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General News

Ghanaian woman, 43, stabbed to death in UK

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

A UK-based Ghanaian woman, Alberta Obinim, has been reported dead following a stabbing incident in Manchester. The 43-year-old woman died around 11:20 p.m. on Sunday at Barnard Road, Gorton.

According to Sky News, the deceased's 64-year-old husband and their 17-year-old daughter also sustained severe stab wounds.

Greater Manchester Police have detained a 22-year-old man on suspicion of murder. Authorities have indicated that preliminary investigations suggest the suspect had close ties with the deceased and her family.

Witnesses present at the scene

are assisting the police with additional information regarding the incident.

Neighbours who spoke to Sky News expressed shock over Ms. Obinim's death and the void it has left in their lives.

Community leader Ibrahim Abu described Ms. Obinim as a "lovely woman" who "always made sure people were smiling." He said the news of her death had come as a "big blow" to the community.

"Yesterday she was at church, dancing and praising. She was at church... and now we wake up to hear she has died," Mr. Abu said.



Alberta Obinim, Deceased

GHC200m compensation to be paid to Jomoro landowners affected by the new Petroleum Hub project

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has instructed the Finance Ministry to disburse some GHC200 million as compensation to residents of communities affected by the Jomoro Petroleum Hub Development project at Nawule in the Western Region.

Speaking at the sod cutting event on August 19, 2024 at Nawuli, located in the Jomoro Municipality of the Western Region, President Akufo-Addo expressed optimism that the Jomoro Petroleum Hub project will significantly address challenges in the energy sector.

The Jomoro Petroleum Hub aims to establish a premier integrated petroleum complex in Africa, enhancing both the upstream and downstream oil and gas value chains across Africa.

Covering 20,000 acres, the hub will host refineries, petrochemical plants, storage tanks, and additional infrastructure, aiming to transform the continent's petrochemical industry.

It is anticipated to generate \$1.56 billion in export taxes by 2030,

boost GDP by 70%, and create over 780,000 jobs.

However, some landowners, particularly the Coalition of Concerned Nzema People, have expressed dissatisfaction with what they perceive as inadequate compensation for their lands.

In response, during the ceremony marking the start of Phase One of the project, President Akufo-Addo directed the Ministry of Finance to release GHC200 million as an initial payment to compensate the affected communities.

"The chiefs and people of Jomoro have generously offered their lands for the development and enhancement of these vital projects. In recognition of their contribution and with deep appreciation, I have instructed the Ministry of Finance to release an initial two hundred million Ghana cedis to commence the payment of compensation for the affected lands, as a first step towards discharging our liabilities to the affected communities," the President said.

Minister of State for Energy,

Herbert Krpa, expressed strong optimism about the impact of the new petroleum hub on Ghana's energy sector.

"The establishment of this petroleum hub marks a significant leap forward for Ghana's energy sector. I extend my sincerest appreciation to you, Mr. President,

for your foresight and to all contributors for their efforts in achieving this outstanding milestone. Through collective collaboration, I am confident that our shared vision of Ghana emerging as a premier energy producer will soon become a reality," he said.



Aesthetic Impression of Jomoro Petroleum Hub project

General News

Akufo-Addo breaks silence on the sale of SSNIT hotels

By Amanda Cartey

President Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo-Addo has for the first time commented on the raging debate on the sale of four hotels in which the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) holds majority shares.

Addressing the issue at the 12th Quadrennial National Delegates Congress of the Trades Union Congress on August 20, Akufo-Addo countered claims that SSNIT is mismanaged, highlighting that the pension scheme continues to achieve notable financial success.

He added that the impressive financial performance of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) in its 2023 report should settle concerns about the Trust's decision to divest from certain underperforming assets.

"Active contributors to the SSNIT scheme have increased from 1.35 million in 2016 to 2 million

as of April 2024. The National Pensions Regulatory Authority has expanded its zonal offices from 2 in 2016 to 6 thereby enhancing visibility and bringing its services closer to the people."

"Coverage of pensions in the informal sector also increased from ninety-one thousand two hundred and fifty-three in 2016 to eight hundred and seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-four currently."

"Total assets under management have grown from 15.7 billion cedis in December 2016 to 71.6 billion cedis in March 2024," the President stressed.

The President's reaction is a direct response to a protest led by Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, and Organised Labour in June. The demonstrators had called for the immediate dissolution of the SSNIT Board and the resignation of senior management over the sale of 60% of SSNIT's holdings in

the four hotels.

President Akufo-Addo has also labeled the controversies regarding the sale of the hotels to Rock City Hotels, owned by his Minister of Agriculture, Bryan Acheampong, as unwarranted.

"I take note in particular of the improved performance of SSNIT which recently announced a surplus of 230 million cedis on its operation. This should be reassuring to Organised Labour and perhaps bring into sharp relief the unnecessary controversy that

was recently generated by SSNIT's efforts to offload none performing assets in its hotel portfolio.

"It is my understanding that the transaction that was aborted represented the only occasion in recent history of SSNIT that external investors sort to invest in SSNIT's holdings.

"All of us need to be measured when it comes to making decisions and pronouncements that will affect the long-term interest of pensioners," Akufo-Addo added.



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Oppong-Nkrumah assures of Bawumia's readiness to sign anti-gay bill

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

New Patriotic Party (NPP) flagbearer, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, will not hesitate to sign the anti-LGBTQ bill into law, provided there are no legal obstacles, according to Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Vice Chair of the Party's Manifesto Committee.

His comments come in response to the remarks made by the Ho West MP Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah who challenged Dr Bawumia to compel President Akufo-Addo to sign the bill into law now, arguing that Bawumia, as Vice President, should influence the president to act.

"If he is man enough to rule this country, he should be able to tell his boss, 'Look, my boss, this is our cultural value, please sign this bill,'" the MP said during an interview.

However, the Housing Minister has

reiterated the Vice president's commitment to ensure that the anti-gay bill is passed into law if it is legally sound and does not violate any human right.

"If a bill properly constructed has gone through the processes and is legally laid before him unless there's something fatally wrong with the bill, he will pass it into law," Mr Oppong Nkrumah stated.

In May this year, Dr. Bawumia reaffirmed his stance, making it clear that LGBTQ activities would not be tolerated in Ghana if he is elected president, hence Oppong Nkrumah is certain Dr Bawumia, will not

hesitate to sign the anti-LGBTQ bill into law, provided there are no legal obstacles, according to Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Vice Chair of the Party's Manifesto Committee.

The Housing Minister also noted that the bill is currently under legal review to ensure it adhered to the correct legislative procedures before its passage.

"It's being litigated, and I'm not going to make a pronouncement on the legality of that bill, but he has said clearly that he will protect

Ghanaian family and cultural values.

He does not support all these LGBT things that some people are trying to promote. He's totally against it," he stated.

Source: *The Independent Ghana* / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo



Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Minister for Works & Housing

General News

Electoral officers for 2024 election to earn between GHC130 - GHC7000 per day

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

The Electoral Commission (EC) has announced new daily rates for temporary staff involved in voter registration and upcoming elections.

According to a memo dated August 14, 2024, from the Deputy Chairman of Corporate Services, pay rates will range from GH¢130 to GH¢2,000.

Under this structure, Supervisors will earn GH¢2,000 per day, Deputy Supervisors GH¢1,800, and Exhibition Officers GH¢130.

Additionally, election-related roles will receive the following allowances: Returning Officers will be paid GH¢7,000, Deputy Returning Officers GH¢6,000, Technicians GH¢2,500, Presiding Officers GH¢800, Name Reference

Officers GH¢600, Verification Officers GH¢600, and Ballot Issuers GH¢600.

This year, the EC revised its compensation approach.

Unlike previous years, where Returning Officers and Deputies received a fixed amount for all activities, the 2024 compensation will be itemised for specific tasks including registration, transfers, proxy voting, compiling the special voters register, and recruiting officials.

Background

The EC during the district-level elections in December 2023, confirmed that payments were made to 116,211 temporary staff members.

In a statement, he detailed that a sum of GH¢69,164,842.11 were disbursed to their temporary staff.

The Director of Public Affairs for EC, Michael Boadu acknowledged that only 46 temporary staff members remained unpaid, with the total

amount being GH¢24,263.16.

Meanwhile, the EC Deputy Chairman in Charge of Corporate Services, Dr. Bossman Asare, cited wrong bank account details submitted by some staff members as the cause of prolonged delay in remuneration.



Electoral Commission Officers

FDA goes after 148 companies for promoting unapproved products

By Amanda Cartey

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has sanctioned at least 148 manufacturing companies nationwide for promoting unapproved products from January to the present.

Head of FDA's Investigations, Matthew Nkum, revealed that these companies face administrative fines of GH¢25,000 each, with amounts potentially increasing based on the frequency of the violation.

In an interview with the media on Friday, Nkum noted that some companies, including those producing cosmetics, herbal drugs, and media houses, have begun paying their fines. The FDA's legal team is actively pursuing legal action against non-compliant companies.

Additionally, another 48 entities, including three individuals, have been warned for similar infractions.

Nkum emphasized that

unapproved advertisements threaten public health and clarified that registering a product with the FDA does not automatically permit its advertisement.

"After a product is registered, an application or script must be submitted to the FDA for review by a committee, which typically takes a few days before approval for advertisement," Mr Nkum explained.

He said "the process for advertisement is straight forward, with a fee of GH¢600."

To tackle the issue, Mr. Nkum stated that the FDA has ramped up its public awareness campaigns regarding the necessity of having products approved before they are advertised.

He urged media outlets to secure approval letters from the FDA prior to advertising any products.

Mr. Nkum reassured the public of the FDA's ongoing commitment to ensuring safety and emphasized the need for public cooperation,

advising that "consumers should always use prescribed medications and verify that products are approved before use."

Regarding a separate matter, Amenia initially agreed to refund the money after Ms. Bukaria expressed her disinterest in the equipment. However, Amenia later informed the complainant of available tractors for auction, which Ms. Bukaria was interested in.

The court was informed that Amenia refunded GH¢23,000.00

into the MOFA/MOF ESCROW account at Ghana Commercial Bank.

Subsequently, Amenia requested foodstuffs from Ms. Bukaria to cover the remaining balance of GH¢56,000.00. Ms. Bukaria provided foodstuffs worth GH¢32,300.00 and an additional GH¢23,510.00, and also transferred GH¢1,500.00 in cash for the tractors. Despite these payments, Amenia did not fulfil his promise.



FDA Building

General News

Drought in Northern Ghana at alarming level; Farmers in distress

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

The ongoing drought in Northern Ghana has reached alarming levels, with farmers in the region facing severe hardships due to over two months of no rainfall. The drought has drastically affected crop production, threatening food security and livelihoods across the five northern regions.

Farmers have expressed their frustrations and concerns as their crops continue to wither, with little hope of recovery.

The Ghana Irrigation Development Authority (GIDA) has responded to the crisis by advocating for the expansion of irrigation schemes as a necessary intervention. Acting CEO of GIDA, Ing. Richard Oppong-Boateng, emphasised the importance of innovative irrigation solutions during an interview on Citi FM's Citi Breakfast Show.

He noted that the cost of developing an irrigation scheme

is approximately \$40,000 per hectare, underscoring the significant investment required to protect agriculture from such devastating droughts.

According to the Head of Public Relations at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Tanko Bagbara, his outfit, although working closely with the Ghana Meteorological Agency, did not foresee the drought escalating to its current level.

"The Ministry [of Food and Agriculture] over the period has worked closely with the meteorological station, and we do heed their advice, but we did not foresee this, and I do not want to blame anybody because all I know is that rain-fed agriculture is something you cannot predict naturally to the latter," Mr. Bagbara stated during an interview on Citi FM.

MoFA is currently collecting

data on the affected farmers in preparation for government intervention. The ministry's data will inform the government's upcoming decisions on how to mitigate the situation.

"We all heard the President give a hint that the government will soon announce some interventions to mitigate the drought situation. Certainly, it is going to affect food

security because a lot of farms have been lost completely, and even if it rains today, there is no way we can recover those farms," Mr. Bagbara added.

This combined effort by GIDA and MoFA highlights the urgency of addressing the drought, with both organisations focusing on long-term solutions such as irrigation development and immediate relief for the affected farmers.



File Photo

Korle Bu vows to resolve renal supplies crisis amid patient protests

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Management of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH) has pledged to expedite the release of renal supplies currently stuck at the Tema Port.

This is according to the largest referral centre's public relations officer, Mustapha Salifu.

The renal unit of Korle bu has been plagued with a number of crises including the shortage of medical supplies.

For more than 3 weeks, the unit has been forced to halt its operations due to a shortage of essential supplies needed for patient treatment.

In response to the supply scarcity, renal patients have threatened to picket at the hospital on Wednesday, August 21.

However, Korle Bu's public relations officer, Mustapha Salifu, has urged the patients to allow the hospital more time to resolve the

issue amicably.

He emphasised that both the hospital and the Ministry of Health (MoH) are working tirelessly to ensure the timely delivery of essential supplies and address the current shortages.

"We have apologised on several occasions for this challenge and we continue to entreat them that they should exercise restraint and that we have gotten a commitment from the Ministry [of Health] that we will have this thing cleared."

"They have already endured for over two weeks now. They should let us work cooperatively as we usually do so that we can clear the container at the port and then resume normal operations," he added.

But reacting to the hospital's assurance, the spokesperson for the renal patients, Baffuor Kojo Ahenkorah, has urged the authorities to honour their

commitment and to speed up the delivery of the supplies.

"We will take it in good faith, but we just hope that they will clear the containers as they have said, so we will try and keep our fingers crossed and hope that something really comes out.

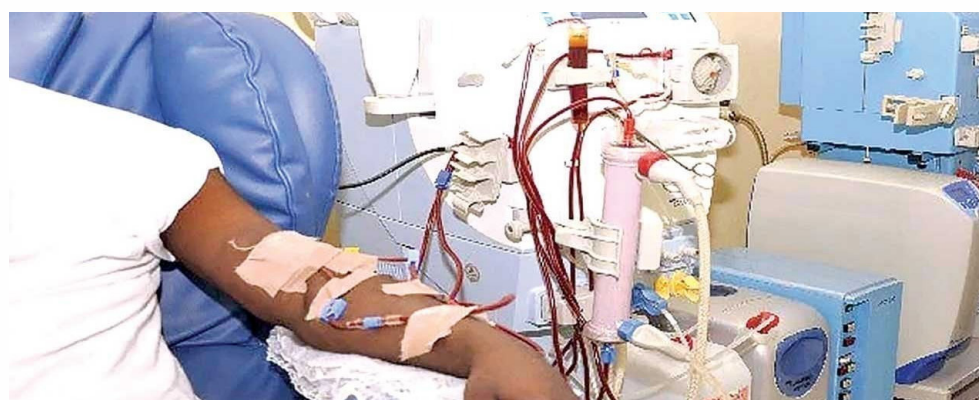
"But at least by Wednesday, they should let us know exactly what is going on," he said.

The Renal Patients Association in May 2023 reported that 14

outpatients from the renal unit at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital lost their lives following the closure of the unit.

During a press conference in Accra, the Association's spokesperson, Michael Asante, explained that these deaths resulted from the patients' inability to afford the more expensive dialysis treatment at private centres.

He added that this option became necessary after the hospital's unit was shut down.



File Photo

General News

IMF 'pushes' for 15% VAT on electricity

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has indicated that the government may consider reinstating the controversial 15 percent value-added tax (VAT) on electricity if inflation rates continue to decline.

The IMF's July 2024 Country Staff Report suggests that reintroducing the VAT is a potential course of action as inflationary pressures decrease.

With recent data from the Ghana Statistical Service showing a drop in annual inflation to 20.9 percent in July, down from 22.8 percent in June, the government may reconsider the VAT policy.

"On the revenue side, implementation of VAT on residential electricity (expected yield 0.17 percent of GDP) was suspended due to strong social resistance. The authorities are committed to implementing this measure when the inflation

dynamics are more conducive," the IMF said on page 10 of the report.

Originally, the government had postponed the VAT on electricity due to significant public opposition, particularly from residential users concerned about the added financial burden.

This tax was initially part of broader revenue measures implemented as part of the IMF-supported recovery plan following the COVID-19 pandemic.

A directive from the Ministry of Finance, dated January 1, 2024, and signed by former minister Ken Ofori-Atta, instructed the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) and Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDCo) to impose the VAT on residential consumers who surpassed a specified consumption threshold.

"On behalf of the Government, the Ministry of Finance would like to inform ECG and NEDCO to suspend the implementation of the VAT directive pending further engagement with key stakeholders, including Organised Labour.

"The Ministry expects that these engagements will birth innovative, robust, and inclusive approaches

to bridging the existing fiscal gap, while bolstering economic resilience."

However, on February 7, 2024, the government halted the VAT implementation following a threat of nationwide protests from Organised Labour, who had planned demonstrations for February 13, 2024, if the tax was not retracted.



File Photo

We received \$105k - GBC refutes Sports Minister's \$3m payment claim for All African Games coverage

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) has denied claims by the Sports Minister Mustapha Ussif that an amount of \$3 million was paid to the former as full payment for providing Television coverage for the 13th All African Games hosted here in Ghana.

The Director-General of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), Prof. Amin Alhassan who appeared shocked rejected the claims labelling it as entirely false.

Professor Amin Alhassan in a recent interview, revealed that the corporation only received \$105,000 for its coverage of the games, which took place in Ghana from March 8-23, 2024 and not an "excess of \$3 million" as alleged by the minister.

"I think yesterday I was one of those who was shocked to learn that the minister of youth and sports said that they had paid GBC

in excess of \$3 million and I want to assure every Ghanaian and the public that GBC's total benefit from the African Games was \$105,000 us dollars equivalent.

Nothing more was paid as a benefit to GBC. And that payment was as support for the fact that we dedicated an entire channel 24 hours.

And for our role as the official broadcaster. that is what the GBC was paid and not in excess of \$3 million," he responded.

Prof Alhassan further explained that the amount was used to offset the corporation's opportunity cost.

"When you suspend a channel's normal programming, there is an opportunity cost, so it's used to offset the cost of the channel not doing regular programming. So there is a loss of business.

So it's important to point out that

when you take an entire channel 24 hours for two weeks, it comes at a cost, and that was what the money was for.

So it was for our revenue. \$105,000 and not in excess of 3 million dollars."



Professor Amin Alhassan, Director General, GBC



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Business

If the cedi remains stable, we will reduce fuel price - OMCs

By Amanda Cartey

Some Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have indicated that they will lower fuel prices at the pumps if the cedi remains stable.

This follows a projection by the Institute for Energy Security that petroleum product prices will remain stable in the second pricing window of August, due to the slowed depreciation of the local currency and activities in the international market.

In an interview with the media at Petrosol Platinum Energy Limited's 10th Anniversary, Chief Executive Officer Michael Bozumbil dismissed allegations that OMCs are shortchanging consumers.

"Anytime we assess the numbers and we see we can give discounts

to consumers, we readily do that. When the cedi is stable we are always ready to reduce the price and Petrosol is always doing that", he said.

Addressing the ongoing dispute between the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers Association and the National Petroleum Authority regarding the implementation of the Cylinder Recirculation Model, Mr. Bozumbil stated that the market would remain unaffected.

He mentioned that the NPA has assured collaboration with all stakeholders in the sector on the Cylinder Recirculation Model.

"I don't think this will be blown out of proportion. The NPA has assured to resolve all issues confronting the sector. We know it's not easy just as when we

started, we had limited financial resources but with a strong network and reputation within the industry, we can leverage to grow. We aim to build a brand that exemplifies excellence in the

oil and gas industry, despite the daunting challenges ahead", he said.

Meanwhile Crude oil prices continue to decline in the international market.



File Photo

Govt misses T-bills target 6th time in a row amid tight liquidity

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Government has again failed to meet its treasury bills target, marking the sixth consecutive time with an under subscription of approximately 6.91% in the latest auction.

Recent data from the Bank of Ghana shows ongoing low investor interest in treasury bills.

The recent auction saw bids amounting to GH¢4.6 billion, falling short of the GH¢4.9 billion target.

Among the bids, GH¢3.6 billion was allocated to the 91-day bills, accounting for 78.26% of the total, and all these were accepted.

Bids for the 182-day bills totaled GH¢733.59 million, and for the 364-day bills, GH¢284.92 million, both of which were also fully accepted.

Interest rates in the money market remain stable, ranging between 24% and 27%.

Market analysts attribute the shortfall to the high targets set by the government and tight liquidity

conditions, exacerbated by recent adjustments to the cash reserve ratio.

The government has informed the

International Monetary Fund that its primary objective is to issue sufficient treasury bills to address the budget deficit.

The immediate focus will be on obtaining adequate domestic financing, with plans for structural market improvements in the medium term.



Ghana cedi notes

International

Suspected Serial Killer Escapes Nairobi Police Custody

By Aljazeera

A manhunt is under way in Kenya after the escape from a Nairobi police cell of a man police claim had confessed to murdering 42 women after dismembered bodies were found in a quarry.

Collins Jumaisi Khalusha, 33, described by police as a “vampire, a psychopath” after his arrest on July 15, broke out on Tuesday morning along with 12 undocumented Eritrean migrants, Kenya police spokeswoman Resila Onyango said.

Their escape was discovered when officers made a routine visit to the police station cells at about 5am (02:00 GMT) to serve the prisoners breakfast, the police said in a separate statement.

“On opening the cell door, they found that 13 prisoners had escaped by cutting the wire mesh in the basking bay,” it said,

referring to an area in the station where detainees could get access to fresh air.

The police station is located in the upmarket Nairobi district of Gigiri, home to the regional headquarters of the United Nations and numerous embassies.

Gilbert Masengeli, the acting police inspector general, said disciplinary measures were taken against eight officers who were on duty after preliminary investigations “indicate that the escape was aided by insiders”.

Khalusha had appeared in a court in the Kenyan capital on Friday, when the magistrate ordered him to be held for 30 more days to enable police to complete their investigations.

“We are dealing with a serial killer, a psychopathic serial killer who has no respect for human life, who has no respect and dignity,” Amin

said at the time.

However, the suspect’s lawyer, John Maina Ndegwa, said in court that Khalusha was “tortured” into making the statement. Prosecutors denied these allegations.

Ten butchered female bodies trussed up in plastic bags were found in the dumpsite in an abandoned quarry in the Nairobi slum of Mukuru, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) said last month.

The location is just 100 metres from a police station. This threw a spotlight on Kenya’s police force which was under scrutiny after a brutal crackdown on anti government demonstrations, with rights groups accusing officers of using excessive force.

The state-funded KNCHR said in July it was carrying out its own investigations into the Mukuru

case because “there is a need to rule out any possibility of extrajudicial killings”.

Kenya’s police watchdog, the Independent Police Oversight Authority, had also said it was looking into whether there was any police involvement or a “failure to act to prevent” the killings..



Collins Jumaisi Khalusha, Serial Killer

Gabon bars foreign holidays for govt officials under new rules

By BBC

Gabon’s interim president who seized power in a coup a year ago has barred members of his transitional government from holidaying abroad.

Gen Oligui Nguema has also limited government officials to a maximum of one week of holiday leave.

These new restrictions were announced on state television, after he toured the country to listen to people’s concerns.

There is speculation that Gen Nguema may be softening the ground to run for president in next year’s election - the first since he seized power in the Central African state.

He overthrew his cousin Ali Bongo, who became president in 2009 following the death of his father, Omar Bongo Ondimba, who had ruled for 41 years.

Since Gen Nguema took power, he has sought to reassure the public

that his military government is acting in their best interest.

However, he has not publicly commented on whether or not he will run for the country’s top job in polls that are planned for 2025.

News of the holiday restrictions comes days before the first anniversary of the coup - when the junta’s record will inevitably be scrutinised.

Gen Nguema may be hoping to draw favourable comparisons with the man he overthrew, Mr Bongo, who was known to travel overseas regularly and whose family owned multiple properties in France and the UK.

Yet Gen Nguema is himself said to own multiple properties in the US, and when asked about these in recent years he has said that his private life should be respected.

Nonetheless it is thought the new holiday restrictions will apply to Gen Nguema too.

But he will no doubt be entitled to go abroad for official purposes.

Details of the new holiday rules were read out on state television, with viewers told that the goal was to “immerse” government officials “in the realities and expectations of their compatriots”.

A spokesman for the interim government explained that “this measure aims to encourage a return to the roots and increased proximity with local populations”,

stipulating that exceptions will only be made in cases of “force majeure” - a legal term meaning extraordinary events that are out of parties’ control - or on health grounds.

Gabonese officials need not despair, given the array of attractions in their home country - including stunning white sand beaches and some of the world’s best gorilla safaris in Loango National Park.



File Photo

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