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Several Ethiopians escaped their shelter in Madinah recently by jumping over the walls and then breaking into the adjoining Taibah University campus, according to the city's police department. Brig. Fahd bin Amer Al-Ghanam, spokesman of the police, said 15 Ethiopians broke into the campus, but security officers managed to control the situation and took them back to the shelter. Several other Ethiopians, who had gathered outside the shelter, were also told to return. The university campus and buildings were searched thoroughly afterwards to make sure that no one was hiding there. The Ethiopians said they wanted the Saudi authorities to speed up the deportation process (Arab News, Nov. 27).

Ethiopia has flown home over 50,000 citizens from Saudi Arabia after a crackdown against illegal immigrants, the foreign ministry said. Foreign ministry spokesman Dina Mufti told the final total once the mass airlift ends is now expected to be around 80,000. Ethiopia started repatriating citizens living illegally in Saudi Arabia after a seven-month amnesty period to formalize their status expired on Nov. 4, sparking violent protests between Saudi police and Ethiopian migrants preparing to leave the country. The Ethiopian government said three of its citizens were killed in clashes. Dina said the government is spending \$2.6m on the repatriation program to bring citizens home, the majority women. Ethiopia has said relations with Saudi Arabia remain "sisterly", with Dina saying the government's main priority was to bring citizens home (WIC, Nov. 27).

The vice chairman of the national council of Semayawi Party, Ato Yeshiwas Assefa, and a member of the council, Ato Simeneh Tsehay, was to appear before the Fourth First Instance Court in Addis Ababa. The two men were accused of creating violent disturbances two months ago as the police tried to arrest Ato Girma Seifu, opposition MP. The two men were immediately arrested but were later released on bail. The authorities arrested them again and formal charges were established against them (Sendek, Nov. 27).

The European Union signed a development grant with Ethiopia worth 212.4m € to help finance road construction and projects targeting maternal health and drought resilience. Ethiopia is midway through a five-year economic plan that foresees almost tripling the country's road network and beginning the building of 5,000 km of new railway lines. Addis Ababa's big push on infrastructure is aimed at connecting remote regions and has propelled the economy to double-digit growth for much of the last decade (WIC, Nov. 25).

The governments of Ethiopia and China signed a financing agreement amounting to 101.5bio Yuan to support various projects. Some 100bio Yuan will go to projects to be carried out jointly by the two governments. The balance, 1.5bio Yuan, will finance the airport expansion project, according to the agreement. The two parties have also signed agreements to strengthen the economic and technical cooperation as well as cooperation between Confucius University and Addis Ababa University, and the China-Ethiopia technology library, research and science park, China cultural center in Ethiopia (ENA, Nov. 26).

The House of People's Representatives ratified the 320m USD financing agreement signed between the government of Ethiopia and Import-Export Bank of China. The loan agreement was signed to finance the Addis Ababa-Adama highway road project. According to the agreement, 143m USD of the total assistance will be used to finance the Addis Ababa-Adama highway, while the balance will go to finance Lebu-Akaki-Goro road (ENA, Nov. 29).

Gleaming Deere & Co. (DE) tractors and harvesters are sitting idle five years after Karuturi Global Ltd. (KARG) opened a farm in Ethiopia that was hailed as the poster child of the country's plan to triple food exports by 2015. 80% of the Bangalore based company's land in the southwestern Gambella region is on a flood plain, meaning its 100,000 ha concession is inundated by the Baro River for as much as seven months of the year, according to Managing Director Ramakrishna Karuturi. The company was unaware of the extent of the flooding when it leased the land, he said. "Karuturi, like many other large-scale investors, underestimated the complexity of opening land for large-scale commercial agriculture," Philipp Baumgartner, a researcher at the Bonn, Germany based Center for Development Research who wrote a doctoral thesis on agriculture in Gambella, said in a Nov. 20 response to e-mailed questions. Karuturi, the world's biggest rose grower, was one of the first companies to take advantage of

a government plan to lease 3.3 million ha of farmland to private investors. Growing food on the unutilized land would help the Horn of Africa country address shortages that forces it to seek aid from international donor severy year, former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said at the time (Bloomberg News, Nov. 25).