

ECG's 'Operation Keep The Lights On' to rake in revenue kick-starts today

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Your policies laid the foundation for Ghana's future - IMF lauds Akufo-Addo

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General News

Financial constraint made it difficult to maintain deteriorating ARCC residency - Fmr Minister

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Former Ashanti Regional Minister Simon Osei-Mensah has attributed the deteriorating condition of the Presidential Villa and the Regional Minister's Bungalow (RMB) at the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council (ARCC) to severe financial constraints faced during his tenure.

Addressing recent allegations from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) that he neglected the properties during his eight-year term, Mr. Osei-Mensah clarified the challenges his administration encountered upon assuming office on February 22, 2017.

He revealed that the ARCC was burdened with a GH¢1.5 million debt, broken-down vehicles, outdated office equipment, a deteriorating administration block, and inadequate staff housing, all of which made it difficult to maintain state properties effectively.

Due to the financial strain, Mr. Osei-Mensah disclosed that he personally funded the council's operations for over six months before the release of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF).

"Consequently, for over six months, I decided to finance the activities of the office from

my personal resources until the first disbursement of the District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) was released," he stated in a press release dated Monday, January 13.

To ensure the effective use of limited resources, he implemented strict spending controls, which he claimed eventually helped clear the council's debt by the time he left office on January 6, 2025.

"Since Regional Ministers do not sign cheques, I had to put in measures to control expenditure and to ensure judicious use of the limited resources of the Regional Coordinating Council," he added.

Commenting on the state of official vehicles, the former minister mentioned that he used his personal Land Cruiser for several months because most government vehicles were either non-functional or lacked fuel. He clarified that a damaged Toyota pickup seen in a recent video was involved in an accident in 2014, prior to his tenure.

Regarding infrastructure improvements at the ARCC, Mr. Osei-Mensah highlighted efforts to modernize the office by procuring new equipment, including air conditioners, computers, refrigerators, and office furniture. Renovations to the administration block, he explained, were funded

through the ARCC's budget, while a six-story building currently under construction was made possible with central government support.

On the condition of the residency buildings, Mr. Osei-Mensah explained that the cost of renovation exceeded the financial capacity of the ARCC. Nevertheless, he personally funded minor repairs and sought partial government assistance.

"Almost all the residency buildings were run down, and the cost of renovation was far above the financial capacity of the ARCC. In the case of the Regional Minister's bungalow, the summer hut attached to the main building had collapsed, and the construction materials had not been cleared. The main building was not habitable,

so for the first year, I commuted from my personal house to work.

Considering the inconveniences involved in moving from my house to the office, I decided to use over GH¢50,000.00 of my personal money to undertake minor renovations of one of the state lodges at Nhyiaeso so as to be closer to the office," he detailed.

Mr. Osei-Mensah firmly denied accusations of neglect, emphasizing that neither he nor the ARCC would "intentionally allow state assets to deteriorate." He attributed the challenges to financial constraints beyond the council's control and reaffirmed his commitment to addressing infrastructure issues during his time in office.



Simon Osei-Mensah, Former Ashanti Regional Minister

Ayine defends ORAL setup as pressure mounts on Mahama to dissolve team

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Attorney General and Justice Minister-designate Dr. Dominic Ayine has defended the constitutionality of the government's "Operation Recover All Loot" (ORAL) team, describing it as a vital mechanism to promote accountability and recover stolen state resources.

During his vetting by Parliament's Appointments Committee on

Monday, January 13, Dr. Ayine dismissed concerns about the legal basis of the ORAL team, which was established on December 18, 2024, and is chaired by Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.

Dr. Ayine acknowledged that ORAL is not a traditional legal body but asserted that its operations align with the values and principles of Ghana's Constitution, particularly emphasizing the preamble of the 1992 Constitution as the

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John Jinapor, Energy Minister-designate

General News

Ayine defends ORAL setup as pressure mounts on Mahama to dissolve team

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foundational basis for the team's mandate.

"If you look at the preamble to our Constitution, it is very clear about the fundamental values underpinning it. The value of accountability is one of the principles articulated in the preamble," he stated.

ORAL, established by President John Dramani Mahama, is tasked with recovering state properties and assets unlawfully acquired by individuals, particularly during past administrations. The five-member team, led by Ablakwa, aims to ensure accountability and restore public confidence in the management of state assets.

Dr. Ayine further explained that ORAL targets politically exposed persons who have misused public

office to amass wealth through illegal means, emphasizing its focus on recovering stolen property, funds, and other intangible resources for the benefit of the state.

"ORAL is supposed to exact accountability from politically exposed persons who misuse their office to loot public resources by way of property, money, and other intangible resources. And so, ORAL is constitutional," he asserted.

He clarified that the non-legal nature of the ORAL team does not equate to illegality. "The fact that it is a non-legal body doesn't mean it is illegal," he said, adding that the team operates within a framework that respects the rule of law and upholds the rights of individuals

under investigation.

Despite Dr. Ayine's defense, pressure continues to mount on President Mahama to dissolve the ORAL team. However, the president remains committed to the initiative, citing the need to ensure accountability and curb corruption.

Criticism has emerged from several quarters, including former Ghana School of Law director Kwaku Ansah-Asare, who has expressed strong reservations about the ORAL team's formation. He argued that the country already has several anti-corruption and crime-fighting institutions capable of handling such tasks and suggested that the president could have empowered these existing bodies instead of creating a new committee.

Ansah-Asare also accused the government of using ORAL to further a political agenda, asserting that the operation is unlikely to produce meaningful outcomes.

Minority Leader Alexander Afenyo-Markin echoed similar concerns, stating that the ORAL team lacks the capacity to strengthen the nation's fight against corruption.

"I regret that members of this hallowed chamber are advocates of this illegal, unconstitutional so-called body called ORAL," Afenyo-Markin remarked on the floor of Parliament.

As the debate continues, the future of the ORAL team remains uncertain, with heightened public scrutiny on how the government will address corruption while maintaining constitutional integrity.

ECG's 'Operation Keep The Lights On' to rake in revenue kick-starts today

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Electricity Company of Ghana Limited (ECG) will commence a nationwide revenue mobilisation exercise dubbed "Operation Keep The Lights On" from today, January 15 to Friday, January 31, 2025.

The power distributor announced the 17-day initiative in an official statement on January 14, 2025. The exercise aims to recover outstanding arrears from all categories of customers and inspect prepaid meters to verify their integrity.

As part of the campaign, ECG reminded customers that self-reconnection after disconnection is a criminal offence, warning defaulters to avoid such illegal practices.

During the exercise, ECG's regional and district offices will operate with reduced staff, focusing only on essential services to allow full participation by top management and staff.

"In this regard, the regional and district offices will operate with a lean staff pool who will provide essential services to customers during this exercise to enable total

participation by top Management and staff," the statement noted.

ECG further emphasized that the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission's Legislative Instrument (LI 2413) grants the company full access to all installations, urging customers and the public to cooperate with staff during the exercise.

The revenue mobilisation effort comes as ECG struggles with

a massive debt owed to nine Independent Power Producers (IPPs) supporting Ghana's energy sector.

To address these financial challenges, Energy Minister-designate John Abdulai Jinapor has committed to establishing a comprehensive framework for private sector participation in ECG's operations by the end of 2025.

He explained that the initiative aims to enhance operational efficiency and improve power distribution across the country. A committee will assess global best practices to determine whether a concession model or full privatization would be most suitable for ECG's operations. Mr. Jinapor assured that the process would be transparent and free from political interference to ensure optimal results.



ECG Officer

General News

Mahama sacks MIIF CEO; Ato Forson to oversee operations

By *Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*

President John Dramani Mahama has dismissed Edward Nana Yaw Koranteng from his position as Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Income and Investment Fund (MIIF).

A letter dated January 13, 2025, and signed by the Secretary to the President, Callistus Mahama, confirmed the termination of Yaw Koranteng's appointment with immediate effect.

The directive instructed Yaw Koranteng to transfer his responsibilities to the government's representative at the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson, who will manage the Fund's operations until a permanent CEO is appointed.

The letter expressed gratitude for Yaw Koranteng's service to the nation, stating:

"I write to formally inform you

that H.E. John Dramani Mahama has revoked your appointment as the Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Income and Investment Fund, effective immediately.

"You are directed to hand over your duties to the President's representative at the Ministry of Finance. Hon. Dr. Ato Forson will oversee the operations of the Fund until a substantive Chief Executive Officer is appointed."

In 2021, former President Akufo-Addo appointed Edward Koranteng to serve as the chief executive officer of the Minerals Income Investment Fund (MIIF). He took over from Yaw Baah, a former Member of Parliament (MP) for Kumawu in the Ashanti Region, who was appointed chief executive of the MIIF in 2019.

The Minerals Income Investment Fund is a state institution created by an act of Parliament, the Minerals Income Investment Fund Act 2018 (Act 978).

This law authorises the establishment of a fund to manage the equity interests of the Republic of Ghana in mining companies, to receive mineral royalties and other

related income due Ghana from mining operations, and to provide for the management and investment of the fund's assets.



Edward Nana Yaw Koranteng, CEO of MIIF

Your policies laid the foundation for Ghana's future - IMF lauds Akufo-Addo

By *Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*

Managing Director for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva has commended former Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for his leadership and policy decisions during his tenure in office.

In a letter dated January 8, Georgieva expressed her appreciation for Akufo-Addo's contributions, stating, "The policies and reforms during your administration have laid the groundwork for Ghana's future."

She also praised the former president's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing his advocacy for the Sub-Saharan Africa region, which, she noted, helped mobilize critical resources to combat the crisis.

Further acknowledging his

government's economic initiatives, Georgieva highlighted Ghana's successful collaboration with the International Monetary Fund.

"I also want to commend the excellent collaboration your government has had with the International Monetary Fund. The recent completion of the third review of the IMF-supported program and the progress made toward restoring macroeconomic stability over the past few years are a testament to a successful partnership," the letter stated.

President Akufo-Addo's administration sought support from the IMF on July 1, 2022, to address macroeconomic challenges intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and external shocks, including the geopolitical conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

As part of the IMF-supported

program, the government implemented measures to restore fiscal stability and sustainability.

These included the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP),

the introduction of the e-levy, and new taxes on betting, all aimed at enhancing local revenue mobilization and addressing both domestic and external debt challenges.



Kristalina Georgieva (L) and Nana Akufo-Addo (R)



General News

Gomoa Central MP vows to expose Ahmed Suale's killer if CID fails to update public

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Gomoa Central Member of Parliament (MP), Kwame Asare-Obeng, has threatened to publicly disclose sensitive details regarding the murder of investigative journalist Ahmed Suale should the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service fail to provide an update on the ongoing investigation.

Kwame Asare-Obeng, also known as A Plus made the bold statement in a Facebook post, urging the CID to report on the case's progress or risk having the identity of the alleged murderer revealed.

Suale, a member of the Tiger Eye PI investigative team, was tragically killed in Accra in January 2019, sparking widespread calls for justice. Despite public outrage, progress on the investigation has been slow, drawing renewed attention from figures like Asare-Obeng.

In his post, the MP shared that he was summoned by the CID last year and provided crucial information about the case. During the meeting, he reportedly named a former high-ranking government official from the previous administration as

being involved in the planning of the crime.

"I also disclosed my source, a highly credible one, in the presence of the CID director," Asare-Obeng said.

Mr Asare-Obeng demanded that the CID offer a clear update to the public regarding the status of the investigation, stressing the need for transparency on whether more time is required to resolve the case.

"It is critical that the CID director updates the public on the progress of the investigation and indicates with justification whether additional time is required," he remarked.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, the MP issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the CID, warning that if no update was provided, he would call for a formal briefing from the Ghana Police Service in Parliament. Should this effort also fail, he vowed to use social media to directly disclose details about the case, including the identity of the alleged perpetrator.

Mr Asare-Obeng's statement has reignited public interest in the unresolved murder, with many now urging the police to step up their efforts to hold the responsible parties accountable. If the

allegations of a former government minister's involvement are proven true, it would represent a major breakthrough in the investigation and further fuel the calls for justice.

The Ahmed Suale murder case continues to be one of Ghana's most high-profile unsolved crimes, highlighting the risks faced by investigative journalists in the country.



Kwame Asare-Obeng, Gomoa Central Member of Parliament (MP)

Minister of Defense, Interior, others to be appointed this week to address Bawku crisis

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

President John Mahama has announced plans to appoint key security ministers, including defense, interior, within the week as part of efforts to restore peace in Bawku, following years of conflict in the area.

Speaking during a visit to Bawku on Tuesday, January 14, President Mahama reiterated his administration's determination to resolve the long-standing tensions, emphasizing that stability in the region remains a top priority.

"During the campaign, I stated that if God granted our desire and I was

elected president, bringing peace to Bawku was going to be one of my number one priorities," he said.

The President assured residents that the formation of a full security leadership team would be completed soon, enabling a more coordinated effort to address the situation.

"We are putting in place the various appointments so that we can have ministers and other officials responsible for security to take charge," he explained. "Within this week, we will appoint the Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, National Security Advisor, National Security Coordinator, BNI

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John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

General News

Minister of Defense, Interior, others to be appointed this week to address Bawku crisis

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Director, and others. Once these appointments are made, I will charge them to make Bawku one of their top priorities."

President Mahama acknowledged the hardship and fear the people of Bawku have experienced over the past three years due to the prolonged conflict. He recalled a period of calm during his previous

administration and assured the community of his full commitment to restoring that peace.

"I want to assure you that I am fully apprised of the issues, and I am committed to dealing with them. Trust in myself and this administration, and by the grace of God, peace will be restored permanently to Bawku," he added.

The government recently imposed a dawn-to-dusk curfew in the area following renewed tensions linked to the controversial return of Seidu Abagre after a chieftaincy dispute. Despite the curfew, violence has persisted, with over 30 deaths reported in recent weeks.

To curb the unrest, security forces have deployed surveillance drones

to track movements and identify individuals responsible for the attacks. The use of drones has led to multiple arrests and the seizure of firearms, with authorities hopeful the technology will aid efforts to stabilize the area further.

The current death toll in Bawku has reached 35 following recent attacks, per reports.

GNFS ordered to deploy fire tenders, tighten security to check surging market fire outbreaks

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

President John Dramani Mahama has directed security services to deploy personnel to strategic locations in major markets across the country in response to the alarming surge in fire outbreaks.

During a visit to traders of the fire-ravaged Kantamanto Market, the President reaffirmed the government's commitment to enhancing safety measures and addressing the concerns of market operators.

He urged the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) to station fire

tenders at key markets to ensure prompt responses to emergencies and minimize damage.

President Mahama also announced plans to install CCTV cameras in major markets as a security measure and a deterrent against possible arsonists.

"We had a meeting with the security heads today to see how we can tighten security around the major markets to prevent any such occurrences from happening.

"In addition, we are asking the Ghana National Fire Service in the night, because these fires take place

in the night, and that is what gives us room for suspicions that there are people who are deliberately doing this.

"In the daytime, you don't hear that there is a fire anywhere. How the fire can decide that it is only in the night that it ignites and burns is beyond everybody's imagination.

"We are asking the Fire Service, where there are major markets, to deploy their fire tenders close to the markets in the night," he said.

Public alarm is growing as multiple markets across Ghana continue to suffer from devastating fires, with

the latest incident at the Techiman Central Market reducing hundreds of shops to ashes on Sunday night.

The Tamale Timber Market, Accra's Kantamanto Market, and the Kwadaso Wood Market in Kumasi have also recently experienced similar destructive fires, causing significant losses for traders.

The Ghana National Fire Service is yet to determine the cause of these recurring fires. However, public speculation is mounting, with suspicions of foul play involved in the incidents.



Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS)



General News

'Dead' Anti-LGBTQ bill should be reintroduced as a govt-sponsored initiative - Mahama

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

President John Dramani Mahama has expressed his desire for the reintroduction of the Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill, officially known as the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill, as a government-sponsored initiative rather than a private member's bill.

Addressing a gathering of clergymen, President Mahama clarified the bill's current status, stating, "As far as I know, the bill did not get to the President for assent. And so the convention is that all bills that are not assented to before the expiration of the life of Parliament expired, and so that Bill is effectively dead, it has expired."

Mahama stressed the importance of national consensus in revisiting the bill, emphasizing a collaborative approach. He remarked, "I do think that we should have a conversation on it again, so that all of us, if we decide to move that bill forward, [we do so] with a consensus." The former president further proposed that the bill be reintroduced with formal government backing following stakeholder consultations.

"I don't know what the promoters of the bill want to do, but we should have a conversation about it again... probably it shouldn't be a private members bill. It should be a government bill with government behind it after consultation with all the stakeholders to see how to move this forward," he explained. Before his inauguration, Mahama had previously maintained that his decision on the bill would be guided by a detailed constitutional review.

Speaking in an interview with BBC Africa on December 4, he clarified: "It is not an anti-LGBTQI Bill; it is a Family Values Bill. It was approved unanimously by our Parliament. [LGBTQI] is against our African culture, it is against our religious faith, but I think we must look at the Bill, and the president must indicate what he finds wrong with that bill and send it back to Parliament or alternatively he must send it to the Council of State and get the Council of State's advice."

When questioned whether he would sign the bill into law if elected, Mahama responded, "It depends on what is in the Bill." He reiterated that he would have scrutinized the bill thoroughly with advisory bodies before making a final decision. "That is what I would have done," he affirmed.

The Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill seeks to criminalize LGBTQ+ activities, including advocacy, promotion, and financial support for related causes. If passed, it would introduce punitive measures against individuals and organizations involved in such activities.

Supporters of the bill argue it is necessary to uphold Ghanaian cultural and moral values against external influences. However, human rights organizations oppose the bill, citing concerns about the violation of fundamental freedoms,

including expression, association, and equality.

The bill previously faced legal challenges from journalist Richard Dela Sky and Dr. Amanda Odoi, who argued that it lacked the required parliamentary quorum during its passage. However, the Supreme Court dismissed the challenges, with Justice Lovelace Johnson clarifying that a bill can only face constitutional scrutiny after receiving presidential assent.

Meanwhile, Ningo-Prampram MP Sam Nartey George has asserted that President Mahama would have no choice but to sign the bill into law if he assumes office.

"That is a misconception that has been put out. I listened to that interview. President Mahama has been clear that he will sign that bill and he has no option than to sign that bill," Sam George stated during a

media interaction. Tamale South MP Haruna Iddrisu has also indicated plans to present recommendations to President Mahama on the bill. Though he withheld details, he expressed confidence that his suggestions would balance national values with constitutional alignment.

"I have some ideas on the LGBTQ but I am yet to share them with the president as to how he can re-own the bill, get national consensus around it, and be consistent with the laws of Ghana and the constitution," Iddrisu stated at the National Muslim Prayer and Thanksgiving event on January 10, 2025.

"There is a way to deal with it. Commenting here will mean that I am reducing it to a religious matter, but indeed it is a social problem of our country that collectively we have to deal with and solve," he added.



President John Dramani Mahama addresses the clergy

General News

Akosombo Dam flood exposed gap in Ghana's mental health support systems - WHO

By *Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined that the Akosombo Dam spillage in October 2023 exposed significant gaps in Ghana's mental health support systems, emphasizing the need for psychological care during public health emergencies.

The disaster, which led to severe flooding across parts of the Eastern, Volta, and Greater Accra regions, displaced thousands of residents and caused widespread destruction. Beyond the physical damage, the floods triggered profound psychological distress among affected communities, highlighting the urgent need for mental health services.

In the aftermath, many families were left homeless, losing their possessions and livelihoods. Children faced trauma from losing their sense of safety, while parents battled feelings of helplessness. Health workers, some of whom were also flood victims, struggled to support others while managing their own emotional burdens.

Dr. Leveana Gyimah, Technical Officer for Mental Health at WHO, stressed the importance of

integrating mental health care into disaster response efforts.

"Floods and other natural disasters don't just destroy property—they leave deep emotional scars. The psychological impact can be long-lasting, affecting not just individuals but entire communities. By integrating mental health and psychosocial support into the flood response, we've been able to bring relief to those most affected and build the capacity of health workers to address these needs," she stated.

Recognizing the need for psychosocial support, WHO, with funding from UK in Ghana, collaborated with Ghana Health Services and the Mental Health Authority to provide mental health services to flood victims. The initiative focused on both direct counseling for survivors and capacity-building for health workers to handle trauma cases effectively.

Among the beneficiaries was Richard Sedem Ahakutor, a mental health nurse from Sogakope, who faced his own mental health challenges during the disaster.

"The flood was overwhelming. I lost everything, and at the same

time, I was expected to help others cope. It became too much to handle. Thanks to the support I received through this intervention, I was able to get back on my feet and continue supporting my community," he shared.

Dr. Senanu Kwesi Dzokoto, Volta Regional Director of Ghana Health Services, underscored the broader implications of the flood on Ghana's health systems.

"Emergencies like this expose the gaps in our mental health support systems. WHO's collaboration with the Mental Health Authority has allowed us to respond effectively to the needs of flood victims, ensuring that both residents and health workers receive the help they deserve. This intervention has been a critical step toward building a more resilient health system," he said.

To provide comprehensive care, the initiative deployed clinical psychologists and psychiatrists to offer counseling and psychiatric services. Dr. Richard Dei-Asamoah, a clinical psychologist and psychiatrist at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, emphasized the importance of mental health care in disaster situations.

"Mental health is often overlooked during emergencies, but it is one of the most critical aspects of recovery. People need help to process their grief, anxiety, and trauma. This initiative has demonstrated how integrating mental health and psychosocial support services into disaster response can truly transform lives and communities," he noted.

The WHO's intervention has not only provided immediate relief but also strengthened Ghana's mental health support systems, ensuring lasting benefits for both flood survivors and healthcare providers. The initiative continues to highlight the critical importance of mental health care in disaster response frameworks.

Last year, the previous government announced plans to construct 2,225 new homes for those affected by the Akosombo Dam spillage but that is yet to be realised.

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has initiated legal proceedings against the government to secure compensation for all victims of the Akosombo Dam spillage.



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Business

Govt to focus on tax compliance to increase revenue to 16% of GDP

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

Dr. Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, Minister-designate for the Ministry of Finance, has pledged to improve tax compliance to increase Ghana's tax revenue to 16% of GDP without raising taxes.

During his vetting before the Appointments Committee of Parliament, chaired by Bernard Ahiafor, Dr. Forson expressed confidence in Ghana's untapped revenue potential, emphasizing the need for enhanced compliance measures.

"We can do better. I have studied the Ghanaian economy for some time, and I can say without mincing words that Ghana has huge potential when it comes to tax revenue mobilisation," he stated.

He added that the focus would be on working closely with the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and the

tax policy unit of the Ministry of Finance to improve compliance and revenue collection.

"We don't necessarily have to increase taxes before you rake in revenue. What we need to do is improve compliance. I will work with the GRA and the tax policy unit to ensure we increase compliance and raise the revenue as much as we can," he noted.

Outlining his vision, he stated, "In the medium term, it is my vision, when approved, to increase the tax revenue from 13.8 percent of GDP to about 16 to 18 percent."

Dr. Forson also reaffirmed the government's commitment to eliminating certain taxes while remaining focused on revenue generation. "We have announced that we are going to scrap certain taxes. We will stick to just that, but it doesn't mean we don't care about revenue. We care about it, and we will have to do more," he stressed.

He reaffirmed his commitment to immediately remove the Electronic Transaction Levy (E-Levy) after a thorough evaluation.

Despite Forson's assurances, some tax analysts have raised concerns about the potential economic consequences of abolishing

the E-Levy without adequate replacements. Tax consultant Francis Timore Boi warned that removing both the E-Levy and the COVID-19 Levy, which are projected to generate GHC7.7 billion in 2025, could undermine the government's IMF-backed fiscal strategy.



Dr. Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, Minister-designate for the Ministry of Finance

Increase road toll and make collection electronic - Kofi Bentil to govt

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

Vice President of IMANI Ghana, Kofi Bentil, recommended an increase in toll prices upon a hint of its reintroduction by the current government.

Before the abolishment of road tolls in November 2021 by the erstwhile government, vehicles were mostly charged around GHS1.00 to GHS2.00 per toll booth, while larger vehicles like trucks and buses paid higher rates. Speaking in response to Finance Minister Designate, Ato-Forson's announcement to re-introduce it following the scrapping of the e-levy.

According to Kofi, the use of toll booths is an inefficient and costly method of revenue collection and time-wasting due to the associated queues vehicles join to wait their

turns to pay.

On his part in a Facebook post on January 14, he wrote, "It doesn't make sense to waste time and stress for an hour just to pay GH¢1, as usual, we will be penny wise and pound foolish," emphasizing the disproportionate costs involved in maintaining the toll booths.

He then went on to suggest an increase and a more modern way of collecting the tolls. "Increase it and make it electronic. No one queues then, or?"

Bentil offered two alternatives saying, "There are two ways - collect them as part of licensing fees or use electronic systems, so there is no stopping."

Mr Cudjoe has suggested using an electronic tolling system to ease traffic and simplify payments, which supports Bentil's idea to modernize the current setup.



Kofi Bentil, Vice President of IMANI Ghana



International

Burkina Faso bans colonial wigs in courts to embrace cultural identity

Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré has banned the use of British and French colonial-style wigs by judges, marking a significant move to decolonise the country's judicial system.

Announcing the decision, President Traoré stressed the importance of breaking away from colonial traditions and embracing practices that reflect Burkina Faso's cultural heritage. The ban is part of his broader push to foster national identity and assert the country's sovereignty.

Colonial-era wigs have long been symbols of foreign influence in African legal systems. Burkina Faso now joins other nations on the continent in discarding such relics in favour of indigenous traditions.

This decision underscores a growing trend across Africa, where countries are revisiting colonial legacies and opting for systems that resonate with their people. It's a symbolic step that speaks to a larger cultural renaissance sweeping the continent.

Source: Africanews



Colonial wig

Ugandan Military court to try opposition leader for treachery

A prominent opposition figure in Uganda will stand trial on the serious charge of treachery, a military court ruled Tuesday, escalating the legal trouble Kizza Besigye faces ahead of presidential elections scheduled for 2026.

Treachery carries the death penalty for those convicted.

Besigye, who has contested the presidency four times, went missing in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, on Nov. 16. Days later, he and his co-accused, an assistant named Obeid Lutale, appeared before a military court in Kampala, the Ugandan capital.

Besigye was charged with illegal possession of a firearm and a charge relating to the alleged solicitation of military support overseas in order to destabilize national security. Besigye, who denied the charges, has since been remanded in custody.

A military prosecutor on Monday amended the charge sheet to include treachery and introduce a third suspect, who is a serving army officer, surprising defense attorneys who then challenged the move.

Besigye, 68, has faced arrest and assault many times in his political career. But he's never been convicted of a crime.

Amnesty International has called

for Besigye's release, saying his "abduction clearly violated international human rights law and the process of extradition with its requisite fair trial protections."

Besigye's trial is "the latest example of Uganda's authorities misusing military courts and military-related charges to clamp down on the opposition," according to Human Rights Watch.

The unfolding trial of Besigye is being watched closely by Ugandans anxious over political maneuvers ahead of presidential elections. Although Yoweri Museveni, who has held power since 1986, is expected to seek re-election, some observers believe he may step aside.

Museveni has no obvious successor within the ranks of the ruling National Resistance Movement party, one reason for widespread fears over an unpredictable political transition.

Besigye, a qualified physician who retired from Uganda's military at the rank of colonel, is a former president of the opposition Forum for Democratic Change, or FDC, party. With Besigye at its helm, the FDC was for many years Uganda's most prominent opposition group. He is a fierce critic of Museveni, for whom he once served as military assistant and personal doctor before they fell out in the 1990s over what Besigye said was Museveni's slide

into authoritarianism.

Human rights groups have long criticized Museveni over alleged violations against opposition figures.

Uganda has not witnessed a peaceful transfer of power since independence from British colonial rule in 1962.

Source: Africanews



Kizza Besigye, Ugandan four-time presidential aspirant

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