

Seven Days, Vol. 19 No. 41, December 11, 2012(\*)

Hailemariam Desalegn, Ethiopia's prime minister, has said that he is willing to hold talks with neighboring Eritrea, with whom Addis Ababa fought a border war that ended in 2000. If Desalegn follows through with Wednesday's statement, it will be the first time a leader in Addis Ababa has held talks with Isaias Afewerki, the Eritrean president, since the end of the conflict which left at least 70,000 people dead. "If you ask me, 'Do you want to go to Asmara and sit down and negotiate with Isaias Afewerki?' Then, I will say yes'," Hailemariam said in an interview with Al Jazeera which was to be broadcast on December 8 (Al Jazeera, Dec. 5).

Ethiopia, the world's fourth-largest sesame grower, may see earnings from exports of pulses, oil seeds and spices rise by a third to more than \$900m this year. Africa's largest coffee producer and second-most populous nation is providing free land for processing and warehouses, as well as waiving related import and export duties, Haile Berhe, president of the 110-member Ethiopian Pulses, Oil Seeds and Spices Processors-Exporters Association said (Haile Berhe, president of the Interview of Ethiopian Pulses, Oil Seeds and Spices Processors-Exporters Association, Dec.6).

Alecto Minerals said on its website that rock chip sampling of the Wayu Boda project, in the Adola Greenstone Belt in Southern Ethiopia, returned grades of up to 47.4 grams of gold per t. Samples from artisanal workings, meanwhile, contained up to 31.7 grams per t of the precious metal, while trenching returned 1.3 m at 4.8 g/t, Alecto added. "These results demonstrate the high-grade potential of the region which is host to Midroc's 160,000 ounce per annum Lege Dembi Gold Mine and NMIC's Dawa Gold Project," said Alecto managing director Damien Conboy (Dec. 3).

An Israeli company has finalized preparations to take over the management of the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCo) for three years. Israel's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Belaynesh Zavaida, told the press that about 50 Israeli investors have applied to open investment projects in Ethiopia. She said 20 Israeli engineers would soon come to Ethiopia to start work at EEPCo. The Israeli company won an international bid to take over the corporation's management. She added that 50 Israeli companies are currently being screened to start projects in solar energy, water technology, irrigation development, health and other sectors (Reporter, Dec. 2).

Ethiopia has been ranked 79th in the world when it comes to the state of globalization. This is according to the DHL Global Connectedness Index (GCI), a comprehensive analysis of the state of globalization around the world, which was released this week. The GCI 2012 ranks 140 countries on their global connectedness levels based on international flows of trade, capital, information and people. According to Essete Gebriel, Country Manager of DHL Express Ethiopia, while the Sub-Saharan Africa region remains the world's least connected, it averaged the largest connectedness increase from 2010 to 2011 (Ethiopia Business News, Dec. 3).

Ethiopia and Japan signed two grant agreements amounting to a total of 17.3m USD for construction of educational facilities and detail design for the rehabilitation of the Lumame-Debreworkos road. Some 16.4m USD will be utilized for the construction of primary and secondary schools in South Ethiopia People's State. The other agreement which amounts to 900,000 USD will be used to finance a detailed design for the Rehabilitation of Trunk Road Project Phase IV from Lumame to Debreworkos (State media, Dec. 5).

The Adama One Wind Power Project, built at a cost of US\$117m, was inaugurated. The project has a generating capacity of 51 MWs. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister noted that Ethiopia is striving to meet a goal of producing 10,000 MWs by the end of the Growth and Transformation Plan in 2015. According to Fikadu Abraham, coordinator of the site, using wind to generate electricity is cost effective, and the project was particularly advantageous because it had no negative impact on the environment or the surrounding community. One Wind Farm has already been connected with the country's main power grid. 85% of the project cost was covered by loans obtained from the Chinese government, and the Ethiopian government provided the balance (WIC, Dec. 3).

An article in Scientific American wrote every day 20 unusual lions greet visitors at a tiny animal park in Addis Ababa. These lions, which have spent generations in captivity, are not like most African lions (*Panthera leo leo*). For one thing, they are slightly smaller than the wild lions found elsewhere on the continent. For another, the males carry distinctive black manes that extend from their shoulders to their stomachs and are much darker than those spotted by other lions. And finally, new research reveals that these rare lions also have unique DNA, although not enough to declare them a separate species or subspecies (Dec. 4).