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Criticality Analysis of Governance & Economic Issues

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Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues

August 10-August 16, 2025





What is the Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues?

The output of good governance is socioeconomic development that has greater impact on the citizens. Government takes the wheels of affairs of the state on the back of the many promises made to the electorates. Yet, it is no easy task when it comes to the processes and mechanisms required for true public services delivery. It must follow policy guidelines religiously, maintain the social contract, avoid excesses and wastages, and be an accountable steward of that which it has been entrusted.

IMANI Centre for Policy and Education in a bid to monitor the processes and mechanisms for public services delivery has devised the Criticality Analysis to evaluate the key actions of the government in this pursuit. The Criticality Analysis follows the major news reports on the key governance issues categorised under the following six (6) themes:

1. Policy and administration.
2. Transparency and accountability.
3. Anti-corruption.
4. Peace, security and stability.
5. Human rights and justice.
6. International relations and development

The Criticality Analysis assesses the key governance issues by employing rigorous narrative analysis. First, we collect the key governance issues from reliable and credible news sources. A preliminary screening is conducted to filter out low-impact and non-governance related issues. The issues are then categorised under the 6 main themes. The criticality analysis is not a performance assessment of government actions.

During the assessment, critical attention is paid to the factual accuracy of the reports, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance. In view of this, the reports are corroborated by analysing same from multiple sources and monitoring the trends and development. In addition, expert opinions on the key issues are analysed to inform the final output of the Criticality Analysis which includes our recommendations for policy and practice to enhance public service delivery and accountable stewardship



What If Each Man Prayed to His God, and Left God Out of National Politics?

On 10 August 2025, Presidential Envoy for Interfaith and Ecumenical Relations, Mr. Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, issued a formal letter urging religious leaders to submit any prophecy "of a national nature"—particularly those touching on high-profile offices, governance, security, or public stability—for official review and escalation. Stated below is the main substance of the letter.

> ***As part of strengthening national coordination on spiritual matters… we kindly encourage you…that any prophecy or spiritual insight of a national nature…should be formally relayed to the Office of the Presidential Envoy for urgent review and appropriate escalation.***

Since the call went out, Mr. Ankrah's office reports having received numerous prophecies, of which an estimated 70–80 percent "lack substance" and are unworthy of further action. Only a small fraction—perhaps 2–5 percent—merits deeper probing. This filtering process illustrates both the challenge of distinguishing genuine spiritual insight from speculation and the administrative burden on a secular government to vet religious content.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution establishes a secular republic, meaning the state guarantees equal treatment of all faiths without elevating any particular religion above others. Yet, in its Preamble, the Constitution invokes "In the name of the Almighty God," suggesting a collective belief in a guiding divine force as Ghanaians gave themselves this charter. Aside from the Constitution, the national pledge concludes with an appeal to God to help us undertake our promise while the anthem calls on divine blessing to uphold the homeland.

Despite secularism, expressions of faith permeate our public life. At official ceremonies like Independence Day (6 March), religious leaders lead prayers. Cabinet meetings are opened with said prayers. Same with Parliamentary proceedings. These rituals testify to the enduring role of faith in national cohesion, even as the state maintains formal neutrality. While preventing state endorsement of any single creed, this is a deliberate balance of acknowledging individual spirituality.

When a state affirms secularism, religion becomes a matter of private conscience. Individuals find meaning in something greater than themselves, especially in times of crisis, but these experiences vary widely. So, how about each man praying to their God(s), and no man bringing their God(s) into national politics. Let each person pray freely, but keep spiritual practice separate from the formal machinery of the republic. A Presidential office dedicated to vetting prophecies exceeds the state's secular mandate.

Secularism in Ghana does not banish religion from public life; it simply ensures no single faith predominates in policy or governance. The constitutional invocation of God reflects our collective aspirations. It is not the mandate of the Presidency to "strengthen national coordination on spiritual matters." The President may retain personal spiritual advisers "especially in these times of uncertainty and complexity", but matters of "governance, national security, or public stability" belong to professional institutions, not ecclesiastical review boards. Faith, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen," should inspire individuals—not be nationalized or politicized.

Further Reading

- A Secular State and the National Cathedral – :: Ghana Law Hub
- Presidential envoy urges religious leaders to submit prophecies for official review | Pulse Ghana
- '70 to 80% of prophecies my office has received lack substance' – Elvis Afriyie-Ankrah
- A secular state is not the absence of religion, but guarantee of equality – Dr Asante – MyJoyOnline



Note: *According to checks conducted by our Founding President, no such department has been sanctioned or authorised by the President to operate.*



Finding Common Ground: A Call for Pragmatism in Ghana's DStv Pricing Dispute

In the unfolding drama between the National Communications Authority (NCA) and Multichoice Ghana's DSTV arm, both sides risk losing more than face. Consumers chafe under high subscription fees, the regulator stakes its credibility on robust enforcement, and the multinational operator stands accused of insensitivity to local realities. Yet the law offers no silver bullet: unilateral licence revocations would flout due-process, while endless litigation threatens to bog down every subsequent tariff review. What Ghana needs now is a carefully brokered accommodation that respects legal boundaries and protects both consumer welfare and investor confidence.

The NCA's suspension notice and the Ministry's daily GH₵10,000 fines underscore the regulator's resolve—yet they also expose its vulnerability. Section 13 of the Electronic Communications Act empowers only the NCA to act on broadcast licences, and even then, it must observe notice-and-hearing protocols. If the process strays into arbitrariness, DSTV could successfully challenge it in court, inviting months, even years of injunctions and appeals. Worse, a drawn-out standoff would send chills through Ghana's digital-economy investors, at a time when AfCFTA markets beckon with new opportunities.

DSTV, for its part, has a legitimate case that inflation, foreign-exchange fluctuations, and rising content-acquisition costs justify periodic rate adjustments. But in a quarter when the cedi has gained ground and headline inflation has eased, offering mere "token promotions" rings hollow. A true middle ground must reconcile cost-recovery with fairness: partial rate reductions, staggered price adjustments, or cross-subsidies could demonstrate DSTV's commitment to the Ghanaian market without hobbling its operational viability.

The path forward lies in structured dialogue. The NCA should convert its 30-day cure window into a series of public-interest hearings—inviting consumer groups, telecom economists, and DSTV representatives to lay out their data, cost models, and policy proposals in full transparency. Such hearings need not follow a sterile adjudicatory format; they can adopt a moderated, consensus-building design that narrows differences rather than inflating them.

Concurrently, Multichoice Ghana should consider a goodwill gesture: temporarily freezing any further price hikes, while jointly commissioning an independent tariff review panel with the regulator and civil society.

This panel could benchmark DSTV's package costs against peer markets in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa; map the precise tax and licence-fee burdens; and propose a sliding-scale rate-cut contingent on key macro-indicators. By tying consumer savings to tangible improvements in operating efficiency and compliance, DSTV would rebuild trust without sacrificing its bottom line.

Success will hinge on political restraint and commercial maturity. The regulator must avoid hyper-politicizing every subscriber complaint, and DSTV must ditch the posture of a remote corporate leviathan. Both can signal good faith by issuing a joint communique that commits to:

- Respecting the NCA's statutory remit and transparent procedures.
- Pursuing consumer-friendly tariffs through an open, data-driven panel.
- Establishing a quarterly platform for reviewing industry-wide cost pressures

If they seize this moment, Ghana can pioneer a best-practice framework for pay-TV regulation in Africa—one that balances legal safeguards with pragmatic, participatory policymaking. It would demonstrate that even a global media giant and a powerful regulator can coalesce around the common cause of affordable, accessible information.

As the 30-day deadline looms, the choice is clear: descent into protracted litigation or a credible, middle-path settlement. For the sake of Ghanaian households, for investor sentiment, and for the rule of law itself, it is time for both DSTV and the NCA to step off the escalatory treadmill. By meeting halfway—through dialogue, independent scrutiny, and shared accountability—they can forge a durable settlement that upholds legal integrity while delivering real relief at the remote control.

Further Reading

- The Perils of Market Interventionism: When Political Pressures Threaten Ghana's Economic Gains – Imani Africa
- Price, Power, and Policy: A Legal and Economic Examination of the DSTV Pricing Dispute in Ghana – desmondisrael.legal
- Can the NCA suspend DStv's license? Here's what the law says – MyJoyOnline
- Communications Minister lacks authority to revoke DStv's license – Musah Ahmed – MyJoyOnline
- NCA issues suspension notice to DStv, grants 30 days for response or remedial measures – MyJoyOnline
- Sam George alleges covert moves by MultiChoice Ghana to evade a 30% DStv price cut – MyJoyOnline
- Gov't slaps DStv with GH¢10,000 daily fine over pricing data delay – MyJoyOnline

Criticality Analysis of Key Economic Issues

August 11-August 16, 2025





Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide a clear and concise evaluation of the most important economic news stories in the preceding week, focusing on their factual accuracy, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance.

Methodology

Selected publications are grouped under five central economic themes. These include:

- Economic Stability.
- Growth and Job Creation.
- Taxation and Revenue Mobilization.
- Trade and Investment.
- Infrastructure Digital Economy.

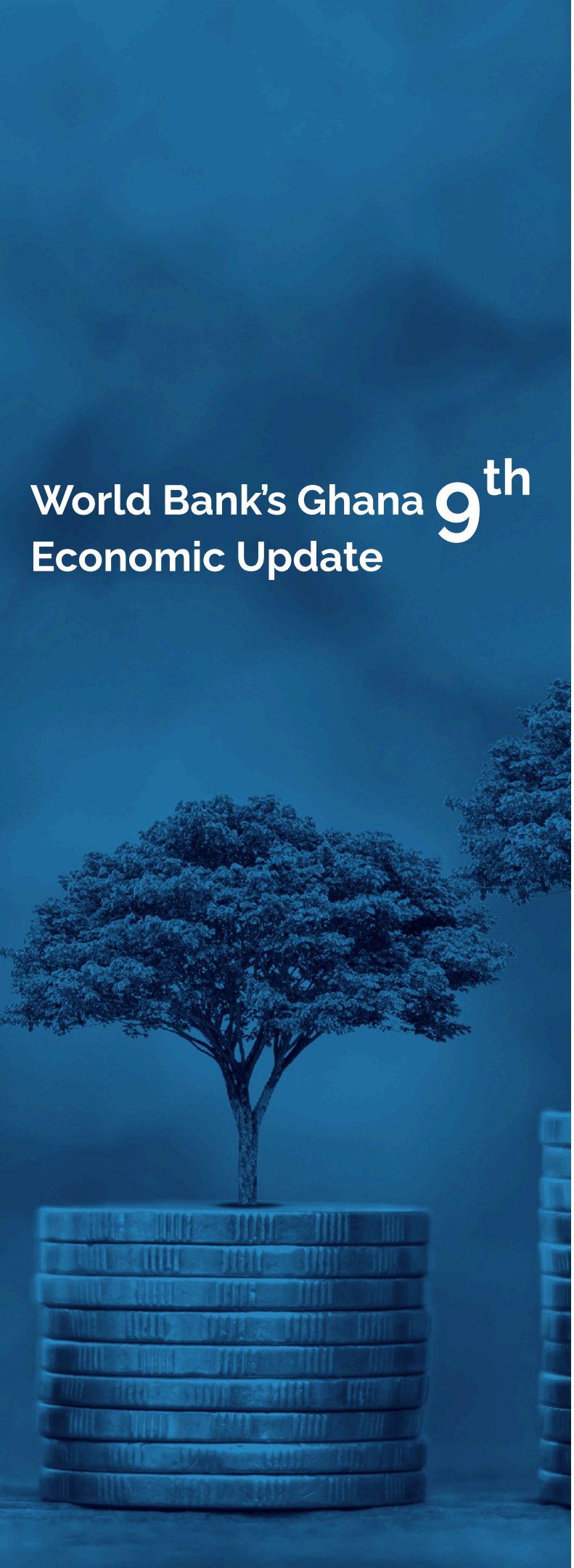
Evaluation

The analysis criteria are applied at this stage. News stories are evaluated based on the following:

Factual accuracy: can the facts in the news be verified; is the news published by other outlets; are there links and references to original sources.

Relevance and timeliness: is the news a developing story or does it provide updates on existing stories?

Impact and significance: does the news have a potential impact on society, policy and the economy; is it of high interest to the public?



World Bank's Ghana 9th Economic Update

The World Bank's 9th Economic Update for Ghana[1] painted a cautiously optimistic picture; the economy is on a positive trajectory, largely because of fiscal and monetary discipline. Growth in 2024 reached 5.7%, with non-oil GDP increasing by 6%, driven by a rebound in mining, construction, and services. Inflation has steadily eased, falling to 13.7% by June 2025, while the cedi has firmed against major currencies thanks to tight monetary policy and improved market sentiment. Debt restructuring has also progressed, with over 95% of public debt restructured, and only $2.4 billion in external commercial debt remaining pending.

Yet, beneath the resilience, the risks are plain. The fiscal deficit widened to 7.7% of GDP in 2024, driven by election-year spending overruns and weaker-than-expected VAT collection. Though provisional data for 2025 point to better control, the World Bank warns that Ghana's fiscal sustainability hinges on completing debt restructuring and strengthening revenue mobilization. One pressing vulnerability, however, lies with state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Poorly performing entities in energy and agriculture continue to bleed resources.

The report notes that ECG alone could run a $2.2bn shortfall in 2025, with cumulative losses exceeding $9bn by 2026 unless reforms take hold. Cocobod is another fault line; despite high global cocoa prices, low output, mounting debt, and arrears to suppliers are eroding its balance sheet, turning what should be a hard-currency generator into a fiscal risk.

These findings are echoed by ***IMANI's Criticality Analysis of Governance and Economic Issues, August 04-08, 2025***[2], which discussed persistent revenue leakages within SOEs, highlights the sheer scale of revenue leakages in SOEs. Ghana Water Ltd, for example, loses 73 million gallons of treated water every day in Greater Accra, over half its production due to theft, illegal connections, and broken infrastructure. The Cocoa Processing Company tells a similar story. Its second-quarter accounts showed a US$10.23 million net loss, wider than last year's, with revenues down by more than a quarter and production of value-added confectionery shrinking by 30 percent. In both utilities and agro-processing, Ghana is producing but not capturing value, leaving balance sheets weak, services unreliable, and the state on the hook for bailouts.

The World Bank's update outlines medium-term reforms aimed at addressing Ghana's structural and fiscal challenges. The priority is to tackle structural imbalances by eliminating the deficits of the Electricity Company of Ghana and Cocobod, both of which have become recurring drains on the public purse. For ECG, the Bank recommends a full overhaul and opening the door to private participation to improve efficiency, curb losses, and enforce revenue discipline. It also stresses that the quarterly debt settlement system must be consistently applied, and the stalled Energy Sector Recovery Program brought back on track.

Cocobod, meanwhile, needs a comprehensive restructuring that trims its functions back to its core mandate of cocoa production and marketing, while phasing out the quasi-fiscal roles that have undermined its balance sheet.

Second, make any financial support In the financial sector, the report highlights the importance of fully implementing the Financial Sector Strategic Plan, from establishing clear resolution frameworks for weak banks to strengthening supervision of fintechs and broadening access to affordable credit. On the fiscal side, the rollout of the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy is seen as central. Rationalizing VAT, expanding excise taxes, improving compliance, and widening the tax net are all necessary to boost domestic revenue mobilization. The broader message is that continued macroeconomic stabilization, keeping disinflation and fiscal consolidation on track, will be key to lowering borrowing costs and restoring confidence. Without these medium-term shifts, Ghana risks slipping back into the same cycle of slippages and bailouts that have haunted past recoveries.

The World Bank's report makes clear that Ghana's story is one of resilience under pressure. Growth, disinflation, and debt progress are all positives. But resilience without reform will not be enough. Poorly performing SOEs, low revenue collection, and spending slippages remain the cracks in the foundation. This is why it has become so important for Ghana to check its SOEs. If leakages are not addressed, they will continue to undermine the country's recovery and reverse the gains from debt restructuring and fiscal discipline.

NEWS TRENDS

- Ghana 9th Economic Update: Addressing Labor Market Challenges and Opportunities in Ghana's Economic Landscape.
- Fix energy and cocoa sectors to protect economy – World Bank tells Ghana
- Ghana's economy resilient but faces fiscal and structural hurdles – World Bank.
- Poorly performing SOEs pose fiscal risks to economic stability – World Bank warns – MyJoy News

Agriculture Push – GHS 2.9bn Commitment and the Red Gold Policy



Ghana's agriculture sector is set for one of its most ambitious boosts in recent years. The government and development partners have committed GHS 2.9 billion to support programmes under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture[1]. The financing mix leans slightly on government resources (55%) while development partners shoulder the rest (45%). Much of this will flow into the Feed Ghana programme, with complementary support for mechanization, irrigation, livestock development, and post-harvest infrastructure. The emphasis is clear: improve food security and reduce import dependence.

This investment ties directly into Ghana's Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda (AETA), which seeks to modernize production systems, raise productivity, and build sustainable jobs along the value chain. Capital expenditure, which will absorb more than half of the funding, is aimed at tackling bottlenecks such as irrigation, storage, and processing capacity that have long limited Ghana's food systems.

Alongside this broader push sits a flagship initiative, the Red Gold Policy, a national palm oil strategy that seeks to cut Ghana's $2 billion annual import bill for edible oils. Ghana consumes over 250,000 metric tons of palm oil annually, but produces only 50,000 tons domestically. To close this gap, the government will distribute 1.5 million oil palm seedlings to farmers, support large-scale out-grower schemes, and offer incentives to expand local processing. The policy, nested under the Ghana Tree Crops Diversification Project (GTCDP), also broadens into cashew, coconut, rubber, mango, and shea, positioning Ghana's farmers to diversify income and build export potential beyond cocoa.

But while the production drive is timely, the bigger structural challenge lies in smuggling and unfair competition. The Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana (OPDAG) estimates that the economy loses around US$40 million annually from palm oil products entering through unapproved routes or under the cover of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme[2]. These smuggled goods evade duties and taxes, arriving in markets at prices that local manufacturers cannot match. The result is a distorted market where farmers and processors lose competitiveness despite increased domestic output. Without strong enforcement, higher production will not translate into stronger industry performance; it will simply create surplus raw fruit that small artisanal millers cannot process, while refined oil imports and smuggled products continue to dominate retail shelves.

If the Red Gold policy is to succeed, the government must pair investment with enforcement. Customs and district security agencies need to implement the existing anti-smuggling framework, sealing porous borders and ensuring import permits are not undermined[3]. Also, infrastructure gaps in processing must be filled; otherwise, Ghana risks producing more raw fruit than it can process locally, deepening dependence on imported refined oil. Consumer education is also critical; awareness campaigns around the benefits of supporting local edible oil production would create market demand that reinforces competitiveness. If well executed, the Red Gold strategy could reposition palm oil as a net contributor to Ghana's agro-industrial transformation, generating employment and creating a pipeline of value-added exports. If execution falters, however, the sector risks sliding into the same trap that has weakened other agro-industrial ventures: high ambition undermined by smuggling, weak enforcement, and a lack of processing depth.

NEWS TRENDS

- Ghana targets $2bn palm oil import cut with new RedGold policy – Citinews.
- Gov't, development partners commit GHS 2.9bn to boost agric, food security.
- Oil palm products-smuggling on the rise – B&FT.

BoG Moves to Control Non-Performing Loans



The Bank of Ghana (BoG) has announced a new set of regulatory measures to address the persistent rise in non-performing loans (NPLs) that continue to undermine the stability of the banking sector, aimed at instilling discipline in the credit system. A firm sanction of one of the measures is that wilful loan defaulters will be barred from accessing credit for up to five years. The regulator's approach is both punitive and corrective; it couples borrower sanctions with prudential ceilings, mandatory write-offs, and stricter risk-management expectations for banks, framing the entire effort as a push to protect depositors, clean up balance sheets, and revive productive lending.

Commercial banks and regulated lenders are now required to publish the names of such defaulters twice yearly in national newspapers and on their websites, ensuring transparency and public accountability. Company directors, guarantors, and associates who aid in fraudulent activities will also face sanctions, underscoring BoG's determination to dismantle the networks that often enable strategic default. For offenders, redemption will only come after repaying all outstanding debts and fees, clearing their credit history, and demonstrating credible repayment capacity.

Alongside borrower sanctions, BoG re-emphasises prudential guardrails for lenders. The industry's NPL-to-gross loans ratio must not exceed 10% (microfinance institutions must meet their own prescribed limits of 5%). Banks must maintain robust credit risk management frameworks demonstrable to the regulator. Crucially, with prior written BoG approval, institutions must write off fully provisioned loans in the loss category and also write off substandard and doubtful exposures where there is no reasonable expectation of prompt recovery.

The World Bank has cautioned that persistently high NPLs are eating into bank profitability, weakening capital buffers, and constraining credit to SMEs and the informal sector, the very engines of job creation. The risk, if left unchecked, is twofold. First, recapitalization delays for banks that suffered heavy losses in 2024 could translate into fresh fiscal liabilities, effectively shifting the burden from private lenders onto the public purse. Second, with banks relying heavily on government securities to shore up earnings, credit to the real economy remains muted, reinforcing a cycle of weak private investment and sluggish growth.

The World Bank has recommended a comprehensive asset quality review, followed by bank-specific action plans for loan restructuring, recovery, and resolution. Complementary instruments such as partial credit guarantee schemes and public-private risk-sharing mechanisms could encourage fresh lending without compromising prudential standards. Also, digital innovation and financial inclusion efforts should be accelerated to expand credit responsibly, particularly for underserved SMEs.

These new measures by BoG will also bring near-term consequences. Stricter enforcement means tighter lending criteria, fewer approved loans, and potentially higher interest rates for riskier borrowers. SMEs without formal credit histories may find access to finance even more difficult. But these sacrifices are necessary to restore discipline, protect depositors, and create a banking system that supports sustainable economic growth. In the long run, a sounder, more resilient financial sector will serve both businesses and households far better than one weighed down by bad debts and hidden vulnerabilities.

NEWS TRENDS

- BoG announces new set of regulatory measures to check NPLs – MyJoy News.
- Wilful loan defaulters face 5-year ban in BoG crackdown – CitiNews.
- BoG unveils robust regulatory measures to strengthen banking sector growth – GhanaWeb.
- Official explanatory notes from BoG

IMANI
Center for Policy & Education

IMANI Center for Policy & Education is a Think Tank of considerable local and international repute based in Ghana. Founded on the 9th of March 2004, IMANI has carved a niche in Ghana's policy environment for putting out objective, independent analysis and critique on many issues, using tried and tested techniques that apply across different disciplines.

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