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General News

Bagbin presses Akufo-Addo to act on anti-LGBTQ bill

By *Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*

Speaker of Parliament Alban Bagbin has intensified calls for President Nana Akufo-Addo to sign the Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill, commonly referred to as the Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill, into law.

Bagbin's remarks came during a press briefing ahead of Parliament's new session on November 7, marking an escalation in tensions over the bill's stalled approval.

The Speaker criticised both the President and Ghana's Judiciary, accusing them of overstepping constitutional boundaries by delaying the bill, which Parliament passed in February.

Bagbin stated, "I have earlier instructed the Clerk of Parliament to transmit the anti-LGBTQ+ bill to the President for assent," underscoring his belief that the legislative branch has fulfilled its duty in approving the bill.

The delay stems from a request made by the Office of the President in March, urging Parliament to hold off on forwarding the bill for Akufo-Addo's signature due to two pending legal actions in the Supreme Court.

In a March 18 letter signed by Nana Asante Bediatuo, the President's Secretary, the administration asked that no further steps be taken until these cases are resolved.

The legal challenges, brought by journalist Richard Dela Sky, gender activist Dr. Amanda Odoi, and law lecturer Prince Obiri-Korang, question the bill's impact on constitutional rights and freedoms.

They seek orders of interlocutory injunction to prevent the bill from becoming law until their cases are heard. Each petitioner argues that the bill's provisions may infringe upon the rights guaranteed under Ghana's Constitution.

The Attorney General has advised the President to defer any action until the Supreme Court rules on the injunctions. However, Bagbin criticised this stance, asserting that "both institutions have sinned against the constitution and must seek the opportunity to confess and repent to be forgiven."

As the Supreme Court's review continues, procedural delays have further slowed progress. The Judicial Service of Ghana noted in a September 13 statement that "essential procedural requirements

are yet to be fulfilled by the parties involved," highlighting that Parliament and the Attorney General had not completed necessary filings in either case.

In Sky's case, initiated in March, the Statements of Case had not been submitted by the July 31 deadline, coinciding with the Court's recess. Odoi's case, filed in June 2023, also awaits procedural completion, with the Attorney General yet to submit required documentation.

The bill, if signed, would establish criminal penalties for engaging in or promoting LGBTQ+ activities,

sparking intense public debate. Its supporters argue that the bill reflects Ghanaian cultural and family values, while critics view it as a threat to human rights.

Protests organised by bill advocates added to the rising public pressure. On October 8, hundreds of demonstrators gathered in Accra, calling for prompt judicial decisions and urging the President to expedite the bill's assent. The protest drew activists, community leaders, and concerned citizens who support the bill's aim to reinforce Ghanaian family values.



Alban Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

We can't accept final certified voters register without ballot statistics and summary - NDC to EC

By *Phoebe Martekie Doku*

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) has declared that it will not accept the final certified voters register for the upcoming December elections unless it includes the relevant ballot statistics and summaries.

Speaking to GHOne TV, the Deputy Director of Elections for the NDC, Rashid Tanko Computer, stated that the final register, lacking these crucial details, cannot be deemed credible.

He emphasised the need for the Electoral Commission (EC) to uphold

transparency and accountability in its responsibility to ensure free and fair elections.

Tanko Computer also pointed out that the EC had initially promised to provide political parties with the necessary data, making it unacceptable for the commission to renege on that commitment.

He reiterated that such actions undermine the EC's credibility as an independent body.

"You held the whole media and political party for ransom for more than 6 hours. If they don't bring

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Rashid Tanko Computer, Deputy Director of Elections for the NDC



General News

We can't accept final certified voters register without ballot statistics and summary - NDC to EC

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the ballot statistics or the voter statistics and the summaries we are not going to take the register. They promised us the summary, but we didn't put a dagger on their neck to ask for the summary. If she knew that she is not obliged to give it to us she should have told us. we have officially returned the drive to them until we get the summary," he added.

On Wednesday, the EC released the Certified Voters Register to all registered political parties and independent presidential candidates.

While addressing party representatives in Accra, EC Chairperson Jean Mensa stated that all outstanding issues with the

register had been resolved.

The independent body assured stakeholders of the credibility of the Certified Voters Register and called for public support in its efforts to ensure a free, fair, and transparent election in December.

This distribution, done in accordance with Sub-Regulation 4 of Regulation 27 of Constitutional

Instrument (C.I.) 91, ensures all parties have the necessary electoral data to prepare for the December elections.

The register shared digitally on external hard drives, includes various supplementary lists alongside the Valid Voters Register, further supporting a smooth electoral process.

Ghana, others' reparation demands exploitative - Tory leader Kemi Badenoch

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Leader of the British Conservative Party, Kemi Badenoch, has recently condemned demands for reparations from Britain as exploitative, arguing that such calls manipulate guilt surrounding the nation's colonial history.

Badenoch, who assumed leadership after a contest to replace Rishi Sunak, is the first Black woman to head a major British political party.

During a debate hosted by GB News, Badenoch called reparations demands "a scam," emphasizing that former colonies should focus on self-sufficiency rather than relying on historical grievances.

"There are many things the British Empire got wrong," she said, "but there are many amazing things the British Empire also did... We need to be honest about that and stop pretending that it was all bad." Badenoch highlighted the Empire's role in ending the Atlantic slave trade, stating, "The British Empire ended slavery... We need to talk about that more."

According to Badenoch, views on the colonial legacy in former British colonies are more nuanced than often portrayed. Reflecting on her own experience in a Commonwealth country, she said, "Many people in these countries don't normally carry the barrage that a lot of the left-leaning comments want to put on our country." She added, "This is the past, we need to talk about the future," and cautioned the UK against "falling for" reparation arguments that, she claimed, are

used to exploit the nation.

Her comments arrive amidst renewed calls for reparations from African and Caribbean countries, where advocates argue that colonial powers profited from the forced labor and exploitation of millions during the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Reports estimate that from the 15th to the 19th century, at least 12.5 million Africans were forcibly transported by European merchants and sold into slavery, mostly in the Caribbean and Americas.

In Ghana, a former British colony, President Nana Akufo-Addo has been vocal about reparations, describing them as a necessary acknowledgment of historical injustice. Speaking at a reparations conference in Accra last year, he remarked, "No amount of money can restore the damage caused by the transatlantic slave trade. But surely, this is a matter that the world must confront and can no longer ignore."

Akufo-Addo highlighted the profound economic and cultural setbacks suffered by African communities due to slavery, saying, "The entire period of slavery meant that our progress, economically, culturally, and psychologically, was stifled. There are legions of stories of families who were torn apart."

Badenoch, however, questioned the feasibility and fairness of financial reparations, suggesting that any assistance should focus on future development rather than addressing historical grievances. During her time as Trade Minister, she recounted instances of foreign

officials pressing the UK for concessions based on colonial history.

"These arguments are a scam... We need to make sure that we put this country first. We don't need to be embarrassed by our colonial past. Every country in this world, at one point or the other either colonised or attempted to colonise another group of people," she said.

The call for reparations has gained traction globally, with a recent reparations summit in Ghana concluding with an agreement to create a Global Reparation Fund to advocate for compensation for African descendants of enslaved people.

The United Nations has recognized the moral grounds for reparations, though it warns of the legal

complexities surrounding such claims, given the time elapsed and difficulty in pinpointing specific victims and perpetrators.

Advocates such as Nkechi Taifa, Director of the U.S.-based Reparation Education Project, have called for reparations to go beyond financial payments. Taifa suggests that reparations could include developmental aid, the return of seized resources, and policy reforms aimed at dismantling systemic oppression stemming from colonial legacies.

As Britain debates the issue, Badenoch's stance underscores the ongoing divide over how nations should address their colonial histories and whether reparations serve as a path to accountability or a source of further division.



Kemi Badenoch, Leader of the British Conservative Party

General News

UK issued 67,000 visas to Ghanaians in 2023 - British High Commissioner

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The British High Commissioner to Ghana, Harriet Thompson, has announced that around 67,000 visas were issued to Ghanaians in 2023, allowing a broad range of applicants to enter the United Kingdom.

This figure underscores the high demand for UK visas among Ghanaians, especially among young people seeking educational opportunities abroad.

Speaking on Joy News' Special AM Show, Thompson acknowledged the increasing volume of applications processed each year by the British High Commission in Ghana. She noted that the Commission strives to meet demand by approving visas for applicants who meet the required criteria, adding that 70% of applications were successful.

"I think we granted 67,000 visas in 2023," Thompson stated. "We granted seven out of ten applications, and there is an 85% satisfaction rate with the service the people have received," she said, attributing

this positive feedback to the efforts made by the visa processing teams.

Thompson also highlighted the challenges some applicants face when navigating the visa guidelines, with a notable number of applications rejected due to non-compliance. According to her, errors often arise when applicants do not adhere to the specified instructions on the UK visa application website.

"Things tend to go wrong when people don't follow the instructions on the website," Thompson explained. "For example, the money is meant to be in your bank account 28 days before your application, but if it's only in there 10 days before, just follow the process properly."

She emphasised the need for applicants to carefully read and comply with the visa requirements to reduce the likelihood of rejection. Thompson further stressed that even in situations where applicants face issues beyond their control, such as delays in scholarship funding, the established immigration rules must still be observed.

"In situations like that, it's not the student's fault, but the immigration rules still apply, and the students need to follow them," she emphasised.

The High Commissioner

encouraged Ghanaians to approach the application process with thoroughness, as compliance remains essential for smooth approval and ensures that the integrity of the visa system is maintained.



Harriet Thompson, British High Commissioner to Ghana

Speaker adjourns parliament indefinitely after NPP MPs boycott sitting

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Speaker Alban Bagbin has once again adjourned Parliament indefinitely after Members of Parliament (MPs) from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) failed to appear for Thursday's sitting.

The session had been scheduled following an NPP-led petition to address pressing national issues, yet the absence of NPP MPs left the House unable to conduct business.

Speaker Bagbin explained that Parliament could not proceed without the Business Committee, led by NPP's Alexander Afenyo-Markin, drafting a report to set the agenda. "In view of the failure of the Business Committee to sit... we are compelled to once again adjourn the sitting of the House," said

Bagbin, expressing concerns over repeatedly adjourning sessions amid critical national needs.

Meanwhile, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) side, which according to a Supreme Court ruling, holds the minority seats, accused the NPP of wasting government resources by calling Parliament back only to boycott. Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson, leader of the NDC in Parliament, criticised the NPP's move as financially irresponsible.

The NPP's absence also sparked further discord as some NPP MPs protested against NDC MPs taking seats on the majority side of the House.

Trade Minister Kobina Tahir Hammond and Afenyo-Markin

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Parliament house



General News

Speaker adjourns parliament indefinitely after NPP MPs boycott sitting

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claimed that Speaker Bagbin was tolerating disorder by allowing NDC MPs to occupy these seats despite a Supreme Court ruling on contested seats held by four NPP MPs, which remains unresolved.

Dispute over vacant seats

The vacant seat dispute originates from Speaker Bagbin's decision to declare four NPP seats vacant, citing Article 97(1)(g) of Ghana's Constitution. Afenyo-Markin, however, challenged Bagbin's interpretation, contending the Speaker overstepped his authority by acting without judicial oversight. This led to the Supreme Court issuing an interim injunction preventing the declaration from taking effect

pending further review.

In response, Speaker Bagbin sought to have his decision reinstated, arguing that parliamentary matters should be handled internally and remain outside judicial reach. Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo, however, rejected Bagbin's motion, asserting the judiciary's role in constitutional matters.

Speaker Bagbin reacts to Judiciary intervention

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, has voiced his frustration over what he sees as an increasing tendency among legislators to seek Supreme Court intervention on matters that should be handled

within Parliament itself.

At a press conference on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, Bagbin expressed concern that this reliance on the judiciary is eroding the authority and respect of the legislative body.

"The courts are replete with debates and proceedings of Parliament. Most worrying is, these proceedings are initiated by some Members of Parliament, even leaders of Parliament who are to know better. Parliamentarians who are supposed to be loyal to Parliament and not the Supreme Court run to the Supreme Court at the slightest opportunity to use the Supreme Court to undermine Parliament. This might be one of the

reasons Parliament and Members of Parliament are not respected and treated with disdain," he said.

Key legislative work stalled

The indefinite adjournment leaves several critical bills and approvals pending, including the ratification of two Supreme Court nominees and tax waivers exceeding \$350 million.

Other pressing bills, such as the Architects Registration Bill, the Economic and Organised Crime Office (Amendment) Bill, and the Vaccines Development and Manufacturing Bill, all await parliamentary action. The Environmental Protection Agency Bill had reached its final review before adjournment in October.

Backlash over new sculpture honouring President Akufo-Addo

By Amanda Cartey

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo on Wednesday unveiled a statue of himself at the entrance of Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Sekondi during a one-day "thank you" tour of the Western Region, sparking public criticism.

Western Regional Minister Kwabena Okyere Darko Mensah explained that the statue honours the President's efforts in launching several regional initiatives, including the rehabilitation of Effia-Nkwanta Hospital, construction of the 3-tier Sinohydro interchange, and redevelopment of the Takoradi Market Circle.

While some of these projects remain uncompleted, the President noted he has fulfilled approximately 80% of his promises to Ghanaians. He urged voters to support Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia in the upcoming elections, highlighting his Free SHS policy as a landmark achievement that has transformed education across Ghana.

"While I do not claim to have fully satisfied all promises, a significant portion - roughly 80% - of our manifesto pledges have been fulfilled, with notable advancements in education, healthcare, infrastructure development,

industrial reform, agriculture, and cocoa production. Previously, financial difficulties hindered approximately 100,000 junior high graduates from advancing to senior high school annually, despite meeting academic requirements.

Over the past decade, approximately 1,000,000 students faced obstacles in advancing their educational journey, but since the implementation of

Free SHS in 2017, our educational system has witnessed remarkable enhancements to date, he elucidated.

Meanwhile, some citizens are displeased about the president's unveiled statue. Many critics, citing Ghana's ongoing economic challenges under Akufo-Addo's leadership—including rising inflation, high public debt, and

unfulfilled development promises—have taken to X to express their dissatisfaction.

Some users even compared the monument to the biblical golden statue built by King Nebuchadnezzar. There are calls for the monument to be taken down. A netizen quizzed, "Why would a man build his own statue and reveal it himself? That's just strange."



Statue of Akufo-Addo at the entrance of Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Sekondi

General News

\$700m Cardinal Namdini mine opens today amid environmental protection concerns

By Amanda Cartey

President Akufo-Addo is set to officially open the first large-scale new mining site, Cardinal Namdini mine, in the Talensi District of the Upper East Region today.

This is Ghana's first big mine launch in over a decade, following the Newmont Akyem mine's opening in 2013. Speaking to the media, Minerals Commission CEO, Martin Ayisi shared that the \$700 million project is expected to significantly boost gold production and bring more revenue to the government.

"This will be a great feat for Ghana. The last time Ghana had such an experience was 11 years ago (Newmont Akyem Mines)," he said.

Cardinal Namdini mine is anticipated to provide 900 direct and more than 2500 indirect jobs. In order to ensure that indigenes of Talensi equally benefit from this development, Mr Martin Ayisi mentioned that a community development agreement has been signed by the company.

"Most of the jobs from this project will be given to Ghanaians. A large portion of the workers already employed at the mine come from the

community. The benefit for Talensi and neighbouring communities will go beyond job creation. The company will invest in other sectors, including agriculture. This will in the long run curb the brain drain," he said.

The head of the Minerals Commission is confident that the opening of this mine, along with two other upcoming mines, could help boost Ghana's position in global gold production rankings.

"The bigger picture is that our gold production will go up. The other two (Newmont Ahafo North and Azumah Resources Ltd.) to be completed in the next few years, which means Ghana is going to cross 5 million ounces per year and may inch up to number 5, if not number 4, globally," he said.

The Cardinal Namdini mine, owned by Cardinal Resources (part of Shandong Gold), got its operating license in 2020. This mine is set to be a major gold producer, with production starting in January 2025. It took just 23 months to build and is expected to keep running for the next 15 years.

Ghana holds the title of Africa's top gold producer and ranks sixth

globally. However, gold exploration has declined over the past ten years, slowing down new projects and reducing production from major mining companies.

In 2023, the nation produced 4.03 million ounces of gold, with a significant portion coming from increased activities by small-scale and artisanal miners.

But Ghana is set to surpass \$10 billion in gold exports by the end of 2024, according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Mr. Martin Ayisi.

This forecast made in August this year is driven by record-breaking gold prices and increased production across both small- and large-scale mining operations.

For the first half of 2024, gold exports contributed a substantial 54% to the total export value of \$9.2 billion, amounting to \$5 billion.

This surge is attributed to an average gold price of \$2,338 per ounce in the second quarter, marking an 18% increase year-on-year and a 13% rise quarter-on-quarter.



Cardinal Namdini Mine plan

Be fair in your reportage to check stereotypical perception - Chinese Ambassador charges Ghanaian media

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Chinese Ambassador to Ghana, Mr. Tong Defa, has called on Ghanaian journalists to adopt an objective and fair approach in their coverage of news involving Chinese nationals in the country.

Speaking during a media engagement in Accra on Wednesday, Ambassador Tong noted that media reports often portray Chinese nationals in a negative light, generalising them as unlawful citizens.

While he acknowledged that a few individuals might be involved in illegal activities, he stressed that

hasty generalization could birth a stereotype that could endanger law-abiding Chinese citizens in the country.

He recounted a recent incident to illustrate the potential consequences of inaccurate media reports.

He said, "there was a local news report, announcing an incident involving the construction of a road. There was the use of explosives, and some people got injured. Incidentally, some Chinese were seen around the site. Some local people who saw them concluded that the project was being undertaken by

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Mr. Tong Defa, Chinese Ambassador to Ghana



General News

Be fair in your reportage to check stereotypical perception - Chinese Ambassador charges Ghanaian media

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a Chinese company. So, some other Chinese went to buy food, and their cell phones got stolen. Luckily, the police intervention revealed that it was not a Chinese company as the media report had claimed."

Ambassador Tong also highlighted that many Chinese nationals in Ghana aim to contribute positively to the country's economic development through job creation and corporate social responsibility initiatives, stating, "We have a lot of Chinese and Chinese communities who are doing quite well here."

He urged the media to engage with the Chinese community in their productive activities, promoting a balanced narrative instead of solely focusing on negative stories that could harm their reputation.

Ambassador Tong further praised the strong relations between Ghana and China, which have been elevated to a strategic partnership.

Ambassador Tong stated, "I have engaged the Chinese community since I came, and they have told me how much they cherish the hospitality of Ghanaians and have

expressed their commitment to contribute their quota to Ghana's growth."

"This means a lot in terms of our cooperation in the mutual interest of our government and our peoples," he added.

In September, President Xi Jinping met with President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and announced the elevation of China-Ghana relations to a strategic partnership.

Xi Jinping noted that Ghana is the second sub-Saharan African country

to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 64 years ago, the friendship between the two countries has remained strong and enduring, regardless of changes in the international landscape.

He stated that China is ready to expand cooperation with Ghana in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, energy, mineral resources and infrastructure, with the hope that Ghana will continue to offer relevant support and convenience to Chinese enterprises and citizens.

FWSC recovers GHC 348m from fraudulent payroll entries

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

A whopping amount of GHC348 million has been recovered from fraudulent entries on the public payroll by the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC).

This was revealed by the Chief Executive Officer of the FWSC, Benjamin Arthur yesterday during a press briefing, explaining that the recovery follows a nationwide audit aimed at removing unauthorised names from the payroll.

"The last estimate, done in August, was about GH¢348 million. Of course, there are also people who were entitled to certain benefits they weren't receiving, and through payroll monitoring, we were able to detect those" he said.

All names found culpable are to face prosecution by the Attorney-General following recommendations to the Office of the Attorney-General, Mr Arthur said.

"For the institutions where we detected some—let's call them anomalies, as I can't judge intent—we've sent their names and details to management for further action. It's only if management fails to act that we consider reporting to other authorities. Unfortunately, we don't have prosecutorial powers, so we can't take legal action ourselves."

He noted this feat would not have been achieved but for whistle-

blowers whose intel proved to be reliable.

"The whistleblowers have been very helpful. Issues that could not come to the attention of Fair Wages, we were able to address through the whistleblowers," he said, adding that more people are becoming aware that someone is monitoring them."

Mr Arthur also announced that his

uniform will in the coming days clear the names of all unauthorised persons, stating "It will be, and beyond that, it's not just about illegal names. If you're inactive and no one knows where you are, you will be deactivated."

Following nearly two decades of implementing the current salary structure, the FWSC has announced that a review is underway to link productivity to pay.

"One of the areas that we have been very keen on and we are also very optimistic, waiting patiently for it to be part of the new pay policy is to be able to have strong measures to link pay to productivity.

"The President ordered that the Fair Wages and Public Services Commission should work together to ensure that this comes to fruition," he said.



Benjamin Arthur, Chief Executive Officer of the FWSC

General News

Public sector salary payment likely to be affected by Parliamentary impasse - Akim Swedru MP warns

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Akim Swedru Member of Parliament, Kennedy Nyarko Osei, has warned that the payment of public sector salaries could be disrupted in the coming months due to an ongoing impasse in Parliament.

He expressed concerns that, without consensus on a budgetary allocation for the upcoming quarter, essential workers, including those in security services, may face delayed or unpaid salaries as the festive season approaches.

"If you are a public sector worker and expecting to receive your salary for Christmas, be aware that the NDC caucus in Parliament has taken a decision to obstruct and prevent the Government from

submitting the three months' salary appropriations," Mr Osei noted.

Mr Osei criticized what he termed "partisan posturing" in Parliament, suggesting it undermines effective governance. He argued that the situation might have been avoided if the speakership position had not been awarded to an opposition member, calling it "a hard lesson" for the ruling party.

"We have caused this ourselves by giving the speakership position on a silver platter to an opposition member. Hard lessons must be learned from these unfortunate events," he stated.

The government's spending on compensation and wages has risen significantly, with a 21.79% increase in the second quarter of 2024,

reaching GHC16.09 billion, up from GHC13.21 billion in the first quarter.

The Finance Ministry announced its intention to present the "Expenditure in Advance of Appropriation" for the first quarter of 2025 to Parliament by November 15 to allow the government to spend money before the formal approval of a budget by the legislative body. This may not take place as Parliament has adjourned sitting indefinitely.

Spending Patterns in Q1 and Q2

In Q1, total compensation expenditure by the government amounted to GHC13.21 billion, with March marking the highest monthly expense at GHC4.74 billion. Spending increased in Q2 to GHC16.09 billion, with June recording the peak at GHC5.39 billion, indicating potential

adjustments in wage settlements or an expanded payroll. Wages and salaries made up the bulk of compensation expenses. Q1 saw GHC11.53 billion allocated, with a notable increase to GHC14.74 billion in Q2, a 27.84% rise. Expenditure on social contributions, however, fell by 19.8% from Q1 to Q2, driven by reduced allocations in June.

Pension payments remained stable, totalling GHC568.63 million in Q1 and GHC571.82 million in Q2. Gratuity spending, meanwhile, saw a minor reduction in Q2, dropping from GHC132.12 million to GHC126.24 million.

Overall, the government has spent GHC29.30 billion on employee compensation in the first half of 2024, roughly 46% of the annual budget allocated for this category.



Kennedy Osei Nyarko, Akim Swedru Member of Parliament



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Business

PIAC reports 10.7% surge in Ghana's crude oil production

By Amanda Cartey

The Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) has reported that Ghana's domestic crude oil production increased by 10.7 per cent in the first half of 2024, reaching 24.86 million barrels.

This boost has also raised oil revenue to \$840.8 million in the first half of 2024, up 55.6% compared to the same period last year.

"Crude oil production for the first half of 2024 increased by 10.7 per cent as compared to a decline of 13.2 per cent in the previous period, primarily due to the coming onstream of the Jubilee South East (JSE) Project," the PIAC report indicated.

Should this continue, Ghana is likely to see a significant turnaround in its oil production, ending a four-year drop in output. Head of PIAC, Constantine Kudzedzi, pointed out that the JSE

project highlights the importance of new projects in reviving the oil industry. He said this progress backs PIAC's long-standing call for more government support to attract new investments that could help sustain and grow production.

After years of declining production, which saw oil output drop from 71.44 million barrels in 2019 to 48.25 million barrels in 2023, this trend reversal could boost national revenues and support economic planning if the gains continue.

In response to this decline, PIAC recently held a workshop with industry leaders to identify ways to turn the sector around. PIAC also raised several issues in its 2024 Semi-Annual Report, such as unpaid rental fees of \$1.2 million, which have not yet been budgeted for, potentially affecting Ghana's economic growth plans.

They also noted that the cap on Ghana's Stabilization Fund, intended for economic stability, remains set at \$100 million, even

though regulations suggest a higher limit of \$530.1 million. PIAC has asked parliament to review this cap to better support the economy.

PIAC also expressed concerns over the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation's (GNPC) lack of a reserve fund, which is required by law to handle long-term expenses. They also called for

enforcement on rent payments from oil companies and suggested that more funds be allocated to industrial development.

PIAC urged parliament to take action, ensuring that all caps on the Stabilization Fund align with legal guidelines and pushing the Finance Minister to follow the Petroleum Revenue Management Regulations.



Constantine Kudzedzi, Head of PIAC

BoG sitting on nearly half a billion cedis in dormant accounts – ILAPI report reveals

By Amanda Cartey

A new report from the Institute for Liberty and Policy Innovation (ILAPI) shows that a significant amount of money is sitting unused in accounts at the Bank of Ghana (BoG).

The report reveals that more than GH¢167.8 million, along with US\$14.6 million, £2.4 million, and €2.3 million, have been left in these accounts from 2016 to 2023. The report also says that nearly 1.45 million dormant accounts have been moved to the BoG between 2021 and July 2024.

The ILAPI got this information after requesting a full report from the BoG about these inactive accounts over the past eight years. A big concern raised by the ILAPI is that many families don't know about the funds left behind by their deceased

relatives, and they often struggle to access this money.

The current laws make it hard for the BoG to help families track down and claim these funds, leaving many families in financial hardship.

To fix this, the ILAPI has called for changes in the law to make it easier for family members to claim what's rightfully theirs.

They also suggest that the BoG should require banks to record next of kin details when accounts are opened to make it easier for families to prove their relationship to the deceased.

The ILAPI is urging the BoG to release annual reports on dormant accounts, work with local governments and national ID systems, and set a time limit for how long unclaimed funds can be kept.



Bank of Ghana (BoG)



International

WHO equips journalists to spotlight critical health insights from 2023 Ghana's STEPS report

Source: WHO

In public health, data serves as a critical foundation for understanding challenges and making informed decisions. Without clear, accurate information, it's difficult for individuals and communities to take meaningful action, and policymakers to devise and implement effective solutions.

Recognizing this need, the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with Ghana's Ministry of Health, organized a media training ahead of the Ghana STEPS Survey 2023 report launch to ensure its findings are communicated to Ghanaians in accessible and impactful ways.

This pre-launch training aimed to equip journalists with essential tools to interpret the data, craft impactful stories, and raise awareness on critical health challenges, such as the rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which account for 45% of deaths in Ghana. With the media's ability to reach communities nationwide, their stories can inspire the

public to adopt healthier lifestyles and encourage stakeholders to strengthen healthcare solutions.

During the training, journalists from diverse media outlets engaged in practical sessions on survey methodology data interpretation, effective storytelling, and audience engagement. These skills will enable the media to transform complex data into stories that resonate with the public, helping to raise awareness and drive action on critical health issues.

Speaking on the essence of this training, Dr Joana Ansong, Team Lead for the Universal Health Coverage, Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases (UCN) Cluster said, "With the media's reach and influence, accurate and insightful reporting on the findings of the STEPS survey can play a significant role in improving Ghana's health outcomes. Together, we can raise awareness and drive conversations around non-communicable diseases".

Journalists found the training valuable for enhancing their

understanding and effectively reporting on complex health data. Nana Kofi Owusu, a health reporter from United Television, shared, "This training gave us hands-on skills to break down complex data for our audiences, which will help us bring to light these pressing health issues".

Another journalist, Benedicta Sarfoa Asamoah from Media General, added, "The insights we gained

today will allow us to craft stories that resonate with Ghanaians and motivate action on NCD prevention and care".

The training reflects WHO and Ghana's Ministry of Health's ongoing commitment to empowering journalists to drive meaningful conversations that impact public health positively, working collaboratively to shape a healthier Ghana for all.



Ghana's Ministry of Health together with WHO

Ugandan MP hospitalised after colleague MP punched him

Source: Newsbyte Africa

A Ugandan MP has been hospitalized following an altercation in Parliament on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, where he was punched by a colleague during a heated dispute.

Francis Zaake, MP for Mityana Municipality (NUP), is currently receiving treatment at the Mother Kevin wing of Nsambya Hospital in Kampala after he was struck in the head multiple times by Anthony Akol, MP for Kilak North (FDC), amid a physical clash in the chamber.

The scuffle began when Zaake allegedly confronted Akol and shoved him from his seat near the Speaker, prompting Akol's physical retaliation.

The confrontation followed an earlier debate about heightened security checks in Parliament, which some MPs criticized. Zaake had also raised concerns over an alleged armed operative in the chamber, although a search ordered by Speaker Anita Among found no weapon.

Zaake, speaking from the hospital, expressed belief that the attack was deliberate, stating, "I believe Hon Akol was sent to do this to me... I feel a lot of burning at the back of my head."

Meanwhile, Speaker Among suspended 12 MPs involved in the disturbance, including Anthony Akol (Kilak North, FDC), Shamim Malende (Kampala Woman MP, NUP), Asinansi Nyakato (Hoima

City Woman MP, FDC), Suzan Mugabi (Buvuma Woman MP, NUP), Isaiah Sasaga (Budadiri East, FDC), Evans Kanyike (Bukoto East, NUP),

Charles Tebandeke (Bbale County, NUP) and Aloyisus Mukasa (Rubaga South, NUP).



Francis Zaake, MP for Mityana Municipality (NUP)

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