

>>> Menas Nigeria Politics & Security

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1.0 Key News Items

- > On Monday 26th February the Federal Government (FG) added 414 megawatts of power into the national grid with the commissioning of the Geregu Gas Turbine Power Plant in Lokoja, Kogi State.
- > President **Olusegun Obasanjo**, attending the commissioning said the development was in line with his administration's commitment to end power outages in all parts of the country in the shortest possible time. The power plant was built by the government at the cost of €195 million, with a pledge to commence the second phase of the project immediately, which would raise the plant's capacity to about 828MW.
- > Vice President and **Action Congress (AC)** presidential candidate, **Atiku Abubakar**, took his campaign to President Obasanjo's home state of Ogun, where he claimed **Egba** ancestry (the **Egbas** are the **Yoruba** ethnic group from the area and President Obasanjo is an **Egba**).
- > Atiku said his coming to Abeokuta, the state capital, was like a homecoming, because of his relationship with the late **Moshood Abiola** and other notable **Egba** sons and daughters. He added that when Obasanjo's term ends on 29th May it would be a case of one **Egba** man handing over power to another **Egba** man.
- > Chairman of **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** **Maurice Iwu** said on 26th February that any politician whose name did not appear on the Commission's final list of eligible candidates of either 8th or 13th March, could not contest the April polls. He also said the nation's Constitution guides the operations of the *Commission*.
- > The **INEC** has written to the **AC** informing it that VP Atiku Abubakar has been constitutionally barred from the April poll. The letter was in response to an earlier letter from **AC** seeking clarification on the status of its presidential candidate. On Thursday 1st March the **AC**

said the that the *INEC*'s disqualification of Atiku was illegal, null and void and of no effect whatsoever

- > Atiku Abubakar expressed dismay on 25th February over the government's refusal to restore his security details days after the Appeal Court ruling, which upheld his status as the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Meanwhile the Inspector General of Police, **Sunday Ehindero**, sought to deny the claim, saying it was untrue, because the VP had a full compliment of about 75 policemen as security details.
- > Meanwhile **Dr Iyorchia Ayu** - who is the former Minister for Internal Affairs and the Director General of the ***Atiku Campaign Organisation (ATO)*** - was charged by the federal government with terrorism. The charge was filed at the Federal High Court in Abuja on the 24th February when he was accused of having conspired with **Timi Frank** and **Paul Ofana** to commit the offence.
- > He is accused of having given N1.5million to the other men on 7th February who the following day allegedly tried to solicit a ***Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND)*** leader to carry out acts of terrorism. The AC party protested against the government's action in pressing charges and described it as a final indicator of the return of full-blown dictatorship to the country.
- > On 28th February the ***ANPP*** presidential candidate and former Head of State, **Mohammadu Buhari**, told party members to accept the current fight against corruption or lose credibility among Nigerians. He added that the party would not field those candidates who had been indicted by the ***EFCC***.
- > The Supreme Court has affirmed the power of the ***Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)*** to investigate state governments and threw out a suit filed by the Abia State Government challenging the powers of the commission to probe the state over financial crimes.
- > The court also held that the ***EFCC*** was a corporate body and that anyone who had any complaint against the commission should sue it directly at the appropriate high court.
- > On 24th February the ***EFCC*** arrested the National Secretary of the ***All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)***, Senator **Saidu Kumo**, in Bauchi town on his way to Gombe State. He has been transferred to Abuja where he is currently being detained.
- > On Thursday 1st March the ***EFCC*** arraigned three officials of the Enugu State government at Federal High Court in Lagos on a 29-

count charge of fraud and concealment, diverting the statutory allocation of some local government areas of the state and concealing the origins of various sums of money totalling over N4.5 billion. The accused persons **Peter Mbah**, **Victor Udeh** and **Sam Ejiofor** all pleaded not guilty to the charges.

- > On 26th February the **All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)** governorship candidate in Kebbi State, Senator **Faruq Bello Bunza** denied that he had betrayed Governor **Adamu Aliero** with his refusal to join him and defect to the **Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)**. Bunza claimed that he remained loyal to the **ANPP** and that Aliero was mistaken to have been persuaded by some desperate **ANPP** members to join the **PDP**.
- > On 26th February the Governor of Borno State, **Ali Modu Sherif** said that the state had in its accounts a reserve of over N10 billion and was not indebted to any bank. The governor said that since the inception of his administration the state had not taken any loan.
- > **Olu Falae** - the National Chairman of the **Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA)**, and the former presidential candidate in the **Alliance for Democracy (AD)** and **All Peoples Party (APP)** joint ticket in the 1999 presidential election - was amongst the dignitaries who launched the gubernatorial campaign of **Jimi Agbaje** in Lagos on 28th February.
- > One of Nigeria's most prominent traditional leaders, the **Emir of Daura, Muhamadu Bashar**, died aged 83 on Sunday 25th February. At the prayer session and burial were the Katsina State governor and **PDP** presidential candidate, **Umaru Yar'adua** and the state's Deputy Governor, **Abdullahi Aminci**.
- > Others were the **Emirs** of Kano, Ringim, Kazaure, Zauzzau, Hadejia, Gumel and Jama're, plus former ministers, diplomats, members of the **National Assembly** and other dignitaries from across the country. The 26th March has been declared as a work-free day in honour of the departed **Emir**.
- > Six Rear Admirals, two Commodores, several Captains and Commanders of the Nigerian Navy were compulsorily retired on Friday 23rd February. The officers who lost out include Rear Admirals **Sunday Lawal Baje**, **John Kpokpogiri**, **Olukayode Biobaku**, **Ndazumi Idris Dirisu**, **Ben Chibuzo Noshiri** and **Francis Akpan**. Others include Commodore **Edwin Onoye Omakwu**, Captains **George Alily** and **Goddy Ohuabunwa**.
- > On 28th February the **National Population Commission (NPC)** insisted that the Lagos State objection to the provisional result of

the 2006 housing and population census could neither be substantiated nor sustained. The Chairman **Samaila Makama** said the objection was based on a very weak foundation of unverifiable and unrelated data collected from secondary sources.

- Banks in Nigeria have made a commitment to invest over US\$700 million (N90.3 billion) in the proposed **African Finance Corporation (AFC)** which is billed to take off in April 2007. According to **Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN)** Governor, **Charles Soludo** a bill making 5% of Nigeria's external reserves, which stood at US\$43.392 billion as at 12th February 2007, available for lending to investment banks like the **AFC** is now before the **National Assembly** for approval.

2.0 Niger Delta & Oil

- On Monday 26th February the federal government deployed hundreds of troops from the **Joint Task Force (JTF)**, also known as **Operation Restore Hope**, to the warring communities of Liama and Egweama in Brass local government area of Bayelsa State to check the fratricidal war that broke out in the areas last week. About 20 people were killed in the ensuing fracas with several others missing and homes and properties in both communities destroyed.
- The **MEND** admitted that a Lebanese, **Imad Saiba**, taken from an **Agip** platform in Bayelsa State, escaped from their custody on Wednesday 28th February. The group alleged that he escaped with the connivance of some Bayelsa State government officials who were funded by Agip.
- Two Italians, **Pasari Lusio** and **Morio Lusio**, who were working for **Revigo Construction**, were kidnapped at Kpean in Ogoniland in Rivers State on the night of Friday 23rd February. So far no group has taken responsibility for the kidnapping.
- On the same night in rivers State a Lebanese was killed when about five men trailed the vehicle they were travelling in and opened fire on them killing him and leaving others wounded. The people in the vehicle were workers of **AUC Construction Company**.
- On 1st March the Minister of Energy, **Edmund Daukoru** said that Nigeria's production capacity now stood at three million barrels per day with the recent addition of about 250,000b/d from **Bonga**, 210,000b/d from **Erha** oil facilities and a set target of additional one million b/d production capacity by 2010 to be realised from projects such as **Agbami** 190,000b/d, **Akpo** 160,000b/d and **Usan** 120,000b/d.

- He also said the country was about to witness huge growth rate in upstream oil and gas investment to the tune of US\$100 billion between 2007 and 2011, with an average annual increase of US\$20 billion.



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