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CONVICTION POLITICS -

President names Special Prosecutor

President Akufo-Addo has announced his nomination for a Special Prosecutor and the calls for the long-awaited Right to Information Bill ("the RTI Bill") have become more intense than ever before.

The RTI Bill has generated enough emotional heat over the years as successive Governments dragged their legislative feet, provoking rebuke from civil groups of the significant delay in enacting the law.

Tackling corruption through the establishment of the Office of the Special Prosecutor and passage of the RTI Bill were key campaign promises of the Akufo-Addo Administration. Many have argued that the appointment of the Special Prosecutor has added a greater sense of urgency to the passage of the RTI Bill. Under the legal mandate to investigate and prosecute corruption, the Special Prosecutor has been empowered to request for information relevant to an investigation, subject to a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment for refusal to comply with such request. However, there

is no doubt that the passage of the RTI Bill could only buttress the Special Prosecutor's quiver of anti-corruption tools and assure Ghanaians of the effectiveness of this independent role.

But there is another side to this debate, that takes the view that the right to privacy cannot be completely buried in this new world of unrestricted access to information. Furthermore, disclosure of certain facets of information ought to be discouraged to prevent the semblance of a "witch hunting" exercise by the powers that be.

Ultimately, the justification for passing the overdue RTI law at this present time could not be more obvious and attractive for a country which, relative to its regional peers, is celebrated for its democracy. The culmination of the Office of the Special Prosecutor presents no better time to formalize freedom of information in Ghana - a long outstanding legislative responsibility.



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ENERGY UPDATE

Government Signs Pact with Exxon Mobil

The country's oil sector has received a major boost with the signing of a petroleum agreement between the Government of Ghana and one of the world's biggest oil companies, Exxon Mobil Corporation (Exxon Mobil) of the United States of America (USA). The agreement will allow Exxon to acquire exploration and production rights for the Deepwater Cape Three Points (DWCTP) block – the Tano Basin in particular.

Ivory Coast Awards Tullow Two New Oil & Gas Blocks

Ivory Coast awarded Tullow Oil Plc two new oil and gas blocks on the 17th January 2018, including one along the maritime boundary with Ghana. The Africa-focused Tullow now holds stakes in nine Ivorian blocks, eight of which it has picked up since an international tribunal in September ruled in favour of Ghana in a dispute over the countries' maritime border. Tullow also holds a 21.33% stake in Ivory Coast's Espoir Field, which is

operated by Canadian National Railway Company.

TOR to Refine 25,000 Barrels of Crude Oil Daily as it Resumes Operations

Tema Oil Refinery ("TOR") is set to refine about 25,000 barrels of crude oil per day as the state refinery resumes operations after almost 10 months of shutdown due to maintenance. Ghana's main oil refinery has been reeling under challenges which energy experts have blamed on poor management.

Ghana Discovers Lithium

Lithium has been discovered in Ghana, the Ghana Minerals Commission has confirmed. The discovery was made in the Volta, Western and Ashanti regions. New satellite stations will be set up by the Minerals Commission to monitor the discovery sites and deter illegal miners from encroaching on them



BUSINESS UPDATE

Ghana's Economy – Strong Growth Outlook

It is reported that Ghana's economy advanced 9.3 percent year-on-year in the third quarter of 2017, above a 9.0 percent rise in the previous period. It is the highest growth rate since the third quarter of 2014, mainly boosted by a 72.2 percent jump in the oil and gas sector. On a quarterly basis, the economy expanded 2.5 percent.

Start-Up Businesses to Enjoy Tax Holidays



The Minister of Business Development, Mr Ibrahim Mohammed Awal, has announced Government plans to provide between one and three-year tax holidays for young businesses effective from this year. This

measure is to enable start-ups to plough back profits into their businesses, expand and create more jobs, the Minister explained.

Cashew Development Board to be Inaugurated on 20th February 2018

President Nana Akufo-Addo has announced that his government will launch the much-anticipated cashew board to oversee the marketing of cashew in the country at Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo Region.

President Akufo-Addo Inaugurates Twyford Ceramics Factory

The President inaugurated a \$77.26 Million ceramics factory at Aboadze, near Shama in the Western Region in January, to produce ceramic tiles to feed the local and export markets.



President Akufo-Addo Inaugurates Twyford Ceramics Factory

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BUSINESS UPDATE

Digital Currencies- “We are not there yet”, says the Bank of Ghana



The Bank of Ghana (“BoG”) has issued a Notice that the use, holding and trading of digital currencies such as Bitcoin, is currently not licensed under Ghanaian law. A revision of the existing law is envisaged in the near future, aimed at bringing the electronic payments system up to date with international standards in line with the evolving electronic payments landscape.

WHO’S WHO

Martin Amidu – Nominated Special Prosecutor.
Popularly known as “Citizen Vigilante” and widely known for his stern stance against corruption of public officials. A former Attorney General and Minister for Justice under the NDC administration. His nomination has been welcomed as an objective and non-partisan one, described by many as a ‘master stroke’ by the NPP- led Government.

Joe Anokye - Director-General of NCA

Mr Joe Anokye has been appointed the Director of the National Communications Authority (NCA). Mr Anokye, previously an award-winning employee of NASA with expertise in telecommunication management, networks and cyber security platforms in both the public and private sectors. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Ghana’s communications industry.

To further discuss these, or any other related topic with us contact:

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