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The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) revealed Ethiopian security forces have detained for two weeks without charge the editor of a newsmagazine and accused him of incitement to terrorism, according to local journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists calls on authorities to release Solomon Kebede immediately and halt their harassment of journalists affiliated with the weekly Ye Muslimoch Guday. Police in Addis Ababa, on Jan. 17 arrested Kebede, managing editor of the now-defunct paper Ye Muslimoch Guday ("Muslim Affairs"), and took him to the Maekelawi federal detention center. Solomon's health is in poor condition and he has been held without access to a lawyer, the journalists said. A court date has been set for February 13 (Release of the CPJ, Feb. 2.)

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom and Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mme Fowzia Yusuf Haji Adan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to set up a Joint Ministerial Commission. According to a Foreign Ministry statement, Dr. Tedros said, "The signing of this agreement here today will open a new chapter in our relations, further strengthen our unique ties and provide us the opportunity to cement the existing relations between our peoples." (ENA, Jan. 30)

Ethiopia will build a 250 km highway connecting between Dire Dawa and Dewale. The road project, currently in the design stage, is expected to upgrade the current gravel road to asphalt creating another alternative access to a sea port. The road is particularly important in light of the fact that Ethiopia handles 98% of its export and import freight through Port Djibouti. It is also expected that a new port intended to be constructed in Tadjoura will increase the congestion at this port thus facilitating the trade through Djibouti. Ethiopia has been investing in the construction of roads connecting with other countries in the region including the Shire-Adi Goshu- Lugdi road project. The first phase of the Shire-Adi Goshu-Lugdi project has been finished at an estimated cost of 616m birr, while the second phase leading to Lugdi is currently under construction. The Gambella-Etang-Gikawe road is expected to connect the newly-independent republic of South Sudan to Ethiopia and is expected to be completed in June 2013 (Capital, Jan. 29).

Ethiopia has increasingly been very welcoming to refugees crossing to its territory from neighboring African countries. Every month, Ethiopia generously receives thousands of new refugees' who flee conflicts at their home country. The country, for instance, currently hosts more than 91,000 Sudanese refugees. In addition to the Sudanese refugees, the horn of Africa's nation also shelters more than 214,000 Somali refugees, 61,000 Eritreans and over 4,000 refugees from other African countries. Last year, Ethiopia received more than 25,000 Somalis - making it the largest recipient of Somali refugees in the region after Kenya (Sudan Tribune, Feb. 2).

Ezana Mining Development, a wholly-owned Ethiopian private company, is building a \$17.8m gold plant in Tigray. The contract is to build a carbon-in-leach (CIL) gold plant at Terakimti, in northern Tigray, near Shire Endasselassie Town. It also said the construction had already begun at the plant, which is scheduled to be operational by the end of this fiscal year. Ezana and the Ministry of Mines (MoM) signed an agreement three weeks ago, enabling Ezana to produce 2.017kg of gold within two years (Fortune, Jan. 31).

The Chennai-based Farida Group has established a tannery in Ethiopia to cater to export market and, if needed, for imports into India. The group is among the largest exporters of footwear and makes leather footwear for leading international brands. The tannery about 70 km from Addis Ababa was commissioned towards the end of last year with capacity to produce about 800,000 sq. ft of leather (The Hindu, Jan. 29).

The Ministry of Agriculture has allocated 285,000 ha for the development of an agricultural investment zone. The idea is to expand agricultural investment as speedily as possible. Minister of Agriculture, Ato Tefera Deribew, said all feasibility studies have been completed to allocate land for agricultural investment. Accordingly, 100,000 ha in Benishangul Gumuz, 67,000 ha in Gambella, and 118,000 ha in SNNP have been set aside for the purpose (Reporter, Jan. 31). A regional laboratory constructed in Adama town of Oromia State at a cost of 60m Birr, with the support of the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was inaugurated. The laboratory is expected to perform comprehensive

laboratory activities including HIV, malaria, TB cultures, improved diagnosis for diseases and viruses through advanced techniques, and provide External Quality Assurance services. Health State Minister, Dr. Kebede Worku, said the laboratory will provide comprehensive service for six million people. He said it will serve as a model for seven laboratories to be constructed in other regional states. US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Donald Booth said it is expected to transform the health research and laboratory capacity building as well as monitoring activities one step ahead. The Ambassador said PEPFAR has allocated more than 70m Birr for the construction of new a outpatient ward and medical school at Adama Referral Hospital (ENA, Feb.2).