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General News

Court to hear NDC's lawsuit against EC over re-collation of parliamentary results today

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Supreme Court has scheduled today, Friday, December 27, to hear motions filed by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) challenging the parliamentary election results in six constituencies.

The NDC is requesting the court to annul the High Court's ruling that allowed the Electoral Commission (EC) to re-collate and announce the results of the elections in Ablekuma North, Okaikoi Central, Tema Central, Dome-Kwabanya, Techiman South, and Ahafo Ano North constituencies.

The controversy stems from a decision made on December 20, by the High Court, led by Justice Rev. Joseph Owusu-Adu Agyemang, which granted a Mandamus application filed by six parliamentary candidates from the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The NDC has since contested the legality of this ruling, prompting them to seek redress from the

Supreme Court to reverse the High Court's decision.

As a result of the High Court's order, the EC has already re-collated and declared results for seven out of the nine contested constituencies, with the NPP emerging victorious in all. The NDC's petition to the Supreme Court includes a request for a Certiorari order, asking the High Court (General Jurisdiction 13) in Accra to submit its December 20 ruling for review and possible quashing.

Additionally, the NDC seeks a prohibition order to prevent the EC from further re-collating, counting, or declaring election results in the disputed constituencies.

Furthermore, the NDC is also requesting an interlocutory injunction to stop both the EC from continuing its processes and the Inspector General of Police (IGP), George Akuffo Dampare from providing security for these actions until the case is resolved.

Meanwhile, the Director of Electoral Services at EC, Dr. Benjamin Bannor-Bio, has indicated that the commission has not received any court orders preventing them from proceeding with the re-collation of election results.

"We have no knowledge of any such petition," Dr. Bannor-Bio clarified.

At a press briefing the Deputy Chair for Operations at the EC, Samuel Tettey, explained that the initial results did not meet the criteria set out in CI 127.

The EC reassured the public that the outstanding results from two constituencies will be declared before the new Parliament convenes on January 7, 2025.



Supreme Court

Ghana still the Mecca of Black race - Bagbin on respect for Democratic governance

By Amanda Cartey

Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, has reassured Ghana's youth that the nation's prospects remain bright, despite current challenges.

In his Christmas message on Tuesday, he emphasized Ghana's standing as a pioneer for democracy and its role as a source of inspiration for other African nations.

Bagbin also acknowledged the challenges Ghana has faced but highlighted the country's 32-year commitment to multiparty democracy, which continues to earn it respect on the international stage.

"Please, the youth, more importantly, the future is bright. I can assure you that Ghana is on the right path. We still remain the beacon of hope, the beacon of democracy, and the country that our colleagues on the African continent are looking up to. Ghana is still seen as the Mecca of the Black race.

"We might have faulted, but people still look up to us. Particularly as we have maintained this multiparty democracy for 32 good years.

"The fact that we are being eulogized

by other countries is something that will fulfill and keep our spirit in a good mood to go on," Bagbin added. Concluding his address, Speaker Bagbin extended warm Christmas

greetings to all Ghanaians, calling for unity and continued resilience. "I want to take this opportunity again to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New

Year. May the good Lord continue to bless all of us and keep our nation greater and stronger," he said.



Alban Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament



General News

Allegations of ammunition shipment false - GAF

By Amanda Cartey

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has dismissed allegations circulating on social media about a civilian pick-up truck being allowed entry into the 5 Battalion of Infantry's Magazine to transport ammunition.

In a press statement dated Wednesday, signed and issued by the Director General of the Department of Public Relations, Brigadier General Eric Aggrey Quashie, GAF assured the public that the claims made in the audio recording are completely false and should be disregarded.

"GAF wishes to assure the public that the information on the said audio is false and should be treated with the contempt it deserves. The vehicle that entered the Magazine premises was there to deliver a newly acquired live cow to be

quarantined, before being relocated to the kraal which is adjacent to the Magazine," the statement indicated. The GAF strongly urged individuals and groups to verify information related to the security services before spreading rumors.

They emphasized that misinformation, especially concerning security matters, can cause unnecessary panic and tension in the country.

"Such actions tend to create unnecessary tension and also cause fear and panic in the country," the statement cautioned. "We urge everyone to exercise caution and ensure that information is properly verified before it is shared."

Additionally, the GAF has reassured the public that its doors are always open for inquiries.

"We encourage anyone with questions or concerns to reach

out to our Department of Public Relations for accurate information," the statement said.

The Ghana Armed Forces has reiterated its commitment to

maintaining peace and stability in the country, stressing that any actions, whether deliberate or inadvertent, that disrupt the peace should be avoided.



Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)

35 lives lost to cholera as cases hit 4,155

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Ghana has reported four thousand one hundred and fifty-five (4,155) suspected cholera cases and thirty-five (35) fatalities since the outbreak began in October this year.

This update was shared by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) in a statement issued by the Director-General of GHS, Dr. Patrick Kuma Aboagye, on Tuesday.

Cholera is a severe diarrheal illness caused by the *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria, often spread through contaminated food and water.

The Western Region has been the hardest hit, accounting for the highest number of deaths, with 17 people succumbing to the disease.

In response to the outbreak, health authorities implemented a series of measures to curb the disease's spread.

Notably, an Oral Vaccination Campaign took place between November 30 and December 19, in cholera hotspots such as Awutu Senya East, Ahanta West, Effia-Kwesimintim, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Shama.

According to Dr. Aboagye, the vaccination effort has yielded positive results, with a noticeable

decline in cases.

Dr. Aboagye added that since the vaccination campaign, Awutu Senya East has not recorded any new confirmed cholera cases.

"Between 30th November and 19th December 2024, an Oral Vaccination campaign was conducted in the Awutu Senya East, Ahanta West, Effia-Kwesimintim, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Shama metro/municipals, which are the hotspots. A total of 662,906 persons have been vaccinated out of 792,482 eligible population. After the vaccination campaign, the number of reported cases in those districts have declined steadily," parts of the statement read.

In a related effort to control the outbreak, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) ordered the suspension of operations for two sachet water producers in Sekondi-Takoradi, Western Region.

A recent FDA inspection revealed that these companies had failed to properly maintain their water filters, a critical factor contributing to the spread of cholera in the region.

Meanwhile, the GHS has disclosed that six hundred sixty-two thousand, nine hundred and six (662,906) individuals have been vaccinated, representing a significant portion

of the eligible population of seven hundred ninety-two thousand, four hundred and eighty-two (792,482).

Despite this progress, the GHS has urged continued vigilance, particularly during the Christmas season.

"As we enter the Christmas season, we are entreated to drink potable

water, eat food that is hot, wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before consuming, and wash our hands with soap under running water before preparing food, before eating, and after visiting the toilet (and washroom) or changing diapers and after touching surfaces," he added.



File Photo

General News

WAEC resumes scanning of WASSCE objective answer sheets

By Amanda Cartey

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has announced that it has started scanning the objective answer sheets for the recent West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The scanning process began last night, Wednesday after repairing some important scanning machines. This move comes after the government provided GH¢25 million to pay part of WAEC's debt, which helped repair the machines and make necessary adjustments.

It noted that along with scanning, examiners are also reviewing scripts that might have signs of cheating.

Speaking to the media on Monday, WAEC's Head of Public Affairs, Mr. Kapi, noted that technicians had fixed three key machines needed for scanning.

"Some of the machines are still not fully working, but we've managed to fix a few. We'll start with scanning the objective answer sheets, though it will be at a slower speed," he said. WAEC has reportedly called its

workers back from their holiday to speed up the scanning process despite delays and Christmas celebrations.

The council says it is focused on ensuring to work with the schedule for releasing the WASSCE results.

While the partial payment has brought some relief, WAEC is still facing financial struggles.

The council has listed urgent needs, such as fixing more machines, paying invigilators and supervisors, and increasing bandwidth for uploading results online.

"Important expenses haven't been

covered, and while we've been promised more funds from the government, any further delays in the release of funds could affect the timeline for the results," Mr. Kapi warned.

WAEC is committed to addressing these challenges and ensuring the results are released on time, despite the difficulties.

Meanwhile, the council still depends on government support to finish processing the results and meet the expectations of candidates and other stakeholders.



The West African Examinations Council



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Business

BoG rolls out stricter bancassurance regulations for financial sector shareholders

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Bank of Ghana (BoG) has unveiled new bancassurance guidelines in the form of an Exposure Draft, inviting input from both the banking sector and the general public.

This initiative aligns with the BoG's Procedures for Issuance of Directives, 2020. The BoG highlighted that bancassurance has witnessed remarkable growth worldwide, including in Africa, since its inception in the 1980s.

This evolving model enables banks and other financial institutions (BOFIs) to enhance their product portfolios, generating additional revenue by utilizing their existing distribution networks to partner with insurance firms.

For insurers, this collaboration offers a valuable opportunity to expand their market reach and drive sales by tapping into the vast customer base of BOFIs.

"For customers, there is convenience, as BOFIs provide a one-stop-shop for all their financial needs including insurance products. In the case of Ghana, insurance companies

have resorted to entering into partnership agreements with banks for the provision of Bancassurance products through the distribution channels of the latter", the directive said.

From the customer's perspective, the model offers the convenience of a one-stop-shop for various financial services, including insurance.

In Ghana, insurance providers have increasingly entered into partnership agreements with banks to offer bancassurance products through these established distribution channels and the directive notes.

Under this model, Regulated Financial Institutions (RFIs) are empowered to sell insurance products to their customers on behalf of an insurer, leveraging the RFI's well-established distribution network.

According to BoG an RFI can partner with one life insurance company and one general insurance company, offering customers the flexibility to select their preferred product and insurer.

It added that the model ensures that risk-sharing between the RFI and the insurer is excluded,

safeguarding both parties' interests. Furthermore, BoG noted that the structure of this framework is consistent with the bancassurance model endorsed by the National Insurance Commission (NIC).

"This Directive is therefore being issued to provide BOG's regulatory expectations to the banking industry to ensure that inherent risks associated with the product is adequately managed by RFIs as well as to further smoothen and ensure a seamless implementation of the business of Bancassurance in Ghana between the banking and insurance sectors of the economy", the BoG said.

In terms of enforcement, the BoG has noted that Regulated Financial Institutions (RFIs) that fail to comply with the directive will face administrative penalties, ranging

from a minimum of two thousand penalty units to a maximum of ten thousand penalty units, as stipulated in Section 92(8) of Act 930.

Beyond this, the Bank of Ghana will reserve the right to impose further sanctions or take corrective actions as necessary, in line with the provisions of Act 930.

In addition to the monetary penalties, potential sanctions for non-compliance may include the suspension of the RFI's involvement in bancassurance, restrictions on the institution's ability to issue further loans or make new financial commitments, limits on bonuses or excessive compensation for executives or directors as well as the removal or suspension of key individuals deemed no longer fit for their roles.



Bank of Ghana Building

Finance Ministry releases guide to ensure efficient financial management of investment projects

By Amanda Cartey

The Ministry of Finance has officially released a guide aimed at enhancing the financial management of public investment projects in Ghana.

Titled *Methodologies for Preparation and Integrated Appraisal of Public Investment Projects in Ghana*, this comprehensive manual outlines a structured approach to managing public projects, from conception to evaluation.

The guide is the culmination of years of work, supported by significant legislative reforms like the Public Financial Management Act of 2016, the Public Private Partnership Act of 2020, and the Public Financial Management (Public Investment Management) Regulations, 2020. These reforms have been instrumental in setting the foundation for the new methodologies.

Minister of Finance, Mr Amin Adam, has expressed his pride in the release of the manual, highlighting

the crucial role it will play in enhancing the public investment management (PIM) system.

He emphasized the guide's potential to bring systematic improvement to project preparation and appraisal, aligning with both international standards and Ghana's specific needs.

"This manual is a pivotal achievement in our efforts to enhance Public Investment Management in Ghana," the Minister said. "It integrates both academic frameworks and practical insights, offering a step-by-step approach for project managers, government officials, and stakeholders. It is a tool for ensuring the successful execution of investment projects that will propel our nation towards sustainable prosperity."

The Minister has further urged stakeholders to actively engage with the guide, describing it as an essential resource that will help unlock the full potential of public investment management in Ghana.

"We must not only learn from the insights in this manual but also act on them to achieve meaningful progress. Let us use this as a driving force to create development that is broad-based and sustainable for all Ghanaians," he added.

With the release of this guide, the Ministry of Finance has set a new benchmark for effective public investment management, signaling a move towards more efficient and transparent financial practices in the country.

The guide is particularly noteworthy for its practical approach, offering readers not just theoretical knowledge but actionable steps for assessing and managing investment projects.

It also reflects the contributions of key experts, including Prof. Edgardo Mimica, an international PIM consultant, whose input was invaluable during the reform process.



Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister

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