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Muslims in Ethiopia protested in the capital Addis Ababa during Eid al-Fitr prayers on Thursday, part of a two-year-old campaign against what they say is government interference in their religious affairs. A heavy police presence around the city's stadium the venue for morning prayers marked a tense run-up to the Muslim holiday after clashes between Muslims and police killed up to five people last week (Reuters, Aug. 8. - Hundreds were arrested, beaten, and tear gassed Thursday morning following nationwide Eid day protests, Muslim rights activists said. Police began rounding up peaceful protesters returning home near the Ministry of Justice in Addis Ababa shortly after the Eid prayers concluded at the national stadium, according to eyewitness reports on Twitter. Those detained were ordered to sit on the ground inside the Ministry's compound, the reports said (OPride, Aug. 8.)- In similar protests, police in the northern city of Dessie fired machine guns and tear gas, indiscriminately beating the protesters, according to a Facebook post by activist group, Dimtsachin Yisema. - Hundreds of Muslim protesters during the weekend clashed with police in Ethiopia's Oroma region ahead of the upcoming holiday of the end of Ramadan, or Eid al-Fitr. The incident occurred in West Arsi Zone after regional police arrived at the scene to intervene the situation. Regional Police told that the violence led to death and injuries following fire exchange with what it alleged were some armed protesters. "Three were killed and seven policemen sustained injuries after armed protesters opened fire on security forces," police said in an email exchange. It added the situation is now under control and those responsible for the violence were taken to custody without elaborating on the number of arrested protesters (Sudan Tribune, Aug. 5).

Ethiopia's annual production of cement has reached 12.12 million t, more than double the current domestic demand, the Ministry of Industry (MoI) disclosed. Ethiopia's current domestic demand for cement is estimated to be around 5.4 million t, according to data from the MoI. "Due to the construction boom and the country's rapid growth we expect the annual demand for cement to grow," Melaku Taye, public relations and communications director at MoI, told. Under the Growth and Transformation Plan, Ethiopia plans to raise its annual cement production to 27 million t (WIC, Aug. 3).

The construction of the main irrigation canal which makes up part of Tana Beles Integrated Sugar Development Project has been completed. The main canal stretches 30.5 km from a six-gate river diversion weir structure built on Tana Beles. The diversion weir, finalized in June 2013, diverts the water which flows downwards after generating 460 MW of electricity for Tana Beles hydroelectric dam. The 4.6 m high and 13 m long diversion weir has the capacity to discharge 60 cub.m of water per second. Melke Tadesse, project manager, said the construction of secondary and tertiary canals that will carry water to the plantation are underway. - The Tana Beles sugar project will develop 50,000 ha of land in Awi and Jawi weredas of Amhara region and 25,000 ha in Dangur wereda of the Benishangul-Gumuz region. According to the project manager, of the total 75,000 ha needed for the project, land clearing works have been finalized on 30,000 ha. The Tana Beles Integrated Sugar Development Project is a 31 bio birr project and includes the construction of three sugar factories each with a crushing capacity of 12,000 tons of cane per day (WIC, Aug. 6).

The Chinese company undertaking the construction of Wolkait sugar factory has been given eighteen months to complete the building. The factory, one of the ten sugar factories planned under the growth and transformation plan, is being built by the popular Chinese company CAMC Engineering (CAMCE) in western Tigray. Amenay Mesfin, project manager of Wolkait Sugar Development, told that construction is in full swing after initial delays due to design revision, resettlement issues and lack of adequate infrastructures such as access to road. The project is being undertaken in phases and when fully completed, the factory will have the capacity to crush 24,000 t of cane per day (tcd). The project will cover more than 45,000 ha of land with sugarcane plantations primarily relying on the Zarema River. Sur Construction, subcontracted by Metals Engineering Corporation (MetEC), is undertaking the construction of the irrigation dam dubbed 'May Day' on Zarema River, which borders the Waldiba Monastery. This dam, upon completion, will have 845 m width and 142 m height with a reservoir capacity of 3.8 billion cub.m of water (WIC, Aug. 3).

