with the presentation of the NCD report to the PNDC which came down cautiously in favour of multi-party democracy".

Without inverting the facts and straining old data contained in a 4th March 1985 press statement to establish a lack of foreclosure in spite of the PNDC Chairman's New Year broadcast to the Nation, the author could not claim credit for his ingenious role in guiding the PNDC to the path of multi-party democracy in Ghana. Our Messiah, Professor Kwamena Ahwoi, then disingenuously and triumphantly writes:

To be Continued.....

ENTERTAINMENT

Mzbel apologises to Afrochella fans***...For poor performance***

Story: Nana Akua AMPONG

Hiplife artiste, Mzbel has apologised to Afrochella festival attendees who were let down by her performance last night. Mzbel and other Ghanaian artistes were announced to round up day two of the festival with some retro performances to thrill patrons.

However, in what may seem to be an unfortunate turn of events, Mzbel's performance fell short of audience expectations due to some technical difficulties and has since received backlash from a section of the public, particularly on social media.

Her performance last night on the big stage was marked by stuttering and frequent voice breakdowns, which lowered the energy the audience had anticipated from her.

The Asibolanga hitmaker has swiftly apologised to the public and expressed her sincere regret for the unfortunate event, admitting that she failed to successfully connect with her audience when she mounted the stage with the goal of thrilling them due to circumstances beyond her control.

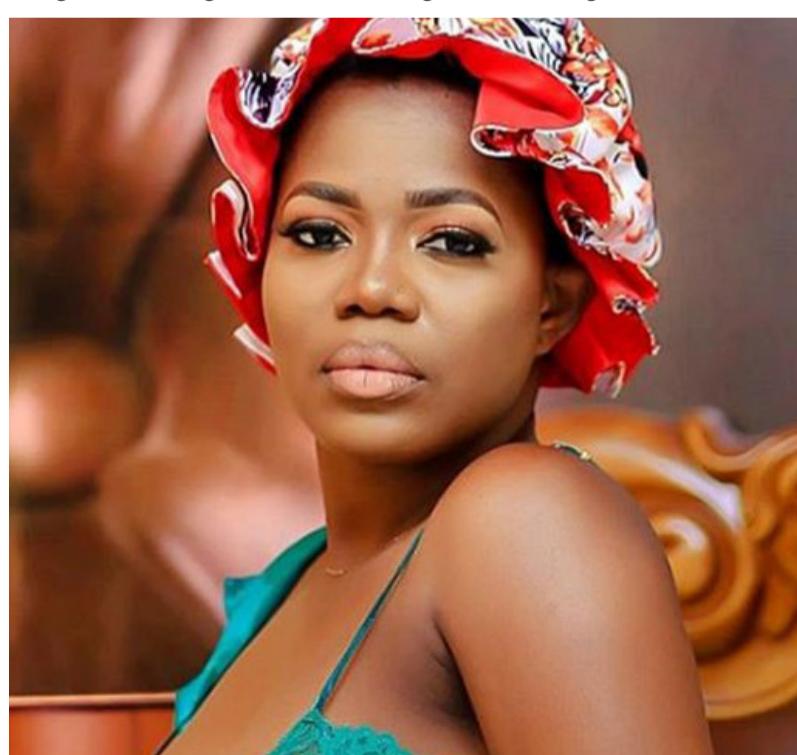
In a Facebook post, Mzbel wrote: "To all Mzbelievers who are disappointed in my performance at the just ended Afrochella 2022, I am terribly sorry and I'm disappointed too cos this is not how we prepared to entertain u

What happened was I couldn't hear myself and couldn't hear my music on stage that's why I kept on shouting and trying my best to have fun somehow but it all ended up trashy. Also the lights hitting the stage was just too strong for my fragile eyes so I couldn't even see the crowd to interact properly."

She continued "Without any rehearsals and dancers I made u proud at Ghana Music Awards 2021 but unfortunately the media houses and bloggers trashing me today didn't share it like they sharing this particular performance but hey I promise to make it up to u soon. There's a bigger gig in the pipeline and if arrangements work out well I will make u proud again."

Despite Mzbel's performance possibly not being the best of the night, revelers were treated to excellent moments from KiDi, Asake, Tic Tac, and Pheelz.

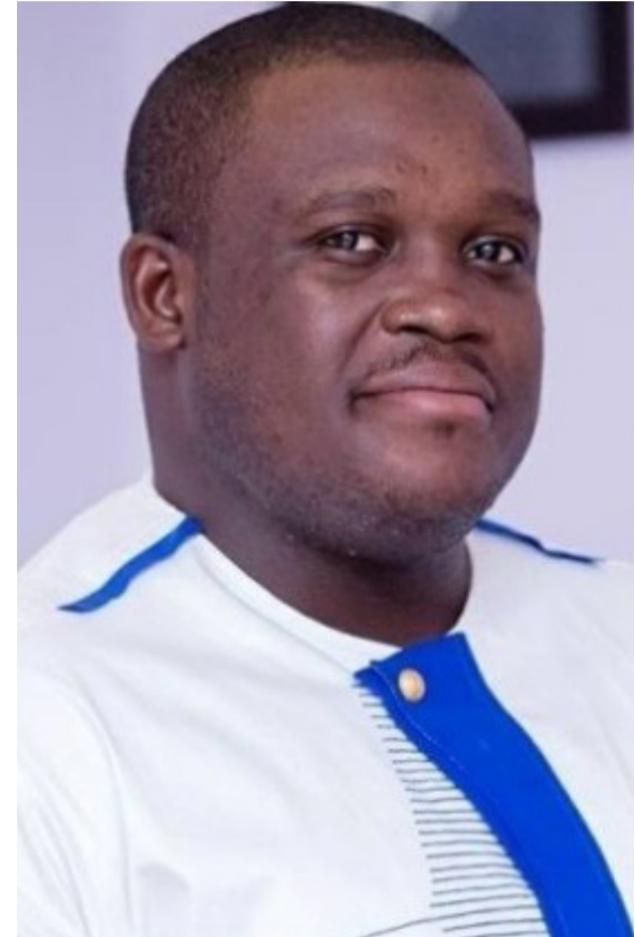
The night was also capped off by the giant of African music, Burna Boy, who turned the El-Wak Stadium into a choir zone by getting everyone to sing along and groove to some of his songs, including Las Las and Angelina, among others.

**Sam George blames NPP , NDC******For bad state of Ghana's creative industry***

Story: Yaw TAKYI

The Member of Parliament for the Ningo-Prampram Constituency, Sam George has said that both the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) governments have failed the creative industry. The MP was speaking at the 2022 edition of the Samini Xperience on the inputs of successive governments in the entertainment industry. "Honestly NPP and NDC, we failed. We have failed the creative industry . We need to find a way for the government to put resources into productions like this (Samini Xperience) and take our music outside of Ghana and make money, we need to do this," Mr George said. He added that, "I believe the next NDC government will focus on this, that's one of the things we are trying to do with Baba Sadiq (former 3Music CEO) and Rex Omar (GHAM-RO) and work with creatives to really put Ghana music and our creative arts on the top

scale." The MP who was thrilled by the performances he witnessed at the Samini Xperience, called on the general public to support Ghanaian music. "Our music is beautiful, let's support Ghana music," he urged.

**Police finds Meek Mill's phone**

Story: Entertainment DESK

The Police have arrested one suspect and retrieved a mobile phone that was stolen from Meek Mill, an American hip-hop artiste.

The suspect, Nuhu Sule, alias Ababaawa was arrested on Friday, December 30, 2022, at his hideout in Accra. He is currently in police custody and will be taken through the due process of the law.

The victim, Meek Mill, reported his phone stolen in Accra on December 29, 2022. The musician, who had been excited to visit Ghana, performed at the 2022 Afro Nation concert on Thursday. Amateur footage showed Meek climbing over the gate into the arena, as he struggled to ditch the zealous group.

He later informed fans while on stage that he had been robbed. In a post on Instagram later, he noted that his phone had been stolen and pleaded for whoever had it to return it.



Sports

Akufo-Addo eulogises Pele

Story: Kwame Baah ADOFO

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has reacted to the death of Brazilian football legend, Edson Arantes do Nascimento popularly known as Pele. In a tribute, the President acknowledged Pele's impact on the world of football and how his presence has gone on to inspire many people across the globe. "The whole world of sports is poorer today for the loss of one of its greatest figures, certainly its greatest soccer player, with the departure to Heaven of Edson Arantes do Nascimento, the iconic, legendary Pele," he wrote.

President Akufo-Addo added that "those of us who had the privilege to witness his incomparable career will cherish forever the memories of skill, talent, determination, and sheer athleticism which we derived from his playing of the game he himself described as 'the beautiful game'."

He also acknowledged Pele's humanitarian activities and his work that made him an advocate for the poor, children, young people, black people, and an inspiration to several generations of footballers.

"The Ghanaian people, who admired him deeply join me in expressing our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to his family, the Brazilian people, the Brazilian government, and football and sports lovers the world over. There will never be another like him. May his soul rest in perfect peace with the blessings of the Almighty."

The Brazilian football legend Pele, arguably the greatest player ever, died on Thursday at the age of 82.

Born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, he is credited with scoring a world record 1,281 goals in 1,363 appearances during a 21-year career, including 77 goals in 92 matches for his country.

The only player to win the World Cup three times, lifting the trophy in 1958, 1962 and 1970, Pele was named Fifa's Player of the Century in 2000.

He had been suffering with kidney and prostate problems in recent years.

Pele had surgery to remove a tumour from his colon in September 2021 at the Albert Einstein Hospital in Sao Paulo, after the tumour was detected in routine tests.

He was readmitted to the hospital in late November 2022.

His daughter Kely Nascimento has kept fans updated on her father's condition with regular social media updates from the hospital.

On Thursday she posted a picture of what appeared to be Pele's family's hands on his body in the hospital and wrote: "Everything we are is thanks to you. We love you infinitely. Rest in peace."



Ghana ranked 26th in World Rugby League

Ghana has been ranked 26th in the World Rugby League ranking.

This comes as the icing on the cake for what has been a splendid 2022 season.

From the 9s and 13s local leagues, playing with Oxford University to the MEA tournament where Ghana placed second to qualify for the next stage of the run towards the World Rugby League Championship.

The Official International Rugby League (IRL) World Rankings are calculated on each nation's performance over the current season and the three preceding seasons.

Points are awarded to each team for each match based on:

The result of the match i.e. win, lose or draw

The margin of victory (or defeat) – the larger the winning margin the greater the value to the rankings

The relative strength of opposition faced – if you play a higher-ranked team that is of greater value than playing a lower-ranked team

The date of the match – more recent matches are weighted more heavily – a result in the most recent 2 years is worth double a result 3 years ago and 4 times a result that is 4 years' old.

The importance of the match – World Cup matches are ranked top followed in order by World Cup Qualifiers, Regional Championships, and one-off international matches

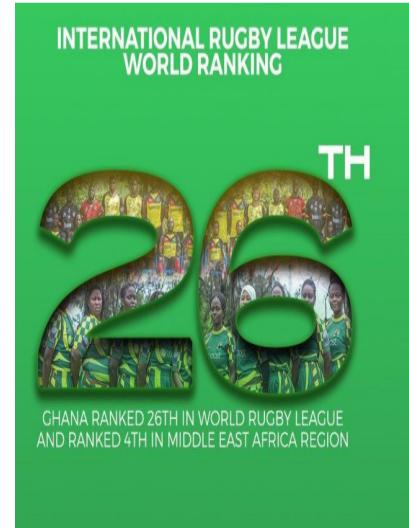
The points are then used to create the Official World Rankings by ordering the teams by virtue of the points gained over the four-year period.

Only officially sanctioned matches played at the senior level between two approved members are considered part of the rankings.

Speaking with the Technical Director of the RLFG, Mr. Marshall Nortey, said;

"This feat could not have been achieved without our sponsors, the media, and supporters. Thanks for being part of our success and progress.

A big appreciation goes to all teams, coaches, managers, and players who are involved with the sport. You're the reason we have come this far. Thank you for an awesome season. 2023 will even be bigger than better. Season greetings to you and yours".



Ronaldo signs for Saudi Arabian side Al Nassr

The Portugal captain is a free agent after leaving Manchester United following a controversial interview in which he criticised the club.

Ronaldo will reportedly receive the biggest football salary in history at more than £177m per year.

The 37-year-old says he is "eager to experience a new football league in a different country".

Ronaldo added: "I am fortunate that I have won everything I set out to win in European football and feel now that this is the right moment to share my experience in Asia."

Al Nassr - nine-time Saudi Pro League champions - described the signing as "history in the making".

The club said it would "inspire our league, nation and future generations, boys and girls to be the best version of themselves".

In the summer, Ronaldo turned down a £305m deal to join another Saudi team - Al Hilal - because he was happy at United.

Earlier in November, the striker spoke out in an interview with Piers Morgan for TalkTV in which he said he felt "betrayed" by United, did not respect manager Erik ten Hag and was being forced out of the club.

Ronaldo, who scored 145 goals in 346 appearances for United, left Juventus to rejoin the Old Trafford club in August 2021 - 11 years after he departed to join Real Madrid.

He had just over seven months remaining on his £500,000-a-week contract with United but his immediate exit was "mutually agreed".

A day after he left the club, he was banned for two domestic matches for knocking a phone out of an Everton fan's hand after United's defeat at Goodison Park in April.

He will serve the ban at domestic level with any new club - in England or abroad - although it does not apply at continental club level, such as the Champions League.

Ronaldo recently returned from playing for Portugal at the World Cup in Qatar, where he made history by becoming the first man to score at five different FIFA World Cups with his strike in his side's opening win against Ghana.

Ronaldo's previous transfers

Date	Club joined	Fee
12 August 2003	Manchester United	£12.24m
6 July 2009	Real Madrid	£80m
10 July 2018	Juventus	£99.2m
31 August 2021	Manchester United	£12.8m



Abedi Pele pays tribute to Pele

Ghanaian football legend, Abedi Ayew Pele has expressed his heartfelt remark at the passing of Pele as he described him as "the greatest footballer to ever play the game".

Although the nickname "Pele" was a mockery in school for Edson Arantes do Nascimento mispronouncing "Bile" - a goalkeeper of Vasco da Gama, it will be remembered for the impact that the three-time World Cup winner made across the globe.

As an attacking midfielder, Abedi was known for his close control, dribbling, passing, speed, and goal-scoring prowess that he was nicknamed after the Brazilian great.

In 2004 during the 100th anniversary of FIFA, Pele named Abedi Pele in his list of "125 greatest living footballers" to mark the occasion.

The two "Peles" have always shared mutual admiration and respect for each other.

STATEMENT BY ABEDI 'PELE' AYEW ON THE PASSING OF FOOTBALL GREAT PELE

It is with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of my friend and mentor, Edson Arantes do Nascimento, the greatest footballer to ever play the game.

Pele, as he was affectionately known, was a global icon who symbolised the beautiful game of football. He inspired millions of generational kids in his native Brazil and across the globe.

Personally, I was immensely inspired by his greatness, and to be likened to him and bear his iconic name throughout my playing time and beyond, is an absolute privilege and a priceless honour.

Pele is synonymous with football, and football will never forget its king. Rest well, my mentor!