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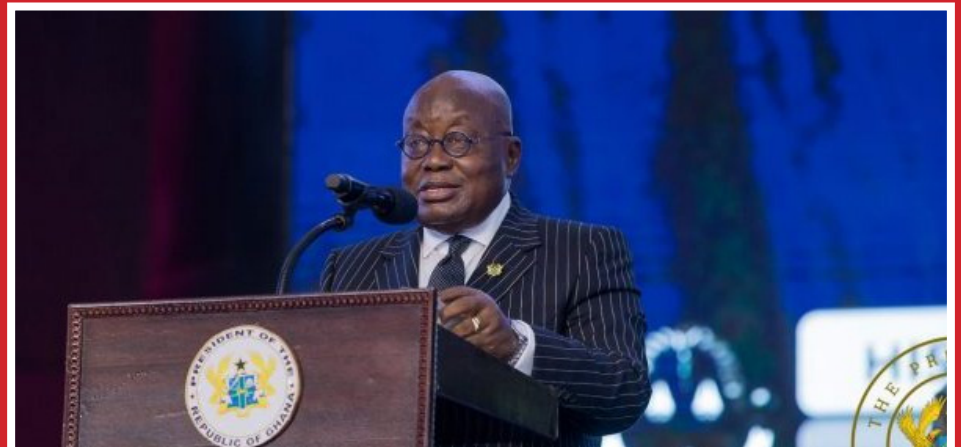


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General News

KATH introduces 'revolutionary' stroke treatment ; indicates treatment cost of GH¢15,000

The Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) has witnessed a significant rise in stroke cases, with admissions increasing from 200 to over a thousand annually over the past four decades.

In response to this surge in cases of the prevalent cardiovascular disease, the hospital has introduced a groundbreaking time-bound treatment known as active stroke thrombolysis.

This newly implemented thrombolysis service administers drugs and medication to dissolve blood clots during an acute ischemic stroke, offering a revolutionary approach to stroke treatment.

Consultant Neurologist at KATH, Dr. Fred Stephen Sarfo who revealed this information, emphasized that

this innovative treatment aims to dissolve clots, restoring blood flow to the brain and potentially curing the stroke.

"This is revolutionary and will change the stroke treatment landscape," declared Dr. Sarfo, highlighting the potential for this treatment to significantly reduce paralysis and disability, contrasting it with past limitations in stroke care.

"This one almost cures the stroke, so the person doesn't have to deal with paralysis and disability. The approximate cost is about GH¢15,000 for treatment to be given and highly standardized and subsidized at the Komfo Anokye," he stated.

Prof. Dr. Otchere Addai-Mensah, CEO of KATH, underscored the hospital's commitment to

optimizing tertiary healthcare through innovation and research. He urged stakeholders and the general public to act swiftly in admitting stroke patients for this specialized service.

"In line with the hospital's new strategy to optimize the delivery of tertiary healthcare through innovation and research, the management has supported the KATH Multidisciplinary Stroke Thrombolysis Team to commence the delivery of this special service to save stroke patients brought in time to this hospital from suffering the worst possible impact of the disease," he said.

The Deputy Regional Director of Clinic Care, Ghana Health Service, Rita Larsen-Reindolf, expressed support for the initiative, emphasizing the need for awareness and public education to

address the increasing prevalence of strokes. She pledged the readiness of the health service to champion this challenge and collaborate with KATH in advancing stroke care.

"For the immediate terms, awareness and public education are what we can capitalize on," she added.

Source: Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital Entrance

Over 230 million women have undergone female genital mutilation globally - UNICEF

A recent report by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has disclosed that more than 230 million women and girls globally have undergone female genital mutilation, with the majority residing in Africa.

The report is based on the most up-to-date compilation of statistics on FGM from various sources, including household surveys, censuses, and administrative records.

The updated global estimates reveal a 15 per cent increase in the total number of survivors, equivalent to 30 million more girls and women, compared to data released eight years ago.

Despite a decline in the percentage of women and girls affected by female genital mutilation, UNICEF cautioned that efforts to eliminate the practice are progressing too slowly to match the rapid growth of populations.

The report stated, "The practice of female genital mutilation is declining, but not fast enough."

Female genital mutilation, a practice erroneously thought to regulate women's sexuality, poses severe risks, including excessive bleeding and fatalities. Girls undergo this procedure at various stages, from infancy to adolescence.

Over time, it can result in urinary tract infections, menstrual issues, discomfort, reduced sexual fulfilment, and childbirth difficulties. Additionally, it may lead to psychological effects such as depression, diminished self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell remarked, "We're also seeing a worrying trend that more girls are subjected to the practice at younger ages, many before their fifth birthday. That further reduces the window

to intervene."

The report, titled "Female Genital Mutilation: A Global Concern," highlights that Africa has the highest number of women and girls subjected to female genital mutilation, with approximately 144 million affected.

Asia and the Middle East follow, with 80 million and 6 million cases, respectively. Somalia stands out as the country with the highest prevalence, with 99% of females aged 15 to 49 having undergone the practice.

However, Burkina Faso has made

significant strides, reducing the percentage of circumcised women in the same age group from 80% to 30% over a thirty-year period.

Additionally, the report notes that 4 out of every 10 survivors reside in conflict-affected regions with rapid population growth rates, highlighting how political instability hampers efforts to combat the practice and assist victims.

The report stated, "Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Sudan account for the largest numbers of girls and women who have undergone

Continued on page 3



UNICEF logo



General News

Over 230 million women have undergone female genital mutilation globally - UNICEF

Continued from page 2

female genital mutilation in conflict-affected countries.”

While acknowledging advancements achieved in certain nations, the report cautioned that the global community is not on track to fulfill the United Nations’

objective of eliminating the practice entirely by 2030.

The report mentioned, “In some countries, progress would need to be 10 times faster than the best progress observed in history to reach the target by 2030.”

CEO of the Five Foundation, Nimco Ali, a UK-based charity fighting female genital mutilation, expressed concern over the UNICEF estimates, stating that more funding is urgently needed to end the practice. She said, “We must use the last six years of this

decade to finally get to grips with this abhorrent abuse of a girl’s human rights and save the next generation from the horrors of FGM.”

Source: *Independent Ghana* / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

African Games: “Strive for excellence; showcase the immense talents Africa possesses” - President Akufo-Addo

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has called on Ghanaians to seize the opportunities presented by the 13th African Games for the benefit of future generations.

Speaking at the opening ceremony held at the Legon Sports Stadium in Accra, the President emphasised the importance of cherishing the unique contributions of participating countries with their diverse cultures, traditions, and identities.

President Akufo-Addo expressed his delight at witnessing the unifying power of sports on the continent, urging athletes to

recognize the inspirational impact of their efforts across Africa.

“As you compete in the games in the coming days, remember that your efforts inspire countless individuals across the continent. Strive for excellence, push your limits and showcase the immense talents that Africa possesses,” President Akufo-Addo stated.

He encouraged participants to strive for excellence, push their limits, and showcase the immense talents inherent in the African continent.

Highlighting the values of integrity and sportsmanship, the President called on participating countries

to compete with fairness and mutual respect throughout the competition. He also extended congratulations to all involved, acknowledging their dedication and determination in making the 13th African Games a prestigious event.

“I extend my heartfelt congratulations for your dedication and determination in reaching this prestigious game.”

Ghana, having won the bid to host the games in 2018 for the first time in its history, is currently welcoming over 6,000 athletes from 53 countries competing in 29 disciplines.

The diverse array of sports includes Arm wrestling, basketball, boxing, chess, football, volleyball, handball, athletics, table tennis, tennis, and badminton, among others, making this edition of the African Games a memorable and significant occasion.

Source: *Independent Ghana* / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Western Region: Let’s fight galamsey with all seriousness - Food vendors are cooking with polluted water - GWL warns

Communication Manager of Ghana Water Limited (GWL) for the Western and Central Regions, Nana Yaw Barima Barnieh, has raised an alarm about the use of water contaminated by galamsey (illegal mining) for cooking by food vendors in the Western Region.

Due to the severe impact of illegal mining on water bodies, particularly the River Pra, GWL has been compelled to reduce water production by 30%. Nana Yaw Barima Barnieh shared these findings during a media engagement on Friday, March 8, 2024.

Highlighting the repercussions of the water production cut, Mr. Barnieh expressed concern that some food vendors were

unknowingly using polluted water to prepare meals for the public.

He stressed the urgency of addressing this issue, calling it a wake-up call for all Ghanaians.

“This is a wake-up call for all Ghanaians. In fact, the galamsey operations affect everybody, including the illegal miners themselves. Because of its bad quality, some people are harnessing it and using it to prepare food for people to buy, which is unknown to all of us,” he stated.

While acknowledging that the 30% reduction in water production would impact communities in the region, GWL assured the public of its readiness to supplement production with supplies from Bremsu Headworks.

In response to the environmental damage caused by galamsey, Eric Seth Atiapah, the Chief Manager of the water distribution company, announced plans to launch an awareness campaign for communities along the riverbanks.

The campaign aims to educate residents about the detrimental effects of illegal mining activities on water sources and GWL’s operations.

Source: *Independent Ghana* / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



File Photo



General News

Accept that there is 'dumsor' and give us a load-shedding timetable - Mahama 'advises' Akufo-Addo

Former President and National Democratic Congress (NDC) Flagbearer, John Mahama, is urging the government to confront the escalating power outages, commonly referred to as 'dumsor,' by unveiling a transparent and well-defined load-shedding timetable.

Recent electrical disruptions across the country have prompted Mahama's call for openness and accountability.

Addressing the issue during his "Building the Ghana We Want" Tour in the Upper West region, Mahama emphasised that Ghanaians are well aware of the ongoing load shedding but lack a clear schedule.

Drawing upon his experience as a former president, Mahama noted that he kept the public informed

during his tenure about challenges and the corresponding measures taken to address them.

Expressing concern, Mahama stated, "When I was president, if things were not going well, I told the people of Ghana that things are not going well and this is what we are trying to do about it. I think my honesty was one of my major problems because I didn't think I should fool my people."

He highlighted the current administration's lack of transparency in addressing the power issues, asserting that a failure to provide a detailed timetable for load shedding leaves the public in the dark about when to expect outages.

The seasoned politician explained, "Today, every day you sleep, and

the lights go off, and we know that they are shedding load. They have a problem with generation. Some generation assets are down. They have a problem with paying for gas. They have a problem with paying for fuel, so every day they are shedding between 280 and 480 megawatts of power, but they will not give us a timetable and say you will be off today, this one will be off tomorrow because that is

what Ghanaians know as dumsor."

Mahama's plea underscores the need for a clear strategy to manage the ongoing power challenges and provide citizens with essential information about the timing and duration of outages, effectively addressing the nation's concerns surrounding 'dumsor.'

Source: Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



John Dramani Mahama, NDC Flagbearer

Ghana secures 9th spot among Africa's safest countries for women

Ghana has secured the 9th position among Africa's top 10 safest countries for women to visit, in the recently released Global Women Peace and Security Index 2023.

The index, evaluating 177 countries based on criteria such as women's inclusion, justice, and security, places Seychelles at the forefront, with Ghana closely trailing behind.

The top 10 list also features countries like Cape Verde, South Africa, Mauritius, Tunisia, Rwanda, Botswana, Tanzania, and Sao Tome and Principe.

Each of these nations is acknowledged for their commendable efforts in ensuring the safety and security of women.

Conversely, the report designates the Central African Republic as the most unsafe country to visit, with additional countries like the DR Congo, South Sudan, Burundi, Eswatini, Somalia, Niger, Sudan, Chad, and Nigeria ranking poorly.

This highlights significant challenges concerning safety and security for women travellers.

Ghana's inclusion in the top 10

is a testament to the nation's dedication to advancing women's rights, safety, and inclusivity.

This recognition encourages

travellers to explore Ghana's diverse landscapes and vibrant culture with confidence.

Source: Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



File Photo



General News

MOH set to meet Finance Ministry to expedite clearance for unemployed nurses

Coalition of Nurses and Midwives in the Northern Region, the Ministry of Health (MoH), is slated to convene with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) on Monday, March 10.

The aim of the meeting is to streamline and expedite the financial clearance and recruitment process for over 75,000 graduate nurses and midwives who remain unemployed despite their training at accredited institutions.

The Coalition has expressed dissatisfaction with the perceived inaction of the government, MoH, and MoF in securing permanent employment for trained healthcare

professionals.

Isaac Baah Ofei, the Public Relations Officer of the Health Ministry, reassured the group in an interview with Citi News, urging patience as the ministries work to address the existing backlogs.

“The Ministry has recruited a significant number of nurses, creating backlogs in the process. We require clearance for medical doctors and dentists who have completed their training. We are actively working to resolve these issues.

We ask for patience from the coalition so that, upon receiving

clearance from the Ministry of Finance, we can proceed with the recruitment,” stated Ofei.

Alhaji Hafiz, the Chief Director, has called for an urgent meeting between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance to explore means of expediting the

recruitment process.

The meeting, initially planned for this week, is now expected to take place early on Monday to chart a swift path forward.

Source: Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File Photo

Strong winds, thunder and lightning; stay safe! - GMet warns about weather conditions in coming days

The Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) has issued a warning about increased winds, thunderstorms, and lightning as the main rainy season approaches.

Senior meteorologist at GMet, Joshua Asamoah, noted that occasional light rains may occur even when clouds are present, urging the public to find shelter in safe locations during this time.

“As we are gearing towards the main rainy season, there will be light rains even when the clouds form to pour; however, there will be more winds, thunder and lightning preceding the rains. So, we urge members of the public to find a safe shelter to stay in whenever it begins to rain this time, to protect themselves from the winds, thunder and lightning,” he said.

Mr Asamoah shared these insights during an interview with the Ghana News Agency on the sidelines of a stakeholder and media training workshop focused on the VOLTALARM Early Warning System.

The VOLTALARM Early Warning System, a collaborative effort between GMet and its partners,

aims to provide timely alerts about floods and droughts to residents living within the Volta basins.

This initiative forms a vital component of the Volta Flood and Drought Management (VFDM) project, involving collaboration among Ghana and neighbouring countries bordering the Volta River to mitigate flood and drought risks around the lake.

Mr Asamoah stressed the importance of the VOLTALARM system in enabling communities

within the Volta basins to better prepare for potential floods and droughts, especially during the discharge of water from the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso.

He outlined plans to bolster capacity-building and foster collaboration among stakeholders and the media to raise awareness among communities within the basins.

These plans include establishing a platform for stakeholders, including the media and local

community members, to receive regular updates on flood and drought situations.

Furthermore, Mr. Asamoah mentioned ongoing efforts to develop a Multi-Hazard Warning System for regions beyond the Volta basin, ensuring broader access to crucial information on environmental hazards.

Source: Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



File Photo

General News

Even God will be angry with us; \$450m on Cathedral is unnecessary – Mahama to Akufo-Addo

Former President John Dramani Mahama, the 2024 flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), has expressed strong disapproval of the allocation of \$450 million for the National Cathedral project.

During a gathering with religious leaders in Wa as part of the “Building Ghana Tour,” Mahama criticised the prioritisation of the cathedral over pressing challenges in the education sector.

Mahama questioned the use of public funds for the cathedral, emphasising that President Nana Akufo-Addo’s personal commitment to God should be funded by individuals who share the project’s vision.

“The President said that he made a pledge to God that if he won the election, he would build a Cathedral for him. So it is his personal pledge and if he wants to

build it, he must gather people who support that conviction to build it, and we were told that public funds were not going to be used for the Cathedral,” former president John Dramani Mahama stated.

He highlighted the contradiction between the government’s promise not to use public funds for the cathedral and the revelation that public taxes were being used.

“But eventually, we found that the Minister of Finance was releasing public taxes. We can’t use public funds, including the funds of people of other denominations, to build a Cathedral for Christians alone,” he added.

“So far, 58 million dollars of public funds have been spent just to dig a deep hole and you have to ask yourself, is it justified in this day and age when children don’t have desks in schools when children do not have textbooks?”

The former President, appalled by the \$58 million spent on digging a hole for the cathedral, pointed out the lack of desks and textbooks in schools.

He argued that redirecting the funds towards education, given the government’s substantial expenses on consultancy services for the cathedral, would be a more judicious use of resources.

Mahama concluded, “For five years, we have not provided our basic schools with textbooks, even though we have come out with a new curriculum, because we say there is no money, and you say we should use 450 million dollars to build a Cathedral, even God will be angry with us.

Source: Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



John Dramani Mahama, Former President of Ghana

Prof Gadzekpo in trouble with Nzemas; given 7 day ultimatum to appear before leaders over gay comments

Heads of the six paramountcies in Nzemaland have issued a seven-day ultimatum to Professor Audrey Gadzekpo, the Board Chair of the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), to appear before them and address recent comments about Nzema’s acceptance of homosexual acts in their culture.

“We are giving her seven days to come and meet us in the Western Region... As a matter of fact, if we have to go into the olden days, then she has to pacify each stool holder because it’s a big insult.

This ultimatum comes after Prof. Gadzekpo, during an appearance on Joy Newsfile on Saturday, March 2, 2024, suggested that some Ghanaian cultures, including those of the Ga and Nzema people, accepted homosexual practices.

“Look, I have heard people who

were against the bill but have admitted that when you look into some of our cultural practices, there are homosexual practices. It didn’t come from the West... Somebody told us that when you look in, there are practices in Ga culture and there are practices in Nzema culture, for example, that sociologists have documented,” she stated.

Subsequently, the six paramount chiefs held a press briefing to express their disgust and indignation regarding the assertions made by the professor.

Speaking on behalf of the other chiefs, Chief Awulae Ati Brukusu III from the Lower Axim Area shared the feelings of the Nzema people in both Ghana and Ivory Coast. He expressed their shared embarrassment, anger, and disappointment regarding the professor’s comments and called for her to be held accountable.

“In fact, she just made a misleading statement that has created a lot of chaos and panic in Nzema Land. And people have been calling and asking—a whole paramount chief—what is all this embarrassment?”

As if she was joking, but she was actually saying something to me. Some of the youth can easily say to us that if it’s a culture within our system, then if you practice it, it is not any sin that is against the traditional norms of the Nzema area.

He contended that such acts or behaviours of homosexuality have never been a part of the people of Nzema Land since the time of their ancestors until now, slamming the professor’s ignorance of knowing who they really are.

“Of course, it is totally no; it is not correct; it has never happened, and it’ll not happen. Even with

the coming generation, it won’t happen. Our ancestors never did that. I have been on my stool for the past 36 years and I have never even heard of such an issue,” he said.

He added that ‘At least she should know who we are, what we are and how we are and not just be on TV publicly just because you are doing it for your own sake.’

Source: Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo, Board Chair, Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)



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Business

Tema Port handles 18 million tonnes of cargo in 2023

Despite a generally difficult local and international economic climate in 2023, the Tema Port handled 18 million tonnes of cargo, while the Takoradi Port handled eight million tonnes. That was a boost in performance in the second half of the year after a dormant first half.

Mr Michael Achagwe Luguje, the Director General, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA), at a media forum, revealed that the cargo traffic through the Ports of Ghana in 2023 was only a million tonnes short of the 2022 figures. However, the Takoradi Port performed better in 2023 than in the previous year.

He attributed the boost in performance in the second half to

GPHA's initiatives in collaboration with its external stakeholders, as well as general economic factors. The initiative included the introduction of a scheme to peg exchange rates charged on transit goods at three-month intervals to avoid increased costs as a result of fluctuating rates.

He said the Authority had earlier in 2023 engaged its stakeholders in Ghana and shipping lines to gather information and facts contributing to the decline in import figures and the findings had been presented to the economic management team of Ghana.

Mr Luguje expressed confidence that measures would be implemented to reduce the rising cost of doing business in Ghana's

seaports.

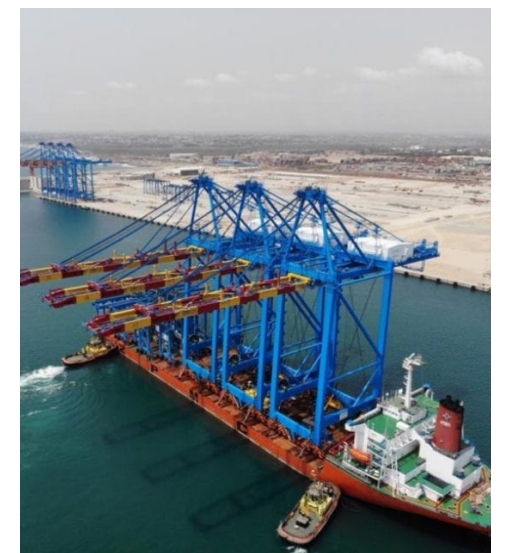
He said often, people thought GPHA was to blame for the high cost of doing business, adding that the port charges only constituted 10 per cent of the total cost of clearance.

"A good chunk of it comes from duties and statutory taxes; the government's attention has been drawn to it, and they are looking at it to see what can be done to reduce it," he said.

"Apart from that, other operators like shipping lines and freight forwarders also contribute to it." He reminded the business community that the cost of doing business in the logistics sector was directly related to the efficiency of port systems and infrastructure.

That was why the GPHA was vigorously pursuing measures to augment ports' efficiency in a bid to make Ghana the preferred hub in the sub-region.

Source: GNA



Tema Port

Parliament approves 300m dollars World Bank loan amid Ghana's growing debt concerns

Parliament has approved a \$300 million loan agreement between the government of Ghana and the International Development Association (IDA). The purpose of this facility, as stated by the government, is to support the financing of the 2024 budget.

However, the minority, led by Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, opposed the loan, expressing concerns that it would further strain the country's already delicate debt situation.

Instead of supporting the loan, the former Deputy Finance Minister urged the government to retract the over 7 billion cedis in tax exemptions granted to companies under the 1D1F program.

Deputy Finance Minister Mrs. Abena Osei-Asare countered the minority's claims, arguing that the tax exemptions are essential for stimulating industrial growth.

Eric Opoku, the ranking member for the Food and Agriculture Committee, questioned the efficacy of the loan given the significant borrowing by the Nana Addo administration in the past, with little tangible results.

Minister for Trade and Industry K. T. Hammond questioned why

the minority was attempting to link the loan facility with tax exemptions.

In a surprising turn of events, Ranking Member for the Finance Committee Isaac Adongo refuted his colleagues' claims about tax exemptions, suggesting that the

rejection of the \$300 million facility from the World Bank was due to the government's failure to present a \$3 billion IMF bailout agreement to parliament for ratification.

Despite the debates, Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Amin

Adams assured the minority that their concerns would be addressed. Ultimately, the loan was approved through a voice vote, with the majority prevailing.

Source: Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Parliament of Ghana



International

Nigeria pauses controversial expatriate employment levy

Nigeria pauses controversial expatriate employment levy. Nigeria has paused a controversial annual levy that would require businesses employing expatriates to pay \$15,000 (£12,000) for a director and \$10,000 (£8,000) for other workers.

President Bola Tinubu imposed the tax over a week ago, but it was met with widespread condemnation.

The Ministry of Interior said on X the levy would be paused for "dialogue among stakeholders". It comes after a meeting was held to discuss the levy on Friday in Abuja.

The Ministry of Interior said the tax was intended to "discourage abuse" of the expatriate quota.

It said it hoped the levy would create "employment opportunities for Nigerians while closing wage gaps between expatriates and local

workers".

Dele Kelvin Oye, national president of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA), welcomed the pause. He praised the government for considering the implications the levy could bring on Nigeria's business community.

"This is indicative of their commitment to creating an inviting atmosphere for both local and international investors," he said in a statement.

When the Expatriate Employment Levy (EEL) was imposed many organisations hit back against it.

The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (Neca) raised alarm over the policy, especially as Nigeria faces its worst economic crisis in a generation.

In a statement shared on X, Neca called the policy "worrisome". It expressed fears the levy could

"potentially increase the level of unemployment with dire socio-economic consequences".

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (Man) called the policy "punitive" and a "punishment" for investors.

"The policy will surely undermine the administration's determination to position Nigeria as an attractive global investment destination," it said on X.

There are more than 150,000 expatriates in Nigeria, according to local media citing data from the interior ministry.

They mostly work in the oil and gas, construction, telecommunication and hospitality sectors.

Nigeria is one of Africa's biggest oil producers. Its oil and gas exports account for 90% of foreign exchange earnings, according to the International Monetary Fund.

It currently costs companies in Nigeria \$2,000 a year to obtain a residency permit for each foreign

employee.

Mr Tinubu acknowledged that Nigerians were going through a difficult period.

Nigerians are facing increased food, transport and commodity prices. This is because of the fall of the naira - which has caused a spike in foreign exchange rates and driven up inflation.

He said efforts were being made to improve the country's finances and grow the economy.

Source: BBC



Bola Tinubu, President of Nigeria

Haiti: US airlifts embassy staff as gang violence escalates

The head of the International Organisation for Migration said Port-au-Prince is a city under siege. Pope Francis, meanwhile, called for peace and reconciliation with the help of the international community.

The United States has airlifted non-essential embassy personnel from Haiti, the US military said on Sunday.

It comes as violent gangs have overrun the country, threatening to bring down the government.

"This airlift of personnel into and out of the embassy is consistent with our standard practice for embassy security augmentation worldwide, and no Haitians were on board the military aircraft," the US military's Southern Command said in a statement.

The embassy clarified on social media that it "remains open."

"Heightened gang violence in the neighbourhood near US embassy compounds and near the airport led to the State Department's decision to arrange for the

departure of additional embassy personnel," it said.

Port-au-Prince 'under siege'

A wave of violence broke out in late February while Prime Minister Ariel Henry was visiting Kenya to push for a UN-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country to fight gangs.

Since then, the criminal gangs have taken control of much of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and have attacked key infrastructure including two prisons where the majority of the 3,800 inmates were able to escape.

The AFP news agency reported that some residents had broken into public buildings to seek refuge from the violence.

More than 360,000 Haitians have been internally displaced because of the violence, the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said Saturday.

Haiti: Gang violence triggers food and water shortages

"Haitians are unable to lead a decent life. They are living in fear,

and every day, every hour this situation carries on, the trauma gets worse," Philippe Branchat, IOM's chief in Haiti, said in a statement.

"People living in the capital are locked in, they have nowhere to go," he said. "The capital is surrounded by armed groups and danger. It is a city under siege."

Meanwhile, the airport in Port-au-Prince remained closed and the main seaport — which serves as the primary gateway for food imports — suspended operations on Thursday after it reported looting.

"If we cannot access those containers (full of food), Haiti will go hungry soon," the NGO Mercy Corps said.

Pope offers prayers for Haiti

On Sunday, Pope Francis offered his prayers for Haiti amid the spiralling unrest.

"I am following with concern and pain the serious crisis affecting Haiti and the violent episodes that have occurred in recent days,"

Francis said after his Sunday Angelus prayer.

Francis called for all sides to work towards peace and reconciliation "with the renewed support of the international community."

The Caribbean bloc CARICOM has summoned envoys from the US, France, Canada and the United Nations to discuss the violence at a meeting in Jamaica on Monday.

Guyana's President, Irfaan Ali, said the meeting would take up "critical issues for the stabilisation of security and the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance."

Source: DW.com



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