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The joint session of the two houses of parliament on Oct. 7 elected Ambassador Mulatu Teshome (PhD) as president of the Republic of Ethiopia. Mulatu, 55, served the nation in various diplomatic missions and until recently was Ethiopia's ambassador to Turkey. Many of his diplomatic missions were in Asian countries including China, Japan and Thailand. The new president replaces Girma Woldegiorgis after two six year terms (state media, Oct. 7).

A bomb blast in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa killed two people, state radio said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, but Ethiopia says it has thwarted plots of attacks in the past two years and blames rebel groups based in the south and southeast, as well as Somalia's al Shabaab insurgents. "A bomb blast occurred at a residential house in the Bole district and killed two unidentified individuals," a report on national radio said, quoting the National Security and Intelligence Service. The explosion occurred in the city's upscale Bole district, about 5 km from a soccer stadium where thousands of fans were queuing for tickets to a World Cup qualifier against Nigeria and gathering at squares in the capital to watch the match on giant screens. The radio quoted the security service as saying it was investigating the incident (Reuters, Oct. 13).

The Ministry of Mines signed an agreement on Oct. 7 with Allana Potash PLC, a Canadian mining company, to mine potash in the Dallol area of Afar State for the coming 20 years. The agreement gives the company exclusive right for large scale mining on 310.176 sq. km. When it starts operation, the company will create jobs for 800 people. Potash, also known as potassium chloride, is mainly used for the production of fertilizer (ENA, Oct. 9).

The giant Chinese company called CGC Overseas has begun the construction of 20 high-rise buildings at an estimated cost of 2bio Birr. The twenty buildings will be 12 to 15 stories high. CGC Overseas and another Chinese company called Huawei Company is engaged in real estate housing construction in cooperation with an Ethiopian company called Tsehay Real Estate. Tsehay Real Estate, a newly created company, has obtained 30,000 sq. m of land from the Addis Ababa Administration for real estate construction. The new real estate building will be undertaken near the CMC area in Addis Ababa. Currently, civil work is being carried out in preparation for the main task as construction machineries continue to come into the country (Reporter, Oct. 6),

The Ministry of Education said the enrollment ratio of girls has been increasing from year to year. Communication Director with the Ministry, Desalegn Samuel, told that over eight million of the total 17.3 million students attending primary education are girls. The gross enrollment ratio of girls in primary education has reached 92.1 %. Over 729,000 of the total 1.5 million students attending secondary education are girls. Almost half of the students in preparatory schools are also girls. Some 16,000 of the total 67,595 students graduated from government universities over the past year are women (ENA, Oct. 6).