

Seven Days, Vol. 19 No. 23, August 6, 2012(*)

Prime Minister Meles is reportedly recovering from his illness and has started performing his official duty from his home in the palace. A senior government official said on condition of anonymity that the Prime Minister is doing his work by talking only with four of his officials. It was explained that doctors have advised him to talk less. The prime minister reportedly returned home from abroad last week after weeks of medical treatment. News sources had earlier reported that the prime minister would give a brief public statement concerning his health but this has now been cancelled (Addis Admas, Aug. 4). At least 18 people have been killed in fierce fighting between two communities over land in southern Ethiopia and 20,000 refugees have fled to Kenya, the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) said on July 30. Fighting broke out because of a dispute over the Ethiopian government's decision to settle the Garri community on land which the Borana claim to own, KRCS said. Thousands of refugees, segregated by ethnicity, are camped out in schools and a mosque around the Kenyan town of Moyale. Others are being given refuge by local Kenyan residents (Reuters, July 30).

The Ethiopian manufacturing sector failed to meet the projected earnings with the various sub sectors bringing in between 63% and 49.4% of anticipated earnings. The textile and garment sub sector earned 84.6m USD which falls short of the 171.4m USD projected for the past fiscal year. The earnings from the sector were however 36% more than what was earned by the sector in the previous year, according to information obtained from the Ministry of Industry. Leather and leather products earned just 54.4% of what had been expected and pharmaceuticals and chemicals only managed to earn 58.7%. Initial projections for the just ended fiscal period estimated 471.3m USD in exports from the manufacturing sector but only 255.4m USD was actually earned. The earnings were still 22.8% higher than what was earned in the previous reported period in spite of being lower than the projection (Fortune, July 31).

The price of teff shot up by 100 birr within a week of a similar increase ten days ago. The Association of Teff Merchants said this is due to the decreased supply of teff in the country. Reporters said they found the price had increased by 100-150 birr per quintal. The government earlier said the continuing increase in the price of teff is the result of of the imbalance between demand and supply (Mesenazeria, July 31).

More than 50m birr has been paid as compensation to households relocated in connection with the Tana Beles sugar development project. Some 234 households from two kebeles in Amhara State were relocated to fertile areas due to the project that encompasses two sugar factories.. All the 234 households received equitable farming and grazing land in compensation for the land they left,. Over 4m birr was also spent to transport properties of the households. Utmost efforts are being carried out to build infrastructure facilities such as schools, health centers, safe drinking water, electricity and telecom services at the two resettlement sites (WIC, July 30).

The fierce Kenyan-Ethiopian rivalry renewed itself, and the result in the women's Olympic 10,000 m was as reliably predictable as it was four years ago: Ethiopia's Tirunesh Dibaba again drew away with a punishing kick to win the gold medal and perhaps establish herself as history's greatest female distance runner. On a cool night, Dibaba ran the year's fastest time to win in 30:20.75. Sally Kipyego of Kenya (30:26.37) and Vivian Cheruiyot of Kenya (30:30.44) ran their personal bests to take silver and bronze (EthioGuardian, August 4).