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WhatsApp Considers Exit from Nigeria Amid $220 Million Fine and Data Privacy Demands

WhatsApp, owned by Meta, is considering suspending its operations in Nigeria following a $220 million fine imposed by the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) for data privacy violations.

FCCPC's additional demands include halting the sharing of user data without consent and providing detailed data collection information. WhatsApp argues these demands would make it impossible to operate due to reliance on Meta's infrastructure. Legal and industry experts have questioned the fine's validity and proportionality.

Comment: The potential exit of WhatsApp from Nigeria could impact communication and business operations for many users and SMEs. It may also set a precedent for data privacy enforcement in Nigeria, influencing how other tech companies approach compliance. Additionally, Meta could face legal and financial consequences, impacting its regional operations and investor confidence.

For more information, please click here.

Lagos State Introduces New Tax Policies for Digital Economy to Boost Revenue and Achieve N5 Trillion IGR Goal

The Lagos State Government has announced new tax policies targeting remote workers, digital influencers, and the broader digital economy to boost revenue. This initiative, part of a broader strategy to generate ₦5 trillion in internally generated revenue (IGR), aims to collect ₦200 billion annually from approximately two million residents. The plan includes implementing a Resident Global Digital Citizen Tax Management System and advanced digital solutions to improve tax collection.

Additional revenue will be generated from the property sector, informal sector, and circular economy, with specific initiatives such as a fintech hub, software development centre, and partnerships for a Digital Service Tax (DST).

The overall strategy seeks to embrace technology, broaden the tax base, and enhance tax administration, with the digital economy expected to contribute ₦750 billion to the IGR target.

Comment: Lagos State's new tax policies targeting the digital economy are likely to significantly increase revenue by expanding the tax base to include remote workers and digital influencers. This could drive innovation in tax administration but may also place additional financial burdens on individuals and businesses within the digital sector, potentially affecting their operations.

For more information, please click here.

Internet Restrictions in Tanzania Signal Escalating Political Control and Threat to Civil Liberties

Tanzania has restricted access to X (formerly Twitter) amid growing political tensions. The internet observatory Netblocks confirmed the outage, which trails the recent arrests of opposition figures, including politician Tundu Lissu and members of the Chadema party. Authorities accuse the opposition of planning disruptions via Zoom meetings. In response, Tanzanians are using VPNs to bypass the ban and express frustration.

This is part of a wider trend of internet control in the region, with recent shutdowns also seen in Kenya and Senegal. Such restrictions often disrupt communication and commerce, sparking criticism from international human rights groups over violations of free speech and access to information.

The developments highlight concerns over democracy and freedom of expression in Tanzania.

Comment: The restriction of access to X and the arrests of opposition leaders in Tanzania signal a tightening of governmental control, likely leading to further political unrest. The move raises concerns about the suppression of free speech and access to information, potentially undermining democracy, and civil liberties. This could damage the country's international reputation and exacerbate internal divisions, while also setting a precedent for further internet controls in response to dissent.

For more information, please click here.

CONTACT US:

Lagos
15 Military Street, Onikan, Lagos

+234 201 700 2570-9

Abuja
3 Lobito Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja

+234 209 700 2570-9

www.alp.company

alp@alp.company

ALP NG & Co

alpng.co

ALPNigeria

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