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Ethiopian police detained twelve individuals on May 10, according to a press statement from the Federal Anti-Corruption Commission. Melaku Fenta, Director General of the Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority with the rank of minister is among the detainees. His deputy, Gebrewahed Woldegiorgis, has also been put in custody. Melaku Fenta was elected to the out-going Council of Addis Ababa City Administration in 2008 as a candidate of ANDM/EPRDF (Daily Ethiopia, May 11).

Thousands of political prisoners are being held by Eritrea in "unimaginably atrocious conditions", says Amnesty International, and not one has ever been charged with any crime. The rights group says at least 10,000 people have been jailed for political reasons since President Isaias Afewerki came to power 20 years ago. It says torture is widespread in a network of detention centers. Some of those imprisoned are journalists or critics of the government, Amnesty says. Others have practiced an unregistered religion, or tried to flee the country or avoid conscription into the army. In most cases, prisoners' families are not informed of their whereabouts, and often never hear from their relative again (BBC, May 9).

As Ethiopia let free some 74 political leaders and members of a tiny rebel group, the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM) this past week, other groups are demanding that their prisoners who remain behind bars are also set free. The move was part of a peace agreement signed last year between the Ethiopian government and the Benishangul rebels after more than two years of negotiations (Bikyanews.com, May 6).

The World Bank and African Development Bank will provide 80% of the funds needed for a \$1.26bio line that will take power to Kenya from Ethiopia. The World Bank will lend the two countries \$684m for the 1,070-km line that will run from Wolayta-Sodo in Ethiopia to Suswa, 100 km northwest of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, African Development Bank Regional Director Gabriel Negatu told reporters. The AfDB is lending \$338m, he said. "The interconnection with Ethiopia will ensure access to reliable and affordable energy to around 870,000 households by 2018," Negatu said (Bloomberg, May 7).

The House of People's Representatives has approved bills ratifying a loan agreement for the implementation of the Gode-Kebri Dehar and localities rural electric power distribution project. It endorsed three bills ratifying loan agreements signed between the Ethiopian government and Saudi Development Fund, OPEC Fund for International development and Arab Bank for African Economy Development. The final draft presented by the Budgetary and Financial Affairs Standing Committee, the 15m USD loan agreement with the Saudi Development Fund will benefit around 34 rural localities contributing to the success of the Growth and Transformation Plan. The loan will be repaid within 30 years including 10 years grace period. The second 15m USD loan agreement with OPEC Fund for International Development is expected to create 1,000 job opportunities for women and youth in the localities. The loan will be repaid within 20 years with 5 years of grace period. The 10m USD loan agreement with the Arab Bank for Africa Economy Development is believed to cover the expenses of Gode-Degehabur rural electric power distribution. The loan is expected to be paid within 20 years including a 10-year grace period. The House unanimously endorsed all the three bills and ratified the agreements (ENA, May 7).

Germany will strengthen its support through knowledge and technology transfer for the growth of Ethiopia's agricultural productivity, the Federal Minister of Agriculture of Germany, Ilse Aigner, said. A German-Ethiopian advanced training center with the Kulumsa Agricultural Research Center was inaugurated by Aigner and Agriculture State Minister Wondyirad Mandefro. The government of Germany allocated 2.7m € budget for the center. During a visit of a German parliamentary delegation to the center, it was noted that well trained experts are key to the development of Ethiopia's farming sector. The Minister, who is also head of the delegation, said that this is where to start ensuring that Ethiopia can further develop its farming sector and be more self-reliant in the future, for the country is rich in resources and has huge potential. The objective of the newly opened center is to teach farmers about sustainable, site-specific and climate adapted methods of production including training with modern technology. By 2014, the center, located some 170km south-east of the capital, will train some

1500 farmers. Wondyirad on his part said the government provides support to investors engaged in large scale agriculture as agriculture significantly contributes to the ongoing efforts of the country to reduce poverty (state media, May 9).