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General News

Manhyia Palace Museum to reopen today

The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, has conducted an inspection of the royal Ashanti treasures delivered to Manhyia Palace by the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

This significant event aligns with the reopening of the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi today, Wednesday, May 1, 2024, as part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II.

During the museum's reopening, refurbished facilities will be unveiled, showcasing historic Asante heirlooms to the public in a new homecoming exhibition.

Among the treasures to be displayed are items looted during the Sagrenti War, which have been returned on loan after undergoing restoration.

This unveiling ceremony marks a pivotal moment in the cultural heritage of the Asante Kingdom, following a landmark agreement with British institutions, resulting in the return of 32 royal treasures plundered from the Asante Kingdom 150 years ago.

These artefacts, comprising 15 items from the British Museum and 17 from the Victoria and Albert Museum, will be on loan at the Manhyia Palace Museum for three years.

In February 2024, the Fowler Museum

at the University of California, Los Angeles, repatriated seven artefacts, further commemorating initiatives under the leadership of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II.

These items, looted by British military forces during the 19th century Anglo-Ashanti Wars, are now returning to their homeland for the first time in 150 years.

The collection includes notable pieces such as the sword of state known as Mpomponsuo and the gold badges of officials authorised to purify the king's soul.

Also featured is a gold lute harp presented by Asantehene Osei Bonsu to British diplomat Thomas Edward Bowdich during an 1817 trade treaty.

Director of the Manhyia Palace Museum, Ivor Agyeman-Duah, highlighted the significance of these agreements in renewing connections between the Asante Kingdom, Britain and the United States.

"These partnerships go beyond the Asante Kingdom," he explained, referencing ongoing international movements to repatriate cultural artefacts to their rightful origins.

"50 years since Asantehene Otumfuo Opoku Ware II first requested the return of the items from the British Museum in 1974, Homecoming

renews our connections to Britain and the United States, in the spirit of progress and cooperation."

Agyeman-Duah continued: "Although the British Museum's laws forbid the permanent removal of objects, thanks to the mutually beneficial cooperation between Otumfuo Opoku Ware II and Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, and the British Museum and V&A, items removed 150 years ago are home from three museums. We now look forward to more dialogues and stronger relationships with all custodians of Asante treasures."

He emphasised the spirit of progress and cooperation underlying these partnerships, and expressed hopes for further dialogues and stronger relationships with all custodians of

Asante treasures.

"This partnership goes beyond the Asante Kingdom," he explained, referencing ongoing international movements to repatriate cultural artefacts to their rightful origins.

The museum, originally opened during the Silver Jubilee of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II in 1995, has been expanded to offer visitors an immersive experience.

Through photographic and regalia displays, lifelike mannequins, and captivating narratives, visitors can explore the rich legacy of the Asante kingdom, including its complex history with the British Empire.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene (Asante King) (R)

Residents call for improved lighting at Tafo Cemetery to deter grave robbers, ritualists

Residents have voiced concerns about the poor lighting and lax security at Tafo Cemetery, which they believe is encouraging criminals to target the site.

The local community is increasingly alarmed by the threat to the graves, with frequent reports of theft and ritualistic acts.

Mohammed Rabiou and his colleagues, who dig graves at Tafo Cemetery, have observed this worrying pattern.

Located on expansive grounds, Tafo cemetery is the largest in the region, with separate sections for Muslim and

Christian burials.

In addition to grave digging, Mohammed Rabiou and his team are responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery.

Mr. Rabiou told Citi News in an interview on Monday that "The individuals perpetrating illegal activities here are those who come to perform rituals at the cemetery. We have not caught anyone picking body parts from the graves. Some visit their fetish priest or other soothsayers and are instructed to bury items at the cemetery; we have caught several of them. Some

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Tafo Cemetery



General News

Residents call for improved lighting at Tafo Cemetery to deter grave robbers, ritualists

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bring in fowls and slaughter them on the graves, which is not helpful.”

“Even if they had prepared those things at home for their children, it would have been better. We cover up such things when we find them at the graves. Some kill and take body parts, while others are instructed to come and collect parts here because the evildoers are everywhere, and they carry out these crimes on our blind side.”

Rabiu emphasized the need for enhanced vigilance, especially at night, as grave looters and ritualists often target the cemetery under the cover of darkness.

He highlighted incidents of ritualistic

activities, including the defacement of graves and the removal of human remains for illicit purposes.

While Rabiu denies any involvement in such acts, he acknowledges the challenges faced in maintaining security at the cemetery.

“It is not possible to come to us and request a body part at this cemetery. Even if people come, the boys will inform the elders here, and we will hand over such individuals to the police. When they are taken to the police station, they will be questioned if this is an abattoir where meat is sold. We bury people here, and we do not entertain requests for body parts,” he said.

He stressed the importance of improved lighting to deter wrongdoers and protect the sanctity of the graves.

“The initiative to enhance the lighting situation at the cemetery will help address these concerns and ward off people with evil intentions. The public should come and help so that their relatives who are brought here for burial will also have a safe resting place. The wrongdoers are everywhere, and they search for body parts to use for money rituals. These individuals must understand that what they do to others will be done to them too, one day.

“When there is enhanced lighting, it will help to brighten up the places.

Our Muslim brothers in collaboration with the traditional authorities have constantly cleared the bushy area and that results in the reduction of some negative activities at the cemetery,” he stated.

Efforts are being made to address these concerns, with calls from residents and workers near the cemetery for enhanced security measures.

The public is urged to support initiatives aimed at safeguarding the resting place of their loved ones and deterring those with malicious intentions.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Sebastian Akaho-Tay

We have not cancelled surgeries due to ‘dumsor’ – Korle Bu debunks claims

The management of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital has refuted claims that critical surgeries were cancelled on Monday, April 29, due to the ongoing power outages affecting the facility.

Reports circulated in the media on Monday suggested that patients in need of critical medical procedures were sent back to their wards due to the power outages, commonly referred to as ‘dumsor’.

However, the hospital’s management released a statement stating that such reports were misleading.

They clarified that Monday’s incident was actually caused by a low current situation at the facility, which lasted approximately 45 minutes.

The statement clarified that “two cases at the Department of Surgery were returned to the ward at the end of the day on account of limited space in the recovery ward and not because of power outage. The rest of the other theatres spread across the hospital all carried out their surgeries as scheduled.”

The hospital also urged the public to be cautious in sharing unverified stories, as they can undermine public confidence and cause unnecessary fear and discomfort among patients.

“We wish to appeal to the media to exercise great circumspection in publishing stories that are not fully verified because they undermine public confidence and create unnecessary fear and discomfort among our patients,” the statement concluded.

Meanwhile, Health Minister-designate Bernard Okoe-Boye has advised health facilities to utilize alternative power sources, particularly generator sets, in response to the recent erratic power supply.

He emphasized that hospitals are integral parts of the country and are thus affected by any challenges the nation faces.

“Because someone did a video of one minute, and 40 seconds and said lights have gone out, everybody goes emotional. The truth is that, if the country experiences some issues with power availability, hospitals are not outside the country, they will also experience some.”

“Another truth is that most of our hospitals have standby power plants, but just like management of a house, you can go to a house, they have a generator but maybe the generator has an issue.”

Speaking at a press briefing during his visit to the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, he added “The one to put in petrol has an issue. Let’s stick to the essentials. Let’s ask a hospital, how is your generator? Is it working? If it’s not working, have you approached the ministry? If it’s working, who was in charge? Why didn’t you make it work? I don’t want to go into the details. We should not get sensational. Let’s stick to the essentials.

“If we want to discuss power supply in hospitals and standby generators, let’s discuss it. That is the way to make progress. You can do an audit, in Accra, there are 40 government hospitals, out of the 40, about thirty have power plants. Ten don’t have. Doctor, what are you doing about it? That is the way to make progress,” the minister-designate said.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

General News

NPP retains Ejisu seat as Kwabena Boateng emerges as winner in by-election

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) has retained the Ejisu seat and its Majority position in Parliament after its parliamentary candidate Kwabena Boateng was declared winner in the just-ended Ejisu-by election held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

He beat his closest contender, Former Ejusi MP, Kwabena Owusu Aduomi, who ran as an independent candidate, by securing 55.8 percent of the total votes cast.

Kwabena Owusu Aduomi garnered 43.3 percent of the total votes.

Beatrice Boakye of the Liberal Party had 0.3 per cent. Esther Osei of the Convention People's Party received 0.2 percent of the vote. Independent Candidates Joseph Agyemang and Atakora Joseph had 0.2 percent and 0.0 percent respectively.

The poll was not devoid of controversy, as reports of vote-buying, confiscation of identification cards, and other electoral malpractice surfaced during the just-ended elections.

The Electoral Commission (EC) has suspended two officials who were allegedly caught accepting a bribe during the Ejisu by-election.

The accusation involves Kingsley Nyarko, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Member of Parliament for Kwadaso, who was seen in a viral video handing what appeared to be an envelope to the EC officials.

"The Electoral Commission has taken immediate steps and has withdrawn the two (2) temporary staff while investigations take place.

"The commission upholds the principles and values of integrity, truth and transparency. These

values are reinforced during the training of all temporary staff.

"The commission will not countenance acts which cast a slur on the integrity of the institutions and will not hesitate to sanction its officials who violate its laws," the Commission stated.

Kingsley Nyarko has denied allegations of attempting to bribe electoral officers. He reaffirmed his readiness to fully cooperate with any investigations that may ensue.

Background

Six candidates were cleared by the Electoral Commission, EC, to contest in the Ejisu by-election in the Ashanti Region.

The Ejisu seat had been vacant since March 7, 2024, following the death of its Member of Parliament for the area, Dr. John A. Kumah, who is yet to be buried.

Nominations opened by the Electoral Commission were officially closed on Thursday, April 18, with six candidates, comprising two females and four males, successfully filing their nominations and being cleared to contest.

The candidates were; Esther Osei representing the Convention People's Party (CPP) who picked the number one spot, followed by the NPP's Lawyer Kwabena Boateng, Beatrice Boakye of the Liberal Party of Ghana (LPG), and a former NPP MP who contested as an independent candidate, Ing. Kwabena Owusu Aduomi.

The other two candidates were Gabriel Agyemang Joseph and Attakorah Joseph, both running as independents for the 5th and 6th positions, respectively.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Kwabena Boateng, Newly elected Ejisu MP



General News

GRA aids FBI et al to bust Ghanaian US Army Major smuggling guns into Ghana

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), in collaboration with international law enforcement agencies, has apprehended a United States Army Major, Kojo Owusu Dartey of Fort Liberty, for smuggling firearms into Ghana.

According to the United States Attorney's Office Eastern District of North Carolina, the Ghana Revenue Authority discovered the firearms and reported the seizure to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) attaché in Ghana and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Baltimore Field Division.

Dartey hid the firearms, which included handguns, an AR15, magazines, suppressors, and a combat shotgun, in blue barrels

beneath rice and household items. These barrels were shipped from the Port of Baltimore, Maryland, to the Port of Tema in Ghana.

Between June 28 and July 2, 2021, Dartey bought seven firearms near Fort Liberty and engaged a U.S. Army Staff Sergeant at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to acquire three more firearms and forward them to him in North Carolina.

Dartey has been found guilty of multiple offences, such as unlicensed firearms dealing and smuggling goods from the United States into Ghana. He is facing up to 240 months in prison, with sentencing scheduled for July 23, 2024.

Michael Easley, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, praised the joint efforts

of global law enforcement in uncovering international crime. He expressed gratitude to the GRA and the International Cooperation Unit Office of the Attorney-General of Ghana for their role in the investigation.

"We are partnering with law enforcement agencies across the globe to expose international criminals – from money launderers to rogue international arms traffickers capable of fueling violence abroad," said U.S. Attorney Michael Easley.

"Through a partnership with Ghanaian officials, this rogue Army Major was convicted at trial after smuggling guns to Ghana in blue barrels of rice and household goods. I want to thank the Ghana Revenue Authority and the International

Cooperation Unit Office of the Attorney-General of Ghana for their assistance in the investigation. I also commend the DEA and the FBI attachés to U.S. Embassy Accra and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs of the Department's Criminal Division for their significant assistance to this prosecution," he added.

The ATF, Army Criminal Investigation Division, and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Export Enforcement conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gabriel J. Diaz led the prosecution with support from David Ryan of the DOJ Counter-intelligence and Export Control Section.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



Kojo Owusu Dartey, United States Army Major

General News

GHS set to begin COVID-19 vaccination exercise from May 4

Ghana Health Service (GHS) has declared a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination initiative in response to escalating infections across healthcare facilities.

In the wake of the 21 news cases recorded so far, according to the Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr Patrick Kuma Aboagye, the former announced during a media engagement on April 29 the starting May 4-May 10, 2024, a vaccination campaign will begin.

The campaign aims to curb the surge in cases, particularly in the Greater Accra Region, where the highest numbers have been recorded.

During the media engagement Dr Patrick Kuma Aboagye mentioned that although the head of the UN World Health Organization (WHO) in May 2023 declared COVID-19 no longer a global health emergency, the virus remains.

Highlighting the virus's high transmissibility, the GHS emphasized

the criticality of adhering to safety protocols.

Director of Public Health at GHS, Dr. Franklin Asiedu-Bekoe, underscored the pivotal role of widespread vaccination in containing the spread.

He urged all Ghanaians to actively engage in the campaign, as shared during a media briefing.

"We are getting a few cases reported in parts of Accra and a few other regions. And it brings to bear the fact that Ghanaians need to be vaccinated and so on the 4th to the 10th of May, we are going to do a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination campaign and we want to urge all Ghanaians to be part of the exercise.

"We plan to do about four or five before the end of the year. The thinking is that we need to get the necessary population immunity that will help us minimize the risk of getting infections in the country," he stressed.

Ghana recorded its first cases of COVID-19 on March 12, 2020. The

two cases were confirmed by the country's health authorities, marking the official entry of the virus into the country. Following the confirmation of these cases, the government of Ghana swiftly implemented several

measures to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its impact on public health and the economy.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Vaccination exercise

Glovo leaves Ghana over profit challenges

Delivery service provider Glovo has made a startling announcement to cease its operations in Ghana.

The company's official customer app will no longer accept orders starting from May 10, as confirmed by a notice to a client that was later publicized.

The decision comes as Glovo acknowledges the need for a prolonged effort to secure a robust market position and profitability. Consequently, the company has decided to reallocate its resources to the other 23 countries where it currently operates.

Glovo has assured its clients that they are likely to be affected by the decision to make outstanding payments per the company's terms and conditions in due time.

In a strategic move that has taken many by surprise, Glovo has opted to focus on markets where it sees more immediate potential for growth and profit.

This decision follows an initial investment of €25 million (\$30 million) to introduce its food delivery service to six African countries, including Ghana, as reported by Business Insider Africa in October 2021.

Despite the ambitious launch of its Ghanaian operations in March 2021 and a commitment to invest 3.5 million euros, as stated by Co-Founder Sacha Michaud in October 2021, Glovo has found the path to profitability in Ghana to be more challenging than anticipated.

Social media reactions to Glovo's departure have been mixed,

with some users attributing the closure to high taxation and rising petroleum prices, while others speculate on market share challenges or political motives.

This development is a significant

shift in the African delivery service landscape, leaving stakeholders and market watchers to ponder the implications for the future of the industry in the region.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Glovo rider



General News

‘What if you apologized to them’ – Sefa Kayi to Ashanti Regional Minister on ‘feud’ with ECG officials

Host of the Kokrokoo morning show, Kwame Sefa Kayi, has suggested that Ashanti Regional Minister Simon Osei-Mensah should seek a peaceful end to his dispute with officials from the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) in the region.

The Peace FM presenter recommends that instead of a confrontational stance, the minister could offer a sincere apology to the power company’s staff to amicably settle the disagreement.

“But Minister, what would happen if you apologised to them? Not everything should be confrontational. My friend, Mr. Osei-Mensah, this quarrel with ECG is unproductive.

Minister, you should call them, recognise them as your people... Then, perhaps share a meal, and

that should close the chapter,” he said during his show on Monday, April 29, 2024.

ECG employees have called on the Ashanti Regional Minister to apologise for his involvement in the arrest of their Ashanti East Manager, Mark Wiafe Asomani.

Yet, Mr. Osei-Mensah has dismissed these calls, asserting that his actions were appropriate.

“Do I need to apologise for performing my security role? I must clarify that I had the police summon Ing. Mark Asomani Wiafe for security reasons, due to the situation in the electricity sector in the region and the risk of an external task force cutting off power without proper notice.

It’s ironic that they claim not to be under my jurisdiction, hence

I cannot direct their actions, yet they wish to instruct me on how to fulfil my security obligations as stipulated in the Securities and Intelligence Act of 2020, Act 10(30),” the minister explained to journalists during a press briefing last week.

The Ashanti Regional Minister sanctioned the arrest of Mr. Wiafe following ECG’s decision to disconnect power to Kumasi Technical University over outstanding debts.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Kwame Sefa Kayi, Host of the Kokrokoo morning show

Private schools to boycott BECE, WASSCE over high charges by WAEC

The Ghana National Association of Private Schools (GNAPS) has issued a stern warning, indicating a potential boycott of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) should the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) proceed to increase registration fees without prior consultation.

Currently, students attending private schools pay GH¢465.00 and GH¢214.00 for WASSCE and BECE, respectively.

GNAPS is strongly advocating for the government to acknowledge low-fee private schools as essential contributors to educating children in underprivileged communities and to extend support accordingly.

This declaration was made during the unveiling of a Pre-Tertiary Private Schools Manifesto, wherein GNAPS emphasized critical challenges they expect the next government to

address within Ghana’s private school education sector.

The National President of GNAPS, Professor Damasus Tuurosong, passionately advocated for the extension of the Free Senior High School policy to encompass private schools.

He urged the government to “scrap the 30% priority placement system. Just as it does for the public school candidates, the government must absorb the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) registration fees paid by private school candidates.”

“Extend the Free SHS programme to private school students. Review the Education Regulatory Bodies Act 2020 (Act 1023) to do away with exorbitant regulatory charges by the National Schools Inspectorate Authority, National Teaching Council and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

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File photo



General News

Private schools to boycott BECE, WASSCE over high charges by WAEC

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"Abolish nuisance taxes that are affecting businesses and review property rates and business operations permit charged by the assemblies, and above all fix the country's economy to create a conducive business environment for the operation of private schools".

GNAPS also issued a firm ultimatum,

indicating potential action if their concerns are disregarded.

"We entreat WAEC to always negotiate with GNAPS prior to any fee increase. Let me serve notice that GNAPS will lead all pre-tertiary private schools to boycott next year's BECE should WAEC arbitrarily increase the fees.

"This year we got the notice late, it

could have happened. But we are serving the notice early that from next year if there is no negotiation, private schools will not be part of next year's BECE, and this is not a mere threat. We are lacing our boots towards that," he stated.

Meanwhile, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) says it

does not intend to review new charges to clients.

According to the Director of Public Affairs at WAEC, John Kapi, the Council considers various factors, such as rising costs of printing materials, in determining examination fees.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku

Africa will be shut out of development finance if nothing is done about its debts - Seth Terkper

Former Minister of Finance, Seth Terkper, has called on African governments to ensure the sustainability of their debts in order to attract development finance assistance.

Development finance refers to financial resources to support economic development and growth in countries, particularly in low- and middle-income regions.

Mr. Terkper, who is also the Executive Director of Public Financial Management (PFM) Tax Africa Network, a consulting firm, made the comment when he held a virtual engagement with journalists following the conclusion of the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Group (WBG) annual meetings in Washington, US.

During the session, he noted that many African countries have transitioned to lower and middle-income status, reducing their access to grants and concessional financing for sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

He emphasized the importance of development finance going forward and urged African governments to diligently address their debt burdens to attract such support.

"Africa must do something about its debt, otherwise, we might be shut out of development finance," Mr Terkper said. Per reports, he led Ghana's 16th International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan-support programme,

The IMF's April 2024 Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa noted a gradual improvement in the region after four turbulent years.

The region's growth is projected to increase from 3.4 per cent in 2023 to 3.8 per cent in 2024. However, the report highlighted that "not all is favourable," as the funding squeeze persisted.

Governments in the region are still facing challenges such as financing shortages, high borrowing costs, and impending debt repayments, which need to be addressed.

"Amid these challenges, sub-Saharan African countries will need additional support from the international community to develop a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous future," the report noted.

Mr. Abebe Aemro Selassie, from the African Department of the IMF, emphasized the importance of African governments continuing to improve public finances, with a focus on domestic revenue mobilization. He made these remarks during the release of the April IMF Regional Economic

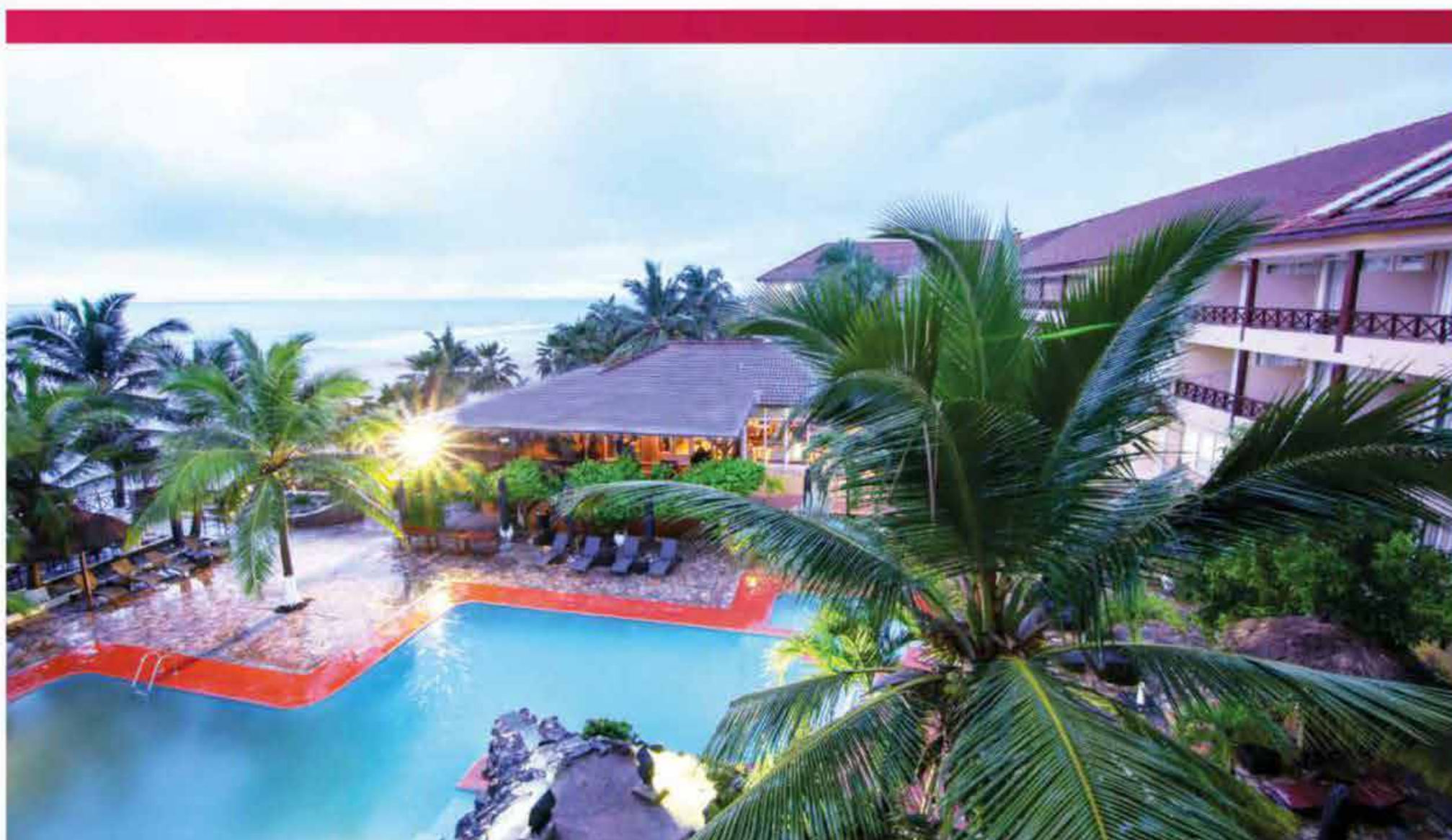
Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa last week.

He also encouraged a sustained effort to reduce inflation and suggested implementing reforms to enhance skill development, stimulate innovation, improve the business environment, and promote trade integration. These measures aim to secure more affordable and stable financing for the region.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



Seth Terkper, Former Minister of Finance



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Business

We're working to reduce operational costs of LPG marketers – NPA

The National Petroleum Authority (NPA) is standing firm in its commitment to reduce operational costs for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) traders.

This comes after concerns raised by the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Marketers Association regarding an \$80 per metric ton (MT) fee imposed on suppliers' premiums.

The fee is specifically aimed at boosting investment margins for bottling plants and cylinder infrastructure.

Abass Ibrahim Tasunti, NPA's Head of Economic Regulation, stressed the authority's proactive approach in addressing industry challenges for long-term sustainability.

Tasunti pointed out innovative measures such as consolidating quantities among Bulk Distribution Companies (BDCs) to lower import

costs.

"Taxes are what usually generate revenue for governments. So if governments can generate taxes from elsewhere, then they can consider reducing some of the taxes on a particular product or service. And that is the appeal we are making. The other thing NPA has done, whilst waiting for the government to respond to the call for a reduction of taxes, is to find a way to introduce innovative ways to reduce the cost of LPG. So we started discussing with the BDCs that, if you look at the way we used to import LPG, you could have a BDC paying a premium to the international oil trader, up to about \$100 per metric tonne. So we thought that if we consolidate the quantities of the BDCs, bring it together, and we do open competitive tenders, we could bring down the cost.

"So we had these discussions, we planned it, and we started in

January this year. The first tender that we did in January to deliver quantity starting from March, we got the premium at \$30 per metric ton. This is a huge drop. And we see that this is an advantage for us. So with this huge drop in the premium, the cost of importing LPG, this introduction of the \$80 per metric ton helps to make it easy to accommodate the price," Abass Ibrahim Tasunti stated.

This strategic move has resulted in a significant reduction from \$100 to \$30 per metric ton through competitive tenders, making the \$80 fee pivotal in facilitating price adjustments.

The NPA's actions demonstrate a strategic response to industry demands, ensuring a conducive environment for LPG traders amidst evolving market conditions.

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Marketers Association voiced its concerns regarding

the government's approach to boosting LPG consumption, cautioning that the continual introduction of taxes could impede this objective.

Their statement comes in response to the National Petroleum Authority's (NPA) recent imposition of a new tax on LPG as part of the revised pricing structure, effective April 1, 2024.

The Association strongly criticized this move, particularly condemning the addition of \$80 per metric ton (MT) as part of the suppliers' premiums, specifically designated for Bottling Plant and Cylinder Investment Margins.

They argued that this imposition was unjustifiable and indicated the Authority's disregard for the decline in consumption since 2021.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Abass Ibrahim Tasunti, NPA's Head of Economic Regulation

Business

ORC increases penalty charge for defaulting companies to GH¢1,000

Effective May 1, 2024, the Office of the Registrar of Companies (ORC) has announced an increase in penalties for companies in default.

The penalty fee has been raised from GH¢650 to GH¢1,000, aimed at discouraging non-filing or late filing of annual returns.

This directive applies to both private and public companies limited by shares, as well as private and public companies limited by guarantee, including schools, churches, associations, NGOs, CSOs, foundations, etc.

“In accordance with Section 126 of the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992), which mandates that

every company file their Annual Returns at least once a year or within thirteen (13) months after incorporation,” a statement from the ORC read.

The Office emphasizes the mandatory requirement for every incorporated company in Ghana to submit an annual return, regardless of its operational status. According to section 126(1) of the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992), the annual return must be certified by a director and secretary of the company and submitted to the Office of the Registrar of Companies, along with the audited financial statements for the year.

“Consequently, effective from May 1, 2024, the ORC will impose an

updated penalty of GH¢1,000.00, up from GH¢650.00, on companies in default for each month the default persists, in line with section 126(7),” the ORC declares. “Should a company fail to comply with this section, the company and every officer of the company in default will be liable to pay the Registrar an administrative penalty of twenty-five (25) penalty units (approximately GH¢300.00) for each day the default continues,” it added.

Nonetheless, the ORC clarifies that the hike in penalty fees is not intended to impose financial strain on companies. Instead, it aims to discourage persistent non-compliance with the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992).

“Companies with a financial year running from January 1 to December 31 are required to file their Annual Returns in the first quarter of the subsequent year,” it stated.

“Additionally, companies with a financial year beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31 must file their Annual Returns in the last quarter of the preceding year. Annual returns may also be filed for a period determined by the directors of the company,” the Office concludes.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Amanda Cartey



Jemima Oware, The Registrar of Companies (ORC)

International

Kenya searches for more than 90 missing after floods

Rescuers were searching on Tuesday for at least 91 people missing in heavy flooding across Kenya, the interior ministry said.

At least 46 people were killed on Monday morning in a mudslide and flash floods in Mai Mahiu town in central Kenya, the ministry said in a situation report, an increase of one on the previous death toll.

Survivors in Mai Mahiu described an onslaught of water that carried away houses, cars and railway tracks.

"When I opened the door, the water gushed in and made its way through the kitchen," said resident Anne Gachie.

"My husband managed to quickly manoeuvre and get out. My daughters

who were in the next room were swept out of the house by the force of the water."

Fifty-three more people in Mai Mahiu were reported missing, the interior ministry said, while the Kenya Red Cross said its tracing desk had reports of 76 missing.

In all, at least 169 people have died across Kenya from heavy rains and flooding since last month. More than 185,000 have been forced from their homes, according to government data.

Dozens more have been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced by intense downpours in Tanzania and Burundi, with scientists saying climate change is causing more intense and frequent extreme weather events.

The eastern county of Garissa, where

four people were killed when their boat capsized over the weekend and 23 others were rescued from the floodwaters, has reported 16 people missing, the interior ministry said.

At least 120 people were killed in

Kenya late last year by flooding caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon. Those rains followed the worst drought large parts of East Africa had experienced in decades.

Source: Reuters



A boy looks at a helicopter hovering near the search and rescue location after heavy flash floods wiped out several homes when a dam burst

Trump held in contempt of court in New York trial for gag order violations

The judge in Donald Trump's New York hush money trial has held the former United States president in contempt of court for repeatedly violating a gag order.

The order prohibited Trump from speaking publicly and posting on social media about individuals involved in the trial.

Judge Juan Merchan on Tuesday said Trump had violated the order nine times. He fined Trump \$1,000 per violation: With nine of his statements identified as breaching the order, the fine came to a total of \$9,000.

Prosecutors had detailed 14 possible violations to the court, and Merchan could make more determinations at a hearing on Thursday.

The judge also ordered Trump to remove seven "offending posts" from his Truth Social account and two from a campaign website by Tuesday afternoon.

He added that Trump was "hereby warned that the court will not tolerate continued willful violations of its lawful orders and that if necessary and appropriate under the circumstances,

it will impose an incarceratory punishment".

The decision came as Trump's criminal trial entered its third week, with witness testimony continuing on Tuesday.

The former president faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to alleged hush money paid to adult film star Stormy Daniels, who claims she and Trump had a sexual encounter.

Many of the gag order violations relate to Daniels, as well as Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen. Both are expected to testify at the trial.

Trump is not only barred from attacking witnesses but also jurors, court staff and their relatives.

The decision came at the start of the second week of witness testimony, after the days-long testimony of former tabloid publisher David Pecker last week.

Pecker said he entered into an agreement with Trump to be the "eyes and ears" of his 2016 presidential campaign. He also testified that he

coordinated with Cohen to stifle negative stories about Trump ahead of the election.

The charges against Trump relate to \$130,000 he allegedly reimbursed to Cohen, after the lawyer paid Daniels for her silence.

Trump has denied any sexual liaison with Daniels. His lawyers have argued he was acting within the law.

To make felony charges stand, prosecutors must convince the jury that Trump falsified records in service of another crime. They have argued that crime included illegal efforts to

influence the 2016 election, which he ultimately won over Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

Trump is currently the presumptive nominee for the Republican Party in the 2024 presidential election. The New York trial is the result of one of four criminal indictments Trump currently faces. The other three have yet to proceed to trial.

No matter the outcome, the proceedings are historic: Trump is the first current or former US president to face criminal prosecution.

Source: Al Jazeera and News



Former U.S. president Donald Trump awaits the start of proceedings at Manhattan criminal court

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