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(((Editorial )))

## Dr Nduom's New Year message apt

THE Founder and President of Groupe Nduom, Dr Papa Kwesi in his New Year message like other statesmen urged Ghanaians to continue to have faith in the country despite the economic challenges the country experienced in 2022.

AS a leader as he is, Dr Nduom although acknowledged the fact that Ghanaians faced loads of economic difficulties last year, he was hopeful that 2023 will be better. However, he advised the leadership of the country to make prudent use of the country's natural resources and the abundant talents.

THE business mogul also urged Ghanaians to give up their best if they want to walk with their heads high and also feel proud as citizens of Ghana.

"WE can make it happen if we all commit ourselves to push Ghana forward in a positive way", Dr Nduom was reported to have said.

WE find his message very refreshing and encouraging at this time considering the fact that, many Ghanaians have given up on this current administration.

INDEED, the call by Dr Nduom on the leadership of the country to make judicious use of our resources including the abundant talents God has gifted us is a call in a right direction. This is because Ghana is not a poor county.

OUR problem, however, since this Fourth Republic has been leadership. We are where we are today after 30 plus years in our democratic dispensation because the leaders we have had did not put Ghana first in their developmental agenda.

WE owe it to ourselves as a people to ensure that, this country becomes a better place to live, and that's why we at Today strongly support Dr Nduom's call.

GHANA needs people like Dr Nduom to be always around to remind us what we need to do as a country. That, Today, believes will help check the excesses of our leaders and make our country Great and Strong.

## What Happened To Anas' Investigations?

Story:Araba Rhule

Love  
Chocolate &  
Acoustics

**ATV**  
AMANSAN TELEVISION



## Old Vandals Protest

***...Against UG's decision to eject continuing students from Mensah Sarbah & Commonwealth halls***

Story: Kwadwo Owusu ADUOMI

**T**here is heavy security presence on the University of Ghana campus as Old Vandals are massing up to protest against the University Management's decision to eject continuing students from the Mensah Sarbah and Commonwealth halls. The Old Vandals Association converged on campus Tuesday morning to give solidarity to current students against what they called the victimisation of the students by the school's management to eject them from the traditional halls. A few days ago, the University Management issued a statement revoking the tenancy of continuing students from the two halls.

According to the decision, all continuing students of the Commonwealth Hall, an all-male hall of residence, and continuing male students of Mensah Sarbah Hall will not return to their halls nor to any of the traditional halls. "They are to be randomly assigned to available rooms in any of the UGEL and private hostels," the communiqué on December 14, 2022 said. Aggrieved students said this is the latest attempt by the school's Management to weaken student activism on the campus.

Meanwhile 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.



## 'Address Economic Challenges

***...To avoid brain drain in health sector'***

Story: Reuben SACKKEY

**G**hana Medical Association (GMA) has urged the government to expedite action aimed at addressing the worsening economic situation in the country to reduce the brain drain in the health sector. The Association said doctors and other health-care workers were leaving the country in droves as a result of the local economic conditions as well as a surge in demand for their services abroad due to the ravaging effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Speaking to the media, General Secretary of GMA, Titus Beyuo appealed to the doctors and other healthcare workers not to leave the country as it worked with government for better conditions of service.

He further charged government to be more deliberate in salvaging the economic conditions.

"It's unfortunate we find ourselves here, but let's stay in the country and work together instead of getting out of the country. If you relocate and change your entire path, or quit the service, that is a permanent solution you have created for what seems to be a very temporary problem. So let us try to be committed and hopeful with correct leadership, management at the helm of affairs in the country and at the health service, hopefully, we will overcome this. But government must be more deliberate at it and not let this go lightly," the General Secretary of the Ghana Medical Association said.

In May 2022, Dr. Beyuo expressed concern that the Agenda 111 project had failed to take into account the issue of human resources in the health sector.

"Agenda 111 [initiative] appears to be disconnected from the HR policies of the Ministry of Health, and that is a fundamental worry. As we speak, doctors and nurses are leaving this country in droves. Brain drain has returned in full swing," Dr. Beyuo said in an interview on TV3 in May 2022.



## International News

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### Burkina Faso asks French ambassador to leave - report

Burkina Faso has asked France to recall its ambassador, Luc Hallade, after several tense exchanges with the military junta that have strained relations between the two countries, Paris-based pan-African publication Jeune Afrique reported on Monday, citing unnamed sources in Paris.

Burkina Faso's Foreign Affairs Minister Olivia Rouamba reportedly wrote to the French presidency "at the end of December" demanding a change of representative.

The development comes less than two weeks after Burkina Faso expelled UN resident coordinator Barbara Manzi.

In November, the French embassy in Ouagadougou accused Burkina Faso of failing to provide adequate protection to its premises, which were attacked during anti-French protests last year.

In July, Ambassador Hallade was forced to apologise for comparing militant violence in Burkina Faso to a civil war.

Burkina Faso is increasingly embracing Russia, seemingly under the influence of Mali which cut diplomatic ties with France last year after Paris condemned Bamako's use of Russian mercenaries.

Obasanjo's endorsement, while Mr Atiku's camp said the "endorsement of an individual no matter how highly placed does not translate to victory at the polls".

Campaigns have intensified ahead of the general elections.



### Obasanjo draws ire for presidential poll endorsement

Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo is at the centre of a political storm after endorsing opposition presidential hopeful Peter Obi ahead of the general election due next month.

In his endorsement, Mr Obasanjo described Mr Obi of Labour Party as a "mentee" who had an "edge over other candidates".

He also described the West African country's current state of affairs as having "moved from [the] frying pan into [the] fire and from the mountain top to the valley".

Mr Obasanjo governed Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 as the flag bearer for the now main opposition PDP party. But he has since distanced himself from the party.

In an angry response, President Muhammadu Buhari's office said the former leader was "being jealous" and represented the "dark days of Nigeria's democracy".

The former president thinks "he is the best ever to lead Nigeria and there will never be another one better than him", a statement from a presidential aide said.

Peter Obi is seen as one of the three main contenders. The others are Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the governing APC and Abubakar Atiku of the opposition PDP.

Local outlets quote Mr Tinubu's campaign as saying that their candidate "will not lose sleep" over Mr

### Australia helicopter collision: Officials probe deadly chopper clash

Investigators are still trying to work out what caused a deadly mid-air collision between two helicopters on Australia's Gold Coast, officials say.

A British couple and two Australians died in the crash on Monday near the Sea World resort in Queensland.

Three others - including two children - were seriously injured in the crash.

Officials say it happened less than 20 seconds after one helicopter took off from a sandbar and collided with another aircraft that was landing.

"What we do need to know now is what was occurring inside those two cockpits at the time," air safety commissioner Angus Mitchell said.

All those killed and critically injured were in the ascending helicopter, which crashed within seconds after its main rotor blade struck the cockpit of the other aircraft.

The second helicopter landed upright on the sandbank. Five of the six people on board suffered minor injuries.

The landing was a "remarkable achievement" given the helicopter was damaged "where the pilot was sitting", Mr Mitchell said.

"We are very fortunate that we're not standing here with far more deaths," he told reporters on Tuesday.

The UK victims were Diane and Ron Hughes from Merseyside - aged 57 and 65 - who were married and had next of kin in Australia.

Australian media reported that 36-year-old Vanessa Tadros also died in the crash, and her 10-year-old son was among the survivors hospitalised in a critical condition.

The fourth victim was 40-year-old Ashley Jenkinson, an experienced Sea World Helicopters pilot who lived in the area. The Brisbane Times reported he was originally from England.

A close friend of Mr Jenkinson's, Ritchie Gregg, told the BBC he was a "gentle giant" and a "silent hero".

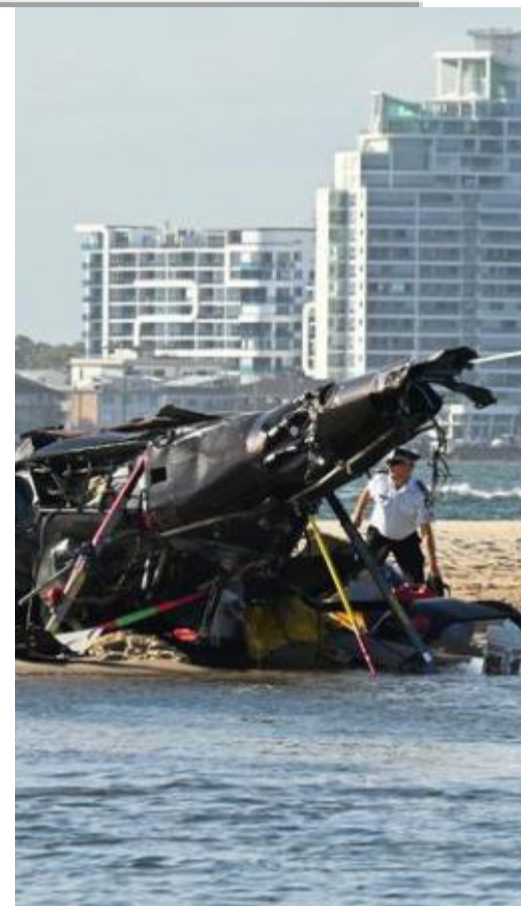
"He was always out there helping the community - from the bush-fires a few years ago to the flood waters last year," he said.

"What we did with the floods in NSW last year was definitely a highlight of my life. If it wasn't for him, a lot of people wouldn't have got the help that they got."

New South Wales was devastated by floods last year, particularly near Lismore.

A boy, 10, and a woman, 33, remained in a critical condition in hospital on Tuesday, police said. A nine-year-old boy with serious injuries was described as stable.

Both helicopters were operating tourist flights for Sea World - one of several popular theme parks on the Gold Coast. Its owner, Village Roadshow Theme Parks, has offered condolences and said Sea World Helicopters is an independent operator.



### Russia plans to 'exhaust' Ukraine with prolonged attacks - Zelensky

Ukraine's president says Russia is planning a protracted campaign of drone attacks in a bid to demoralise Ukraine.

Volodymyr Zelensky said he had received intelligence reports suggesting that Moscow would launch the attacks using Iranian-made Shahed drones.

It comes after Ukraine carried out a strike that it said killed hundreds of Russian soldiers in the Donbas region.

In an extremely rare admission of battlefield losses, Russia said the attack killed 63 of its troops.

Speaking from Kyiv in his nightly address, Mr Zelensky said Russia planned to "exhaust" Ukraine with a prolonged wave of drone attacks.

"We must ensure - and we will do everything for this - that this goal of terrorists fails like all the others," he said. "Now is the time when everyone involved in the protection of the sky should be especially attentive."

Russian drone strikes on Ukraine appear to have increased in recent days, with Moscow launching attacks on cities and power stations across the country over the past three nights.

Correspondents say that as well as the strain on Ukraine's military - which has to track and intercept the drones - there is also an attritional impact on the civilian population which lives with the uncertainty, fear and disruption the attacks cause across the country.

Russia has been targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure for several months, destroying power stations and plunging millions into darkness during the country's freezing winter.

Mr Zelensky said Ukrainian air defences had already shot down over 80 Iranian-made drones in the opening days of 2023.

Elsewhere, Ukraine has confirmed it carried out a strike in the occupied region of Donetsk, which it earlier claimed killed 400 Russian troops.

# Bu\$ine\$\$

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## Debt Exchange not good for banking sector— ISSER boss

Story: Kwadwo Owusu ADUOMI

Director of Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Professor Peter Quartey, has warned that the government's debt exchange programme would lead to a lack of confidence in the banking system.

The programme launched on December 5, 2022 is intended to restructure the country's debt which has reached unsustainable levels.

Speaking to the media, Professor Quartey said the programme would lead to more people keeping their monies at home rather than with the banks.

"What is happening with the debt exchange is going to affect confidence in the banking system. In the 70s and 80s when government said those with ₵50 note should bring to the banks and there were interference with the banking system, a lot of people kept their monies at home and the banking system actually suffered. We are going back to those days".

"Now people don't not know where to invest their monies. I meet several people asking me now what is save to invest my money, where do I go? I think we ought to be careful with this debt exchange programme", he explained.

Professor Quartey continued that if government was providing a stabilisation fund for banks as a buffer, it should also be able to provide the same for individual bondholders and others who will be affected by the debt exchange programme.

"The banks there is a stabilisation fund, what about the individuals, the pensioners, the poor, the many people who have bought bonds, those who have bought this unit trust and all that? What happens to them? Is there anything to mitigate the cost of adjustment, the cost of this policy? We are not told.

The renowned economist also called for a communication plan to inform investors of the status of the programme at every point in time.

"In a crisis situation, you need a crisis communication plan. If you have that plan, as soon it happens, whom do I engage, at what point, what to do? We need to deplore and have that plan and deplore as and when crises arise. Unfortunately, we have not done that".



## 2023 will be tougher than 2022-IMF boss predicts

Story: Business DESK

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the global economy faces "a tough year, tougher than the year we leave behind."

"We expect one-third of the world economy to be in recession," Madam Georgieva told CBS's 'Face the Nation' in an interview aired January 1, 2023 "Why? Because the three big economies — US, EU, China — are all slowing down simultaneously."

The IMF already warned in October 2022 that more than a third of the global economy will contract and that there is a 25% chance of global GDP growing by less than 2% in 2023, which it defines as a global recession.

Examining the three biggest economies on CBS, Mrs. Georgieva painted a mixed picture of their ability to withstand the downturn.

While "the US may avoid recession," the European Union has been "very severely hit by the war in Ukraine — half of the EU will be in recession next year," she said. At the same time, China faces a "tough year."

Data published on Saturday showed that China's abrupt reversal of its Covid Zero policy pushed economic activity in December to the slowest pace since February 2020 as the virus swept through major cities and prompted people to stay home and businesses to shut.

The slowdown in the biggest economies "translates into negative trends globally — when we look at the emerging markets in developing economies, there, the picture is even direr," Georgieva said.

Purchasing managers' index numbers for manufacturing published on Monday showed negative readings across Europe, Turkey and in South Korea. Data published Tuesday are set to reveal similarly dire numbers for Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, the UK, Canada and the US.

Still, the outlook for the world's largest economy may offer respite.

"If that resilience of the labor market in the US holds, the US would help the world to get through a very difficult year," Madam Georgieva said.



## Gov't urged to strengthen VAT

Story: Reuben SACKKEY

Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) has reiterated the need for government to strengthen the structural operations of the Valued Added Tax (VAT) to enhance compliance.

The advice follows the implementation of the increase in the VAT rate from 12.5% to 15%, effective January 1, 2023.

Speaking to Joy Business which was monitored by Today, President of GUTA, Dr. Joseph Obeng cautioned that increasing the rate without improving compliance may not yield the targeted results.

He pointed out that the current state of the VAT laws imposes hardship on businesses, particularly retailers.

"The increase in VAT is going to bring some discomfort to businesses".

Mr. Obeng cited an example where the current nature of the VAT implementation system resulted in the opposition by traders in the Ashanti region, where the traders refused to cooperate with the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) officials.

"You recall that our members in Kumasi embarked on demonstrations against the invigilation by the tax officers on the VAT simply because of noncompliance," he said.

"The structure itself is very complex and it does not ensure compliance and that is why we are thinking that government should have looked into reforming the structure so that it will ensure compliance rather than increasing the rate", he added. Expressing his disappointment, Dr. Obeng maintained that the GRA should have engaged key stakeholders before encouraging government to announce the increment in the VAT.

According to him, there was the need for government to engage players in the informal sector, who are generally traders.





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## Local news

### UG defends academic facility user fees

Story: Kwabena AKYEANA

University of Ghana (UG) has justified the adjustment made to Academic Facility User Fees for the 2022/2023 academic year.

The University said the adjustment of fees WAS based on rates approved by Parliament and communicated through the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), thus it is legal.

In a press release issued by the Management of the school it said, “the University decided to suspend the increment of fees in 2019/2020 academic year by 5% which was given approval by Parliament to all public universities since the university received the letter only after it had already announced fees for that academic year which made it late for the school to implement the new fees.”

The statement added that, “the University Management decided to suspend the implementation of the new fees until 2020/2021 academic year even though the gazetted approved fees for the 2019/2020 academic year were found to be higher than the already charged fees we requested students to pay. This was to spare students from a fee increase in the middle of the 2019/2020 academic year.”

According to the statement signed by the Registrar of the University, Emelia Agyei-Mensah, “With the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, coupled with its associated challenges, Management accepted a plea from the student leadership (SRC and GRASAG) to further suspend the implementation of the parliamentary approved and gazetted fees until the 2021/2022 academic year. In effect, therefore, the University of Ghana charged students subsidized fees for the 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years, rather than the approved rates.”

The University noted that it therefore implemented the 2019/2020 approved fees on December 13, 2022 due to increasing cost of operations before the new approval of the 15% increment of fees by GTEC on December 16, 2022.



### Bantamahene blames KMA

*\*For poor sanitation in Kumasi*

\*For poor sanitation in Kumasi

Bantamahene, Baffour Owusu Amankwatia VI, has vowed to lead the mobilization of chiefs for the development of the Ashanti regional capital, Kumasi if the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) fails to do so. Baffour Owusu Amankwatia VI blamed the KMA for the rampant mounting of kiosks and containers and allowing congestion at the city centre which he said was turning the once flourishing Garden city into a village.

Sharing his New Year message, Baffour Owusu Amankwatia VI pointed out that the city had become ungovernable, with perpetrators going unpunished. The Kumasi metro houses a population of 3,630,000 as at the end of 2022.

The city is the second-largest in Ghana, after the capital city Accra.

The city was referred to as the Garden City due to its green area cover and brilliant settlement layout. Underdevelopment emanating from issues of congestion, open space filth, street markets, and uncompleted government projects are eroding the said legacy of the city. According to the Bantamahene, Baffour Owusu Amankwatia VI, people with political authority had ignored calls for development of the city.

“I had the opportunity to put this issue before the Regional Minister when he addressed the regional house. We have nobody to blame other than the KMA and its assembly members. We know assembly members take money from these people to put up these structures. “Pavements inhabited by people doing business. It has made Kumasi look like a village. Some laws must be adhered to. But once they (traders) get the authorization from the assembly and authorities, they do not care about the authority of Nananom,” he said.

“Decongestion issues in Kumasi are serious to the extent that people are selling tomatoes in front of Komfo Anokye hospital. We want a KMA that would be able to decongest the city. Nananom do not have political power. The political power is with the KMA. We have had a meeting with them and came up with the issue of filth and the issue of trying to put Kumasi in order. In 2023, if they fail to do it, Nananom will take it upon ourselves to make sure Kumasi is clean.

“There are projects currently being done by Nananom and not the KMA. We are trying to privatize the road in front of Manhyia. If we keep waiting for the government, things are not going to happen. People say Kumasi is the second city, however in terms of development, Kumasi is 50 years behind Accra, which is not acceptable. Kumasi is turning into a village,” he added.



### National Cathedral secretariat details project expenditures

Story: News DESK

The National Cathedral Secretariat has revealed that government has paid a total of GH¢339 million towards the construction of the National Cathedral. This was contained in the status report of the National Cathedral Secretariat delivered at the Bible Reading Marathon Thanksgiving Service held at the project site on Monday, January 2, 2023. According to the Executive Director of the secretariat, Dr. Paul Opoku-Mensah, the amount was duly documented.

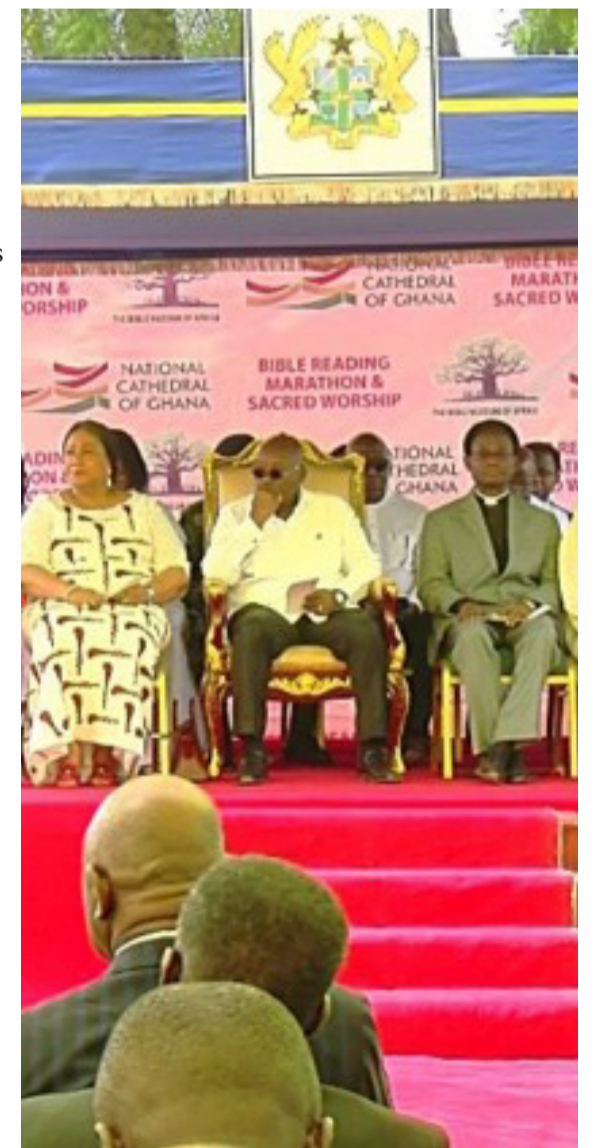
“The indication is that we cannot account for GH¢113 million. Mr. President, I want to state emphatically that the total payment made by government as of December 15, 2022 is GH¢339 million. Amount paid directly to the National Cathedral Secretariat is GH¢225 million, and the amount paid directly to the consultant, Adjaye Associates and Design Team is GH¢113,040,546.70. The two payments total, GH¢339,003,064.86. So, there are no funds that are not accounted for” he said.

Dr. Paul Opoku-Mensah also registered the Board of Trustees’ unhappiness about what he described as misrepresentation of facts by some Members of Parliament.

He said “while a project of this nature will always have discontents, we’re nonetheless concerned about the misrepresentations particularly when it comes from Members of Parliament. Rather than 34% that was bandied around as contract sum paid to the architect, the actual figure is 12.5%.” He therefore urged Ghanaians to disregard such information, as he appealed to them to donate their little to support the project.

Meanwhile, President Akufo-Addo has made a fresh donation of GH¢100,000 to support the continuation of work.

Although there was no indication on when work will resume, the Secretariat is optimistic that with enough resources, the project should be completed and commissioned by President Akufo-Addo before he leaves office.



Local news

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## NUGS Prez opposes school fees payment option

### ...Under Free SHS programme payment

Story: Peace AWUKU

President of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), Dennis Appiah Larbi-Ampofo, says giving parents the option to pay school fees for their wards under the Free Senior High School Programme will create classism in schools.

Mr. Larbi-Ampofo advised government not to explore such an option. He lamented the level of classism that already characterizes the usual extra classes when some parents are unable to afford the fees. According to him, treatment of students will vary should the option be effected.

“There’ll be classism. Now there’ll be a different way of treating those whose parents are paying and those whose parents are not paying. Even when I was in Secondary school, when teachers organize extra classes, we saw how teachers treat those who came and paid for their extra classes and those who did not come,” he said.

The Union President admitted that although the option was a “brilliant idea”, the country is not ready for it.

“It’s a brilliant idea but practically, this country is not ready for that. Let’s not even go there,” he added.

He also warned that a resort to the option would “run this country into an apartheid system of a sort where people who pay for Free SHS are treated in a different way.”

The Free SHS programme has been subjected to persistent criticism lately with some people questioning the quality of human resources resulting from the policy.

Reports indicate a deficit in school infrastructure to accommodate the huge number of students under the programme.

Meanwhile, individuals and organizations have called on the government to review the policy in order to cut down on the huge sums of money being channelled into the programme.



The House subsequently approved an amount of GH¢180 million for the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture as against the initial allocation of GH¢260 million for the year 2023. The \$450 million National Cathedral project was envisioned by the government in March 2017 as a physical embodiment of national unity, harmony, and spirituality. The inter-denominational cathedral is expected to have an auditorium capable of seating 5,000 people, as well as chapels, and a baptistery.

## Apaak blames gov’t

### \*For collapsing public basic

Story: News DESK

Member of Parliament (MP) for Builsa South, Dr. Clement Apaak has cautioned the government against the delay in the payment of the capitation grants to the various basic schools.

According to the legislator, the delay in releasing the money is gradually collapsing the public basic school system.

Speaking to media, Dr. Apaak said government must do the needful to avert the situation.

“This is a grant that the heads of basic schools use to procure basic supplies like chalk, registers, and to engage in basic fixtures like doors and windows. So when government fails to make this available, the heads of basic schools are compelled to either borrow monies to keep the schools running or to take some of these items and services on loans. In fact, this is collapsing the public basic school system and I think it’s most unfortunate. Government needs to do the needful,” the Member of Parliament for Builsa South stated.

The Executive Secretary of Africa Education Watch, Kofi Asare on Sunday, January 1, 2023, also called on the Ministry of Finance to release the funds in full to schools.

“I don’t see anything positive happening at the capitation grants in 2023, because if you look at the goods and services budget line of the Ministry of Finance where the capitation grant is actually financed, the reason why the grant is delaying is that the Ministry of Finance is not releasing the goods and services allocation to the Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education,” the Executive Secretary of Africa Education Watch said.

He was sceptical about the improvement of the capitation grants, bemoaning the government’s decision to cut down on the grants

“Last year 2022, GH¢2.92 million was allocated for basic education in terms of the goods and services, capitation grants and teacher learning resources, feeding grants to special schools, BECE subsidiary, but when the minister went to Parliament to read the 2023 budget, less than 19% had been disbursed. As of now, less than 20 percent has been disbursed.



## Akufo-Addo justifies construction of National Cathedral

Story: Yaw TAKYI

President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has defended the construction of the controversial National Cathedral despite the widespread criticism.

He explained that the Cathedral will not just be a place of worship but a symbol of the country’s Christian faith, adding that it will be a rallying point for the entire Christian community to come together and worship. Speaking after donating an amount of GH¢100,000 to support the construction of the stalled National Cathedral, the President said, “as I have said before, the National Cathedral will not just be another monument adorning the skyline of Accra, it will be a rallying point for the entire Christian community to come together and worship... I am therefore committed to working with the Board of Trustees to ensure the completion of this project to the glory of God”.

Parliament in December 2022 disapproved the allocation of GH¢80 million for the construction of the National Cathedral.

The rejection followed a decision by the government to reintroduce the allocation in the budget estimates for the Roads and Highways and Communication Ministries.





## Unvaccinated Ghanaians urged to go for COVID-19 vaccine

Story: Eunice KENYENSO

Director General of the Ghana Health Service has advised Ghanaians who are unvaccinated against the Covid-19 virus to take appropriate steps to get vaccinated.

Speaking to journalists, Dr Patrick Kuma Aboagye explained that the best protection anyone could have against the virus was getting the needed doses.

He, that the threat of Covid-19 in Ghana remains because “there are many people who are not fully vaccinated”.

“We have people in some rural areas where the community is quite naive, either they have not been infected or vaccinated and that is the reason why we need to be more cautious than other countries. That is why we are encouraging people to get their vaccines, second dose and booster,” he stated.

Dr Kuma-Aboagye added that there were more vaccines in store for Ghanaians in Accra and across the regions.

This comes after China recorded an increase in Covid-19 cases after it ended its strict Covid restrictions in December.

Many countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Morocco, Italy, France, Australia, Canada and others have imposed restrictions on China.

On Monday, the Ghana Airports Company also imposed restrictions on passengers coming from China and other countries with high records.

Meanwhile, speaking on the restrictions, Dr Kuma-Aboagye stated that the Ghana Health Service (GHS) will continue to monitor the situation in China and raise or downgrade the guidelines based on the data they receive.

He however added that the current Covid-19 situation in the country was good but Ghana needed to be on its toes.

“We have not had anybody on admission, no critical case, we have not had a death for weeks now and our last active case was nine. So the current situation is okay but that is the more reason why we need to ensure that we keep it that way,” Dr Kuma-Aboagye said.



## KIA updates Covid-19 protocols as cases in China soar

Story: News DESK

Ghana Airports Company (GAC) has updated the Covid-19 guidelines for passengers using the Kotoka International Airport (KIA).

The revised guidelines take effect from January 6, 2023 at 00:00 hours (UTC).

This follows new concerns about the outbreak of the virus in China and other countries.

In a press release, the Ghana Airports Company indicated that passengers from China will be required to produce valid negative Covid-19 PCR test results taken 48 hours prior to departure from the country.

**“Passengers ORIGINATING THEIR journey from CHINA WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESENT A VALID NEGATIVE COVID-19 PCR TEST RESULT 48 HOURS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM ORIGINATING COUNTRY.”**

The statement further noted that, “All persons arriving in Ghana (citizens, residents, and visitors) who are fully vaccinated will be exempt from any form of testing done either prior to boarding from originating country or on arrival in Ghana EXCEPT PASSENGERS ORIGINATING THEIR JOURNEY FROM CHINA.

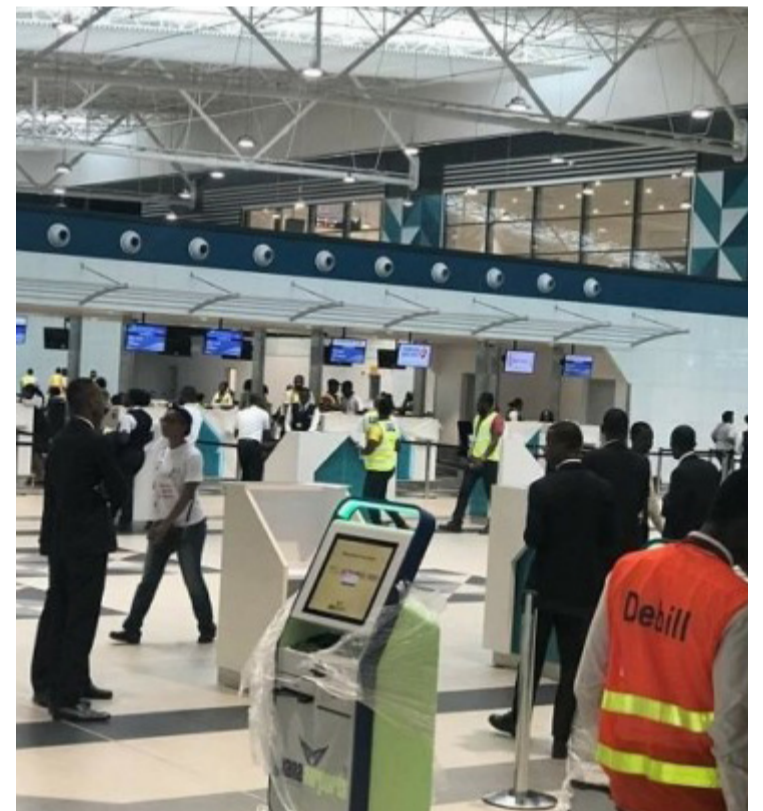
“In addition, such passengers will be required to UNDERGO MANDATORY COVID-19 TESTING ON ARRIVAL AT THE KOTOKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT NO COST,” it noted.

The Ghana Airports Company further stated that, “All OTHER PASSENGERS, ORIGINATING THEIR JOURNEY FROM ELSEWHERE OTHER THAN CHINA (i.e., Ghanaian citizens, permanent residents of Ghana or non-Ghanaians), who ARE PARTIALLY VACCINATED OR UNVACCINATED, WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESENT A VALID NEGATIVE COVID-19 PCR TEST RESULT 48 HOURS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM ORIGINATING COUNTRY.”

In addition “passengers may be randomly selected and offered test on arrival”

They also stated that “airlines that bring passengers to Kotoka International Airport who are not fully vaccinated or passengers originating their journey from China without a valid negative Covid-19 PCR test results 48 hours prior to the departure would be surcharged \$3500.”

“Wearing of nose mask is recommended in all Airport Terminals and ancillary buildings,” the GAC stressed.



## US imposes Covid testing for visitors from China

Source: BBC

The US has become the latest country to impose Covid testing on visitors from China, after Beijing announced it would reopen borders next week.

Italy, Japan, Taiwan and India also announced mandatory tests, but Australia and UK said there were no new rules for travellers from China.

After three years of being closed to the world, China will let people travel more freely from 8 January.

But the country's ongoing Covid surge has sparked wariness.

China is reporting about 5,000 cases a day, but analysts say such numbers are vastly undercounted - and the daily case load may be closer to a million. Hospitals are overwhelmed and residents are struggling to find basic medicines, according to reports.

On Wednesday, the US said a lack of “adequate and transparent” Covid data in China had contributed to the decision to require Covid tests from 5 January for travellers entering the country from China, Hong Kong and Macau.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said this was needed “to help slow the spread of the virus as we work to identify... any potential new variants that may emerge”.

But Beijing's foreign ministry on Wednesday had said coronavirus rules should only be instated on a “scientific” basis and accused Western countries and media of “hyping up” the situation.

Some people reacted angrily on China's censored social media.

“I thought all of the foreign countries had opened up. Isn't this racism?” read one comment that was liked 3,000 times on Weibo. The US has said testing is required of anyone coming from China, or via a third country, regardless of nationality.

But others said they understood the reason for the conditions: “This is nothing compared to all the restrictions

we had for people coming into China,” one user wrote.

Beijing only announced on Monday its decision to end quarantine for arrivals - effectively reopening travel in and out of the country for the first time since March 2020. Until this week, anyone entering China had to undergo quarantine in state facilities.

Before the pandemic, China had been the world's largest outbound tourism market. But it's unclear how many Chinese people will travel abroad after 8 January given that the number of flights are limited, and many citizens need to renew their passports.

The international community's reaction has varied with the UK and Australia saying they were monitoring China's Covid situation but were not planning on announcing new testing requirements.

## OPINION

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# Only lawyers will understand

By: Elizabeth Ohene

I am not sure I can work out why law has become such a sought-after profession. Young people, old people, half of the public service, it looks like everybody wants to become a lawyer. I hope it is easier getting into heaven than trying to gain entry into Law School and I hope sincerely that once out of law school, life as a lawyer is turning out to be half as attractive as it promises.

I am coming to the conclusion that the attraction lies in people wanting to belong in this group where people speak their own special language the rest of us don't understand, make rules (laws) that bind all of us and are the only ones that interpret the rules and having them in your corner can make the difference between retaining your liberty or going to jail.

I hesitate to quote Charles Dickens because as one of my young friends told me recently, nobody reads that kind of book these days. But I really can't find anything from any modern writer that captures the dilemma that I face. So, with a little apology for showing my age, I go back to Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, where Mr Bumble, the unhappy spouse of a domineering wife, is told in court that "...the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction", and he replied: "If the law supposes that, then the law is an ass – an idiot".

The law

Seeing as I am not knowledgeable in the law, I try very hard to be ever so careful of what I say about lawyers and the law and the legal process because I don't really want to get on the wrong side of the law or lawyers or where they ply their trade. But every once in a while, Mr Bumble looms large in my consideration of events and I wonder if the lawyers, the lawmakers and the interpreters of the law sometimes also feel that the law is an ass.

Ato Essien's case

I am looking at this recent case involving Mr Ato Essien of the collapsed Capital Bank. Since the trial came to an end, there have been loads of discussions about the use of the relevant law in coming to a settlement that enabled him to escape going to jail on condition he pays the GH¢90 million he was charged with stealing.

For the sake of the only strangers in Jerusalem, it is probably worth recounting the broad outlines of the case brought against Mr Essien, the Founder of the Capital Bank. He was charged with stealing depositors' funds and he came to an agreement with the Attorney General to pay the sum of GH¢90 million in restitution to the state and avoided going to jail. All perfectly legal, according to the lawyers.

Some smartaleck has put on the net, another story of two people who faced an Accra Circuit court on a charge of robbery. The two men, one a barber and the other, unemployed, were found guilty of robbing a trader of her purse, which contained a mobile phone and GH¢44.00 and each of them was sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment with hard labour.

For those of us not learned in the law, it is easy to see the befuddlement that this situation poses. We can just about work out that there is a difference between employing force to steal the purse with the mobile phone and 44 Ghana cedis and employing your connections and expertise to steal millions. Someone has told me comparing the two cases is like comparing oranges with pawpaw. But there is this lingering feeling the bigger the amount you steal, the easier it is to avoid jail.

I certainly would want every pesewa to be retrieved from those who caused the financial crisis. If at all possible, I would want everyone who is caught stealing to be made to return whatever amount that has been stolen. But it seems it is only when you steal from the state that you can benefit from the law that allows you to escape jail and offer to make restitution and pay back the amount.

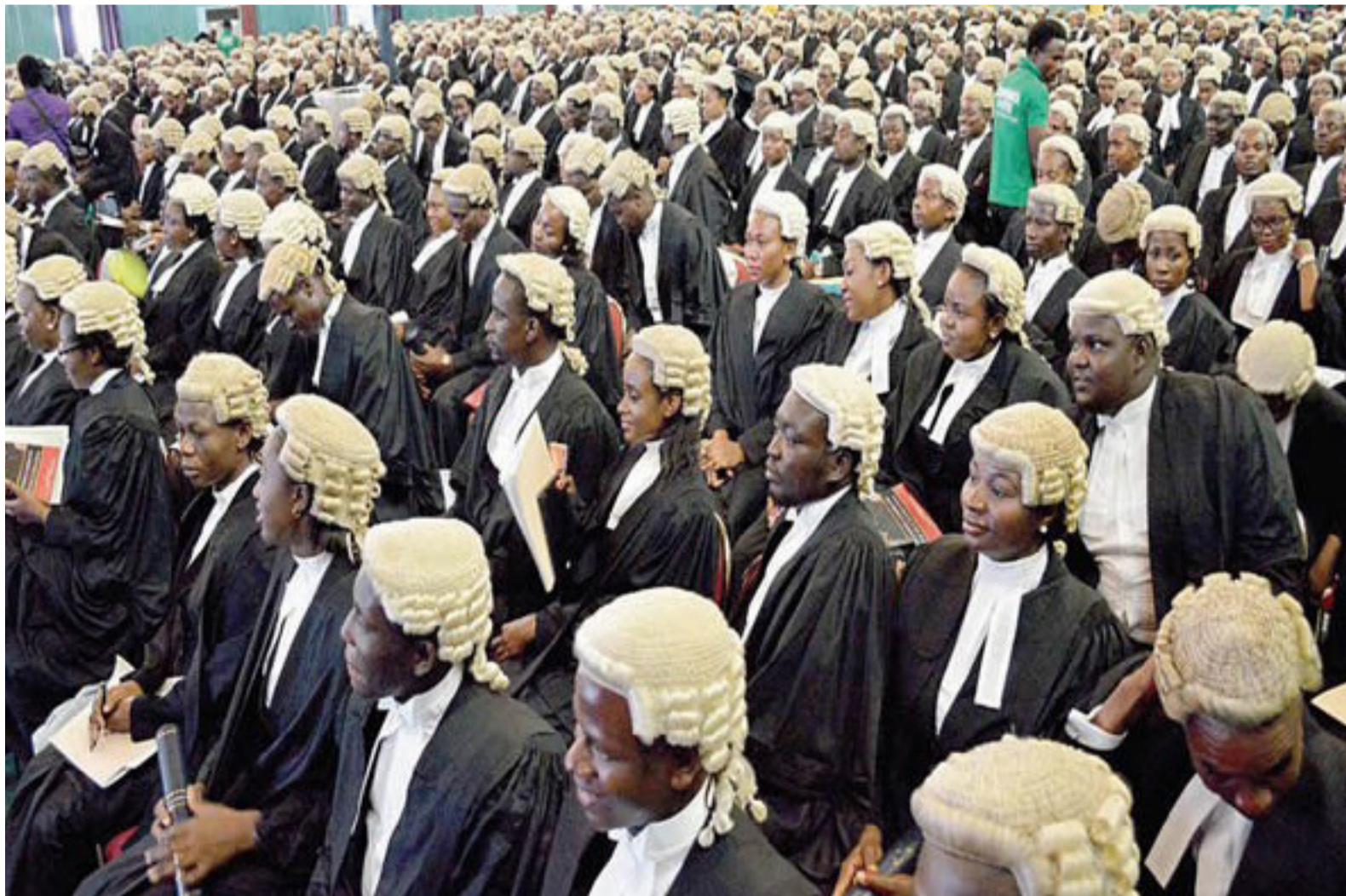
I wonder what happens to the man who enters my room surreptitiously and cuts up my mattress and steals the millions of cedis stashed in there and when he is caught, offers to return the money, buy me a new mattress and guard my house for free for the rest of his life. Is there room for such a deal to be cut and would he escape jail, seeing as he would have employed some violence to gain entry into the room and the money belongs to me and not the state?

I wouldn't want to underestimate in any way the distress that is caused to victims of robbery and the anger and disorientation you face when you walk into your home and find it ransacked and your treasures taken away. But I wonder if someone considers the likelihood that these so-called white-collar crimes cause far more violence to the state and citizens than petty crimes and big robberies. I wonder why we think it is the white-collar crimes that deserve these special arrangements that spare the perpetrators from serving time in jail.

Arguments

I have taken note of the arguments that have been put up to show that the arrangement should not be seen as Mr Essien having been given an easy option as he won't be able to serve as a director or manage a financial institution and would have to disclose on official forms that he has a conviction. I am unimpressed. If Mr Essien thought for one moment that going to jail for one week would be a better option, I bet he would have kept the GH¢90 million and gone to jail.

Whilst I have been grappling with the issues raised by this case, my mind has gone back to something that happened in this country back in 1975 that shook the legal and court process in much the same way as this current one.



A famous Sunyani lawyer called Ohene Djan was arrested and put on trial for murder. He was a high-profile lawyer who was forever in the news and, therefore, the murder case attracted a lot of attention.

After the prosecution had finished presenting its case and lawyer Ohene Djan had been in the dock to testify on his own behalf and we were left with the delivery of the judgment, the lawyer for the accused person and the Director of Public Prosecutions spoke in that special lawyer's language and the judge suddenly announced in the court that lawyer Ohene Djan had been found guilty of manslaughter.

I forget what else happened but I do remember that the lawyer was let go and he left town for the United Kingdom (UK). Some said it was a plea bargain, which if it existed on the books, I had certainly never heard about it being used in Ghana.

The lesson is if you can afford a good lawyer, secret doors will open. Maybe that is why everyone wants to be a lawyer.





## Romelu Lukaku wants permanent Chelsea exit

Inter Milan striker Romelu Lukaku said he is hoping to put his injuries and Belgium's premature World Cup exit behind him and return to form in a bid to discuss a permanent move from Chelsea.

Lukaku missed a huge chunk of games in the first half of the season due to hamstring and thigh injuries which affected his return to the national team as Belgium crashed out of the World Cup in the group stage.

The 29-year-old is on loan from Chelsea and sealing a permanent move back to Inter could be difficult as the Premier League side looks to recoup the £97.5 million they paid the Serie A club in August 2021.

"Everyone knows what I want. Right now I have to do whatever is necessary with the team to make Inter win and then we can talk to Chelsea," Lukaku told Sky Sport Italy.

"The idea is to finish [my career] with [boyhood club] Anderlecht. I'm [nearly] 30 years old, my son started school here and plays in the Inter academy. I'm fine, Inter always has ambition to keep growing.

"I want to stay here and do things right. I hope to do well with Inter in the next six months, work to the maximum and then at the end we talk to Chelsea and hope to find a solution." Lukaku said the long-term injury was the first time he had missed so many games in his career, adding that his house resembled a hospital as he looked to recover in time for the World Cup.

Their campaign in Qatar ended with the striker being consoled by Belgium's assistant coach Thierry Henry and Lukaku said the former France international was the "ideal" candidate to take over after Roberto Martinez stepped down.

"For me Henry is the next coach of Belgium. There are no doubts, I say it openly: he will be the next coach," Lukaku said. "He has the respect of all the players, he has won everything. He knows how to coach, he knows what we have to do to get there.

"He wants to win, and I don't think the federation is going to get a coach who wants to change everything and start from scratch."



## Semenyo celebrates debut goal

After getting his debut goal in the 2023 calendar year, Black Stars forward Antoine Semenyo has stated he feels good about finding the back of the net.

He said this in an interview after scoring in Bristol City's 1-1 result against Coventry City in the English Championship's last round of games.

"It definitely feels good obviously I haven't been in the team for the last few games came in the last two...and am happy to contribute" he said in a chat with Bristol City media.

Semenyo scored in the 28th minute to get Bristol level after conceding a Jake Bidwell goal in the 12th minute; Semenyo played out the entire duration of the contest.

The equalizer against Coventry was Semenyo's fourth goal in the Championship this season and the 22 year old had an assist to his name.

Semenyo was included in Ghana's 2022 FIFA World Cup squad in a campaign that had the Black Stars compete in Group H.

He is the subject of major interest from English Premier League side AFC Bournemouth according to British portal TeamTalk.



## NFL game suspended

**\*After player collapses on field**

American football star Damar Hamlin is in a critical condition after suffering a cardiac arrest during a primetime US National Football League game.

The Buffalo Bills player, 24, fell to the ground after colliding with an opponent during the first quarter of a match against the Cincinnati Bengals.

He received on-field medical attention for more than 30 minutes before being taken to a local hospital.

The NFL suspended the game for the night about an hour after the incident.

His team, the Buffalo Bills later confirmed the cardiac arrest in a statement and added that his heartbeat was restored on the field.

The emergency sparked an outpouring of support for Hamlin and brought attention back to the dangerous nature of America's most popular sport as the NFL season approaches its climactic play-off stages.

Hamlin was tackling Bengals receiver Tee Higgins in the stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio, when Higgins' helmet appeared to hit Hamlin in the chest. After initially getting to his feet, he fell on his back.

Players from both teams gathered around Hamlin as emergency medical staff gave CPR and oxygen. Several were seen visibly distressed, with many kneeling to pray and some in tears. Television coverage repeatedly broke away from the scene on the field, while the crowd in Cincinnati remained silent during the ordeal.

Jordan Rooney, Hamlin's representative, wrote on Twitter: "His vitals are back to normal and they have put him to sleep to put a breathing tube down his throat. They are currently running tests. We will provide updates as we have them."

NFL games are rarely suspended because of injury. Commentators said the fact that game-play had stalled was a sign of the shocking and severe nature of the emergency.

The two teams are among the top Super Bowl contenders this year, with their head-to-head coming in the primetime Monday night slot in the penultimate week of the NFL's regular season.

The league's players' association wrote in a statement: "We have been in touch with Bills and Bengals players and with the NFL. The only thing that matters at this moment is Damar's health and well-being."

Hamlin, a native of McKees Rock, Pennsylvania, was drafted from the University of Pittsburgh by the Bills in 2021.

He has drawn praise for hosting annual Christmas toy drives in his hometown since before he was a paid athlete.

An online GoFundMe page for the toy drive was reshared after Hamlin collapsed on Monday and has raised nearly \$3m (£2.5m).

Buildings across Cincinnati were lit up in blue on Monday evening, including Paycor Stadium where the incident occurred.

The safety of American football has been much debated in recent years but usually over concussion rather than cardiac risks.

Many former NFL players have the degenerative brain condition CTE which research has linked to repeated hits to the head.

Blunt trauma is common in contact sports, but it's rare that it causes heart issues like this.

A direct hit to the chest can result in cardiac arrest. That's when the heart stops beating properly and is unable to do its job of pumping blood around the body.

It's different to a heart attack, which happens when blood supply to the heart muscle is cut off.

In Hamlin's case, medics were able to quickly get his heart beating again. It's not yet known what internal injuries he may have sustained from the incident and whether there has been any significant damage to his heart.

Good wishes for the stricken player have poured in.

Basketball star LeBron James said: "It was a terrible thing to see and I wish nothing but the best for that kid."

Arizona Cardinals defensive end JJ Watt wrote on Twitter: "Please be ok man. Please be ok," while retired Pittsburgh Steelers safety Ryan Clark told ESPN's SportsCenter show: "This isn't about a football player, this is about a human."

Bruce Sharpe, a Bills fan who was in the stadium when it happened, said it was "devastating".

"Everything got dead silent. Even the Bengals fans, you know, you don't want to see anything like that," he said. "We're just praying that everything's okay."

Additional reporting by Michelle Roberts of BBC's health team

