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Criticality Analysis of Governance & Economic Issues



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In this issue

- 1** When National Polls Meet Party Gatekeepers, Who Really Decides?
- 2** 19 Stations, No Presiding Officer verification: How did the Electoral Commission Lose Ablekuma North?
- 3** Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society: Facilitating Greater Demand-Driven South-South Development Cooperation Under Ghana's 24-HOUR Economy and India's 2047 Vision
- 4** Rethinking the 24-Hour Economy: It's Not About Shifts, It's About Systems
- 5** Modified Tax Scheme: Simple to Administer, But What Will It Deliver?
- 6** US\$360m World Bank Facility: Why Language and Transparency Matter

Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues

June 29- July 5, 2025



The background of the top section features a blue-tinted image of a building's facade. Two large, dark, five-pointed stars are positioned in the upper right corner. Below them, a stone plaque on the building's wall displays the date 'AD 1957'.

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



When National Polls Meet Party Gatekeepers, Who Really Decides?

Global Info Analytics’ recent survey paints a vivid portrait of Ghana’s 2028 contest: Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia commands 56 percent of the national electorate and 70 percent of New Patriotic Party faithful, while within the National Democratic Congress, Haruna Iddrisu leads a tightly packed field with 27 percent, narrowly ahead of Johnson Asiedu Nketia on 26 percent and Dr. Ato Forson on 22 percent. Yet these headline figures—so eagerly dissected by pundits—only tell half the story. Even as the survey shows that 50 percent of NDC voters would hypothetically back Bawumia in the NPP race, the real test lies not in cross-party preferences for best known reasons but in the art of delegate persuasion. For in Ghana’s internal primaries, it is not the millions of registered voters but a few thousand delegates who ultimately confer the nomination that transforms poll front-runners into flagbearers.

Behind every eye-catching statistic lies the unyielding reality of party mechanics. Those poll figures may signal broad public appeal, but it is the delegates—station-level executives, constituency officers, regional representatives—whose votes determine flagbearers. These gatekeepers are tasked less with mirroring the nation’s mood than with safeguarding party orthodoxy, advancing loyalists, and maintaining intricate webs of patronage. Even the most beloved candidate must traverse this guarded path, courting a delegation that often prizes strategic alliances over raw electability.

Into this enclave of influence, strides the phenomenon of endorsements. When two hundred and twenty former Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives publicly band together behind a candidate, their gesture carries weight far beyond mere sentiment. It signals unity to wavering delegates, whispers of inevitability, and can momentarily overshadow the grassroots enthusiasm reflected in national polls. Yet, when endorsements arise from party elites, they risk stifling spirited debate, creating an illusion of consensus rather than genuine momentum.

Layered atop these tensions is the persistent gender gap that punctuates Ghana's political narrative. Despite the historic ascendancy of Prof. Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang to the vice presidency, women remain conspicuously absent from the frontlines of presidential primaries. Delegate lists brim with familiar male faces while the voices of female activists and local leaders struggle to gain traction. This imbalance is neither accidental nor innocuous; it reflects structural biases that relegate half the nation to the margins of internal power struggles. Without deliberate reforms—quotas, expanded delegate inclusion, automatic running-mate mandates—these primaries risk reaffirming rather than challenging entrenched hierarchies.

When we widen our lens, party primaries emerge as a microcosm of Ghana's broader democratic health. Opacity in delegate selection, the outsized sway of endorsement networks, and structural barriers to female participation all corrode public confidence—not only within parties but in the national electoral process itself. Voters ask: can a nation boast a robust democracy when the pathways to candidacy remain hidden from public view and dominated by entrenched interests?

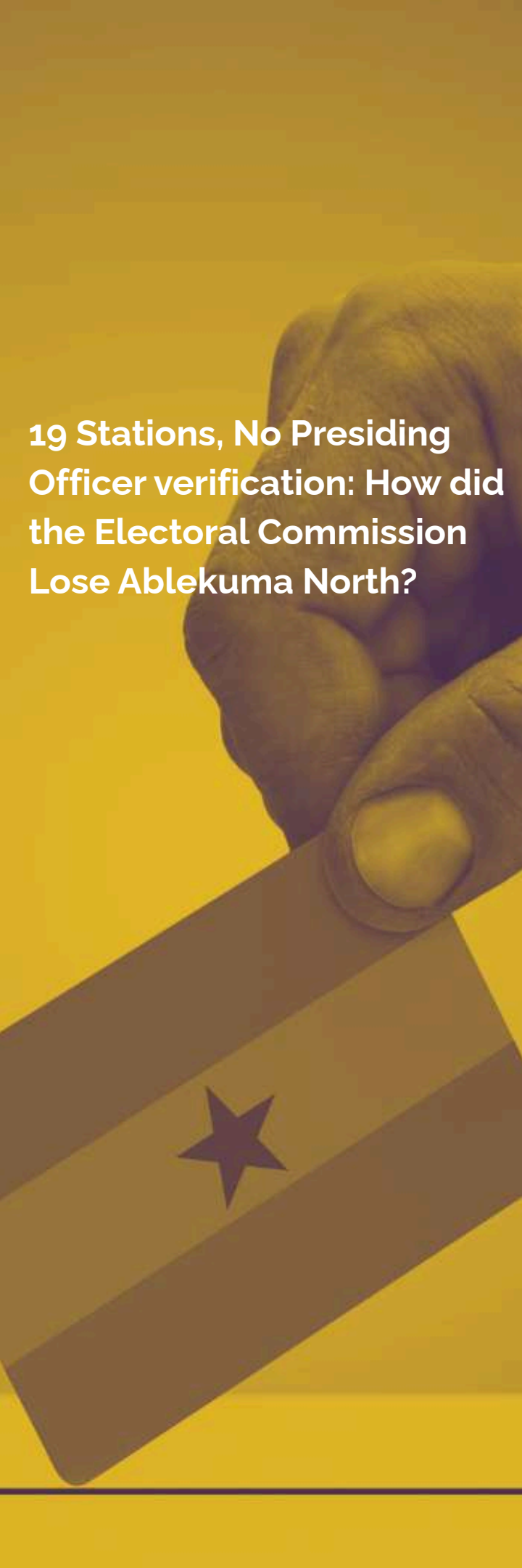
The poll results from Global Info Analytics provide fertile ground for debate, but they do not guarantee a seamless road to the ballot box. Instead, they illuminate a paradox: widespread public support may glitter in headlines, yet real power remains concentrated within corridors of party edifices. As delegates convene, endorsements multiply, and gender imbalances persist, Ghana faces a critical choice. Will it allow internal democracy to stagnate behind veils of formality, or will it seize this moment to broaden participation, deepen transparency, and align its primaries with the spirit of popular will?

In the end, the true test of Ghana's democratic resilience lies not in who leads the polls, but in how those polls translate into authentic, inclusive party contests. If the delegates' ballots finally reflect the people's voice—in diversity, in openness, in fairness—then the nation can look forward to an election season that embodies the very principles its constitution enshrines.

Recommendation

- Parties should forge an integrated nomination framework which has a bearing on credible national polls. This will have the tendency to inform delegate choices and candidates strategies. Political parties can dissolve the divide between public sentiment and insider decision-making, ensure that flagbearers truly reflect the electorate's voice, and rebuild faith in every stage of the election cycle.



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a Ghanaian flag. The hand is positioned at the top, with fingers gripping the top edge of the flag. The flag features three horizontal stripes of red, white, and green, with a black star in the center of the white stripe. The background is a solid yellow color.

19 Stations, No Presiding Officer verification: How did the Electoral Commission Lose Ablekuma North?

Imagine a parliamentary result hanging in limbo for seven months because 19 out of 281 polling stations Statement of Poll could not be verified. No Presiding Officer (PO) verification, no valid declaration. Voters in Ablekuma North remain without representation, and Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) finds itself in an unprecedented procedural abyss. Now, it seeks to re-run the election in those 19 polling stations.

Ablekuma North, a bellwether constituency in Accra, made each one of its polling station crucial. On December 7, original pink sheets were destroyed amid scuffles at the collation centre. A fire on December 17 consumed ballot boxes at the Kwashieman cluster of schools, where they were being kept. With no originals, the EC scrambled for scanned copies, triggering partisan battles over legality. More broadly, the chronicle has dented public confidence in electoral integrity, risking the legitimacy of Ghana's democracy.

Ghana's 2024 General Elections ran under C.I. 127 (Public Elections Regulations, 2020). The regulations key to this analysis include:

- **Regulation 19(2)(c):** Presiding officers must fill and sign all forms—including Form 8A (Statement of Poll).
- **Regulation 39(2):** Form 8A requires signatures from the presiding officer, candidates, or their agents, and counting agents to be valid.
- **Regulation 48:** Agent absence can not void a poll, but it does not empower agents to substitute for the presiding officer's declaration
- **Regulation 45:** An election officer's failure to perform a required function is an offence—punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both, and a five-year disqualification from election duties.

These rules leave no wiggle room—without the PO’s signature no parliamentary result exists under the law.

The EC’s citation of Regulations 19.2(c) and 39.2 to justify a rerun is legally unassailable. Form 8A without the presiding officer’s signature—that verifies and validates—is a nullity. Yet the road to this ruling was littered with avoidable missteps. First, there were conflicting directives within the EC. Officials of the EC first rejected scanned sheets, then reversed course. This internal tug-of-war left returning officers without clear guidance. Again, there were security lapses in the safekeeping of election records. The destruction of records could have been averted with better perimeter control and chain-of-custody protocols. Lastly, multiple suspensions of collation attempts, missed court deadlines, and scant public updates deepened mistrust, presenting a breakdown of communications.

Nineteen officers flouted statutory duties by failing to sign Form 8A or verify during the attempts to re-collate—an offence under Regulation 45. Yet the EC has not invoked sanctions. Party agents signed scanned forms, but Regulation 48 makes clear their presence or absence can not override the presiding officer’s non-delegable duty. The EC’s earlier tolerance of agent-authenticated results blurred these lines, sowing confusion that culminated in the rerun decision. Voters in those 19 polling stations have been disenfranchised for months, eroding faith in Ghana’s electoral machinery. The precedent set here raises fears that future disputes over digital or scanned records could paralyze results indefinitely.

The EC’s decision to rerun polls in 19 polling stations is a procedural necessity according to the election regulation, not political caprice. Yet legal correctness can not mask managerial failure. In vacillating over scanned sheets, tolerating officer inaction, and allowing security breaches, the EC lost control of Ablekuma North. Restoring public trust demands procedural rigour, proactive enforcement, and a commitment to transparent, citizen-centred election management. Only then can Ghana’s democracy safeguard every vote—even in the most fraught constituencies.

Recommendation

- To prevent future impasses, the EC should implement real-time electronic transmission of Form 8A to a secure central server with paper records stored in guarded facilities, maintain a roster of trained reserve presiding officers to immediately substitute any non-compliant or unavailable officers, and rigorously enforce Regulation 45 by launching probes into officers who fail to perform statutory duties—issuing show-cause notices and applying penalties as needed. Moreover, Parliament should promulgate a new Constitutional Instrument for the 2028 elections—one that explicitly addresses the logistical, procedural, and security gaps exposed in Ablekuma North—and adopt the practice of drafting a fresh C.I ahead of every election cycle so that each successive poll benefits from lessons learned and evolving best practices.



Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society: Facilitating Greater Demand-Driven South-South Development Cooperation Under Ghana's 24-HOUR Economy and India's 2047 Vision

The Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society stands at the nexus of two ambitious national agendas. On one side is Ghana's five-year drive to add 7 percent to GDP and generate 1.8 million jobs through its 24-Hour Economy pillars—Grow24 (agro-processing parks), Make24 (continuous-operation manufacturing zones), and Build24 (round-the-clock infrastructure). On the other is India's 2047 Vision—a long-term strategy to transform itself into a fully developed nation by the 100th anniversary of its independence—which targets a two-thirds reduction in poverty headcount, a five-fold rise in per-capita income, and the doubling of bilateral trade to USD 6 billion. By leveraging India's current USD 4.5 billion in bilateral trade and USD 450 million in concessional lines of credit, the Society must convert these macro-economic ambitions into locally owned, demand-driven projects that deliver real-world impact.

Between 2015 and 2023 Ghana's exports of gold and cocoa to India climbed from USD 900 million to USD 1.6 billion, while India's exports of machinery, pharmaceuticals, and ICT products to Ghana reached USD 1.7 billion. In the fiscal year 2024–25, total bilateral trade reached USD 3.14 billion, up from USD 2.24 billion in 2020–21, with Indian exports at USD 1.35 billion and imports at USD 1.79 billion—gold accounting for over 70 percent of purchases.

India's corporate investment in Ghana further cements this partnership. From 1994 to 2024, Indian firms channeled USD 1.92 billion into 820 Ghanaian projects, spanning manufacturing, services, trade, agriculture, construction, tourism, and liaison operations.

Annual FDI flows from India reached USD 93.84 million in 2021—7.6 percent of Ghana’s total—before moderating to USD 32.48 million in 2022, rebounding to USD 77.93 million in 2023, and tallying USD 16.46 million (2.7 percent) in 2024. India now ranks second by project count and eighth by value among Ghana’s investors, reflecting both breadth and depth of engagement.

This ensemble of trade, finance, and investment must be translated into legislative frameworks that embed demand-driven cooperation. Ghanaian and Indian MPs should co-draft a Shift-Work Framework Act to codify rotating eight-hour shifts and labour safeguards, maximizing Make24 factory uptime without compromising worker welfare. Simultaneously, a Time-of-Use Tariff Act—with Indian input on smart-metering—could slash off-peak electricity costs by 40 percent, unlocking Build24’s round-the-clock operations sustainably.

Rigorous oversight will be pivotal. A bilateral parliamentary committee, meeting quarterly, must scrutinize Exim LOC disbursements, monitor project milestones—such as Ghana’s first agro-park commissioning—and publish co-authored impact reports. Public town halls in Grow24 districts will invite farmers and traders to validate project designs, creating a transparent feedback loop grounded in SMART indicators: export tonnages, electricity uptime, and job creation.

Deepening stakeholder engagement further ensures community ownership. Annual constituency hearings will allow local voices to shape agro-park layouts before parliamentary ratification. A Private-Sector Liaison Cell within the Society can match Indian investors—Tata,

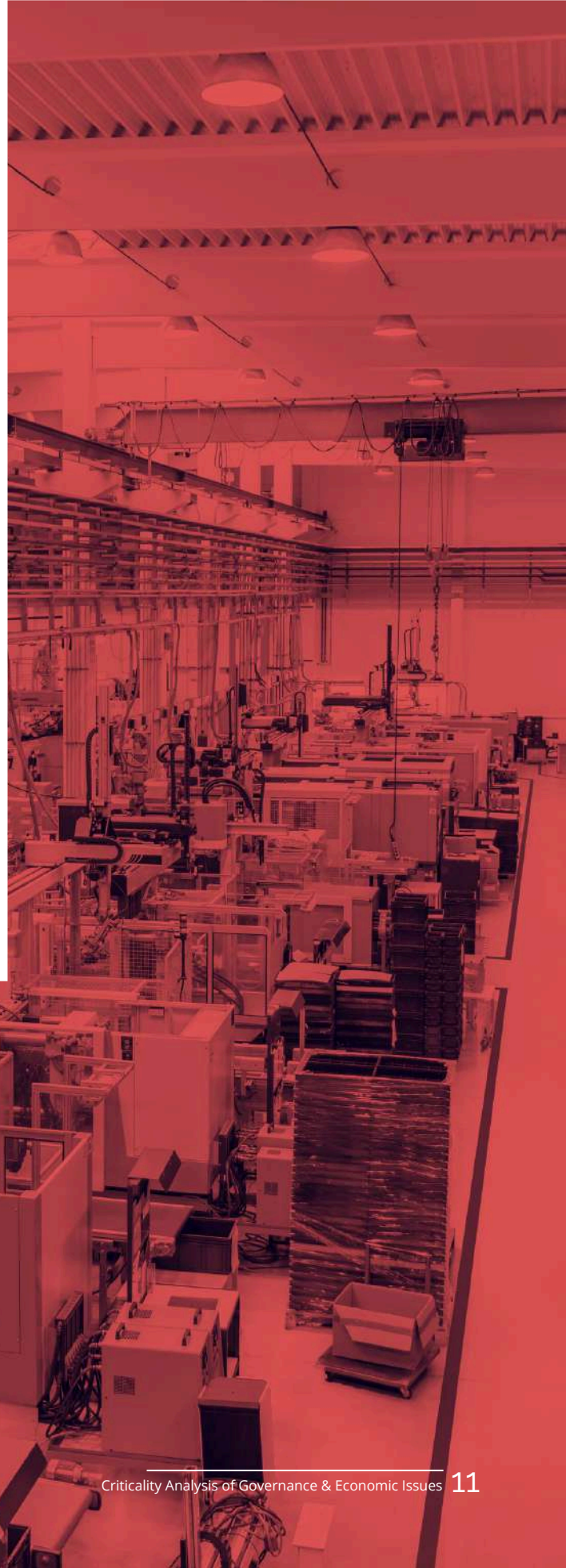
Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra—with Ghanaian SMEs, backed by parliamentary guarantees on land access and customs facilitation. To bolster technical capacity, the Society should inaugurate fellowships that send three Ghanaian parliamentary legal drafters annually to India’s legislative services, honing their skills in PPP contract negotiation and tariff drafting. Bi-annual study tours for Ghanaian MPs to India’s 24×7 SEZs—such as Noida and Visakhapatnam—will expose legislators to logistics coordination, community resettlement frameworks, and smart-grid management.

Institutionalizing co-financing cements this South-South partnership beyond executive discretion. A Joint Appropriation Act could mandate that 20 percent of Ghana’s annual infrastructure budget be co-financed via Indian LOCs, while a seed-capital matching clause obligates Ghana to contribute USD 0.25 for every USD 1 of Exim finance. Such measures signal shared ownership and attract co-investment from multilateral and private partners.

These joint initiatives—from trade credit lines and FDI to legislative co-creation and capacity building—reinforce one another. Agro-processing parks financed by ring-fenced LOCs will create raw material demand that sustains continuous-operation manufacturing zones. Smart-grid pilots will deliver the reliable power essential for both evening agro-processing and night-shift factories. The Private-Sector Liaison Cell’s matchmaking, guided by parliamentary guarantees, will catalyse investments into these zones, while oversight committees ensure accountability across projects. In this integrated approach, Ghana’s 24-Hour Economy and India’s 2047 Vision become mutually supportive frameworks, delivering sustainable development outcomes that extend far beyond the initial agreements.

Recommendation

- Parliament of Ghana should adopt a “24H+ Vision 2035” medium-term development framework—spanning 2025 to 2035—that crystallizes half-way milestones for Ghana’s 24-Hour Economy pillars (Grow24, Make24, Build24) in service of India’s 2047 Vision. Under this framework, a standing 24H+–2047 Coordination Subcommittee should be empowered to co-draft and fast-track model bills (Shift-Work Framework, TOU Tariffs), legislate annual appropriation amendments to ring-fence Exim Bank LOCs, and set SMART targets—7 percent GDP growth, 1 million new jobs, 40 percent off-peak power cost reduction—reviewed quarterly through joint oversight hearings. The subcommittee would also institutionalize constituency-level consultations, private-sector matchmaking forums led by a Liaison Cell, and an annual fellowship sending Ghanaian legislative drafters to India, thereby embedding a demand-driven, accountable policy architecture that delivers tangible progress toward Vision 2047’s halfway mark.



Criticality Analysis of Key Economic Issues

June 30 – July 4, 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.

2. 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?

3. Critical news stories

The week ending July 4, 2025, had the following news headlines:

1. Agriculture in the 24-Hour Economy: The Foundation of an Integrated Economic Strategy.
2. Modified Tax Scheme: Simple to Administer, But What Will It Deliver?
3. US\$360m World Bank Facility: Why Language and Transparency Matter.



4. Categorization of news stories under central economic themes

Economic Stability	Growth & Job Creation	Taxation & Revenue Mobilization	Trade & Investment	Infrastructure & Digital Economy
US\$360m World Bank Facility: Why Language and Transparency Matter	Rethinking the 24-Hour Economy: It's Not About Shifts, It's About Systems.	Modified Tax Scheme: Simple to Administer, But What Will It Deliver?	-	-



Rethinking the 24-Hour Economy: It's Not About Shifts, It's About Systems.

Public perception at the outset was simple: Ghana's 24-Hour Economy would extend working hours and create more jobs. But the full policy blueprint reveals something far more ambitious, a cohesive structural transformation agenda that ties together agriculture, industry, supply chains, manufacturing, culture, and human capital. In other words, the policy isn't about working around the clock. It's about making the economy work better, deeper, and more sustainably. Jobs, in this framing, are not the starting point. They are the outcome of coherent growth in the productive sectors.

Agriculture has been made the cornerstone of industrial expansion. One of the strongest features of the policy is its understanding that you cannot industrialize what you cannot produce. Agriculture is positioned as the foundational block for Ghana's industrial transformation, with explicit links to: reducing food imports, improving forex stability through domestic raw materials, feeding local industries like agro-processing, textiles, and pharmaceuticals, and creating supply chain linkages between rural farms and urban processing zones. This is a major improvement from past fragmented initiatives. It shows the government understands the centrality of agriculture to Ghana's macroeconomic and industrial performance.

Here lies the real test: Are we building the value chains needed to feed this new economy, or are we just outlining bold targets without the groundwork?

Take the Strategic Manufacturing Value Chains (SMVs) outlined in the policy: Agro-processing, textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, machinery and technology, and medicinal herbs and food supplements.

Under textiles and garments, the policy outlines plans to expand The Akosombo Textiles Limited (ATL) and Tex Styles Ghana enclave into full-scale spinning, dyeing, knitting, and printing powerhouses and phase out finished uniforms imports to stimulate domestic production of the garment and apparel ecosystem and position itself as a net exporter of African prints. But what's missing is the cotton production. Ghana's cotton production is currently declining and fragmented. Without rebuilding the cotton value chain; from farm to ginning, spinning, and weaving, these textile ambitions cannot be sustained. We're setting up for dependence on imported yarn, which undercuts competitiveness. Compare this to Benin, which built a thriving cotton sector first, then developed the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone to convert that raw cotton into high-value textile exports. Their industrialization is anchored in raw material strength. Ours isn't yet.

The Bigger Question: Do We Have What It Takes?

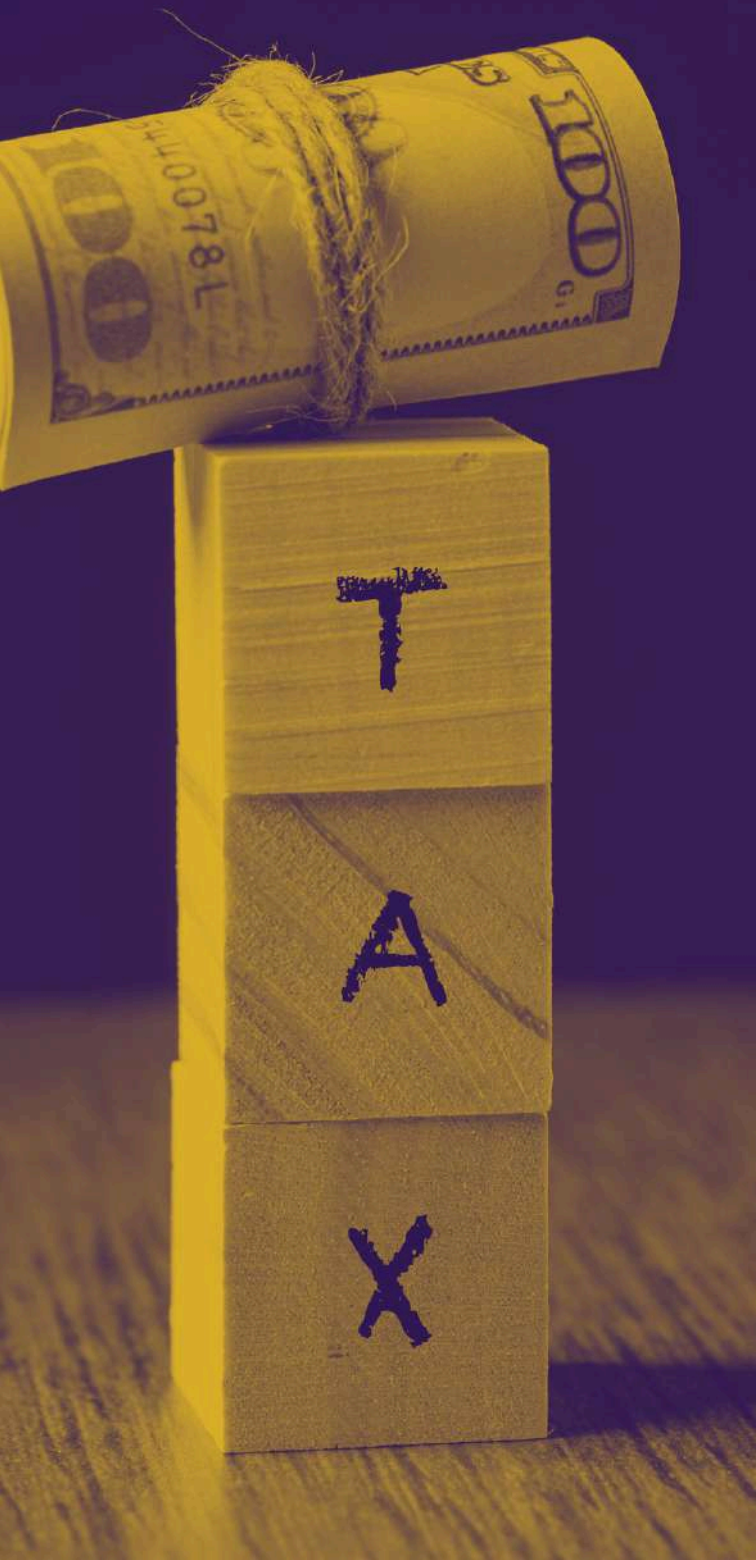
The 24-Hour Economy is right in framing economic transformation as a systems challenge. But do we have the right foundation to implement this vision? Do we have the land governance, irrigation, and agro-credit infrastructure to scale raw material production competitively? Can we align research, skills development, and financing to match the needs of each SMV? Without these pieces, the risk is that Ghana tries to industrialize on paper while continuing to import the raw materials it claims to replace. That's not transformation, it's repackaged dependency.

The 24-Hour Economy Policy reflects a deeper, more mature vision of economic transformation—one that tries to knit production, supply chains, industrial capacity, and human capital into a single loop. That's a major step forward.

But ambition alone won't deliver results. The real litmus test is whether Ghana can build strong, local value chains to feed its industries, starting with agriculture, poultry, cotton, and other key manufacturing inputs. If we fail to do that, the entire model risks becoming uncompetitive. We'll end up trying to industrialize using imported inputs, which defeats the purpose of the strategy. We cannot build the kind of resilient, forex-saving, job-creating economy this policy envisions while relying on external raw materials. Without deliberate, grounded investment in raw material competitiveness and supply chain depth, Ghana's 24-hour economy will run 24 hours a day but on imported inputs and borrowed strength.



Modified Tax Scheme: Simple to Administer, But What Will It Deliver?



On July 1st, the Ghana Revenue Authority introduced a new Modified Taxation Scheme aimed at informal businesses, a fixed quarterly tax of GH¢25–GH¢45 for those earning under GH¢20,000/year and a 3% turnover tax for businesses earning between GH¢20,000 and GH¢500,000/year, along with a 5% excise tax on locally produced plastic products and a 15% tax on non-life insurance premiums. The goal is to simplify compliance and widen the tax net and increase domestic revenue.

There's no doubt that simplicity is the Modified Tax Scheme's biggest strength. In a sector where most businesses are undocumented and cash-based, complex systems won't work. But this simplicity comes at the cost of equity.

Fairness and progressivity still hang in the balance. Flat taxes, by nature, are regressive. In effect, the poorest informal workers' pay a higher share of their income in taxes than those who are better off. That's regressive, so while the rate is uniform, the burden isn't. In the end, the scheme may hurt the very low-income entrepreneurs it's trying to formalize, pushing them further out of the system rather than bringing them in.

The economic burden is already trickling down to consumers. From food vendors to plastics manufacturers, many businesses have said they'll pass the tax onto consumers, raising prices by GHS 1–2 per meal or more. A 5% excise tax on plastics is also expected to affect packaging and everyday goods. This means a tax on the informal sector becomes a tax on households.

One key question that must not be overlooked is this: how much will it cost to collect these taxes? Is GRA's plan to rely on voluntary compliance, but voluntary systems rarely work when people can't see what their taxes are doing for them. So what happens when payments don't come in? This policy is not new. Ghana tried something similar under the Kufuor administration (Tax Stamp). It failed to generate meaningful revenue, partly because enforcement was weak and many traders simply refused to pay. In some areas, collection costs even exceeded revenue. Do we have better infrastructure, trust, and enforcement mechanisms today to make this work? Or are we repeating old experiments for marginal gains? Also, there's no guarantee that this will significantly increase tax revenue. This policy may not deliver significant revenue without intensive public education and smart incentives.

The Modified Tax Regime might expand the tax net on paper, but whether it delivers real fiscal value is far from guaranteed. Because if the system feels arbitrary or unfair and offers nothing in return, compliance will drop and enforcement will become expensive.

The Modified Tax Scheme reflects a longstanding desire to tap into the informal sector, but good intentions don't always translate into good outcomes. It simplifies tax administration but it's not progressive, it may be expensive to enforce and it likely won't deliver significant revenue

If the government wants to succeed where previous efforts failed, it must answer some hard questions: Will this scheme be cost-efficient to administer? How will the GRA enforce compliance at scale? What incentives beyond obligation will encourage payment? And how will the public see value in what they pay?





US\$360m World Bank Facility: Why Language and Transparency Matter

On July 1, 2025, Parliament approved a US\$360 million facility from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), part of the Second Resilient Recovery Development Policy Financing programme. The government described the facility as budgetary support to clear arrears, particularly to road contractors. But the Minority raised two key concerns: The government deliberately avoided calling it a loan, creating confusion around its fiscal classification, and that there were inconsistencies between the Cabinet-approved purpose (solely arrears to contractors) and what was presented to Parliament, which included other government payments. The Minority's worry is that, over time, such vagueness could be creating space for unrecorded liabilities or debt reclassifications and hidden debt.

The Ministry of Finance has since clarified that it is indeed a loan and that the funds will go toward contractor arrears.

The Real Issue is public accountability, not the loan itself. This isn't about the loan's terms or even the economic wisdom of using it for arrears. This is about political framing and transparency in communication. The core concerns are language matters. Referring to a concessional loan as simply "financing" or "budget support", without openly stating that it adds to public debt, invites suspicion. Ghana has walked a dangerous road before; hidden energy sector debts, off-budget liabilities, and guarantees quietly tucked away have all undermined fiscal credibility. In an era where public trust is fragile, every word used to describe public borrowing must be clear. Transparency isn't just about publishing numbers; it's also about honest, unambiguous framing.

The backlash over the \$360 million facility was avoidable. It's a case of how unclear communication and language can erode trust, even when the economic decision is defensible. In a country still rebuilding credibility after years of debt opacity, the standard must be clear, honest, and consistent public disclosure. Because trust in fiscal policy isn't just about what governments borrow, it's also about how they say it.





IMANI Center for Policy & Education is a Think Tank of considerable local and international reputation 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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