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The court has ordered the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission to establish firm charges against the persons arrested recently on charges of corruption. A large number of government officials and businessmen, including the Director-General of the Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority with the rank of Minister, have been arrested on charges of corruption. Some of them have complained that the prison administration has denied them the right to meet their lawyers. The court has, however, ordered the prison administration to allow the prisoners to meet and consult with their lawyers (Addis Admas, May 18).

The number of government officials and businessmen who have been arrested on suspicion of involvement in corruption has reached 32. The latest round of arrests includes low ranking officials of ERCA. The new detainees were to appear in court on May 20 (Reporter, May 19).

The Federal Police Commission said on May 18 it had arrested a man called Dawit Mekonnen suspected of involvement in corruption and was on the run. The Commission told ERTA the suspect was trying to enter Kenya after learning he was wanted by police. It said police arrested the suspect in Shashemene town of Oromia State. The suspect was a broker in the customs offices in Addis Ababa and Adama (ENA, May 19).

54 people, including the manager of the Mille branch of the Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority (ERCA) have been arrested suspected of involvement in corruption. The suspects were caught smuggling contraband goods into the country through Mille in complicity with illegal merchants. Meanwhile, officials who were earlier arrested under the same charge have appeared at the Second Criminal Bench of the Lideta High Court (Reporter, May 22).

Ethiopia's economy is estimated to expand by 11.3% in the 2012/13 budget year. This is according to a 9 month performance reported to the Budget and Finance Affairs Permanent Committee of the Parliament by Sofian Ahmed, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. The Minister explained to the committee that the performance of the economy this year in agriculture, industry, and service sectors indicates that the economy grows at a pace it did a year before. Inflation has come down to a single digit at 6.1% and this is due to the government's intervention in the market that commits to importing food commodities while, at the same time, halting borrowing money from the treasury (Ethiopian Radio and Television (ERTA), May 23).

Ethiopia, Djibouti and China signed a loan agreement amounting to over 2bio USD for the construction of the 756km Addis Ababa/Sebeta-Djibouti railway project. The loan secured from EXIM Bank of China will also cover the cost of the remaining 100km railway project that extends from the Ethiopian border with Djibouti to the Port of Dorrale. The project will play a pivotal role in reducing time to the Djibouti Port and contributes to the economic growth in Ethiopia (state media, May 22)

The Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) has started the construction of the 109-km Mega-Moyalle asphalt road, linking Ethiopia with its neighbour, Kenya, in the south. The project is funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Ethiopian government and is expected to cost 1.1bio birr, Samson Wondimu, ERA's communications director, told. The road is expected to be completed within three years. "When completed, the project will further strengthen and accelerate economic, political and social ties with Kenya," Samson said (WIC, May 23).

Ethiopia has earned 229.4 million USD from the export of manufactured goods in the last ten months of the fiscal year, according to the Ethiopian Ministry of Industry. Public Relations Director Melaku Taye told that the revenue was earned from the export of textiles and clothes, leather and leather products, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals to various countries. 9.5m was earned from leather and leather products, 83.4m from textiles and clothes, 41.1m from agro-processing and 6.4m from pharmaceuticals and chemicals. The ten months revenue exceeds that of the same period last year by more than 4.2, according to Melaku (WIC, May 22).

A company called DuPont Pioneer said it has allocated 4m USD to boost maize productivity in Ethiopia for the next three years. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a seed processing plant and a warehouse constructed with over 2m USD in Menagesha Town, Oromia State, DuPont Pioneer Vice President Dan Jacobi said

that DuPont is contributing its share to efforts to boost maize productivity by building the plant and warehouse. Jacobi said DuPont has reached agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture to implement Advanced Maize Seed Adoption Program. The program will also focus on increasing productivity of other crops in the future. Jacobi said the company will transfer technology and knowledge to development agents. The warehouse will help curb the shortage of seeds. Special advisor to the agriculture state minister, Abera Mulat, on his part said the plant will help meet the demand for seeds by farmers in addition to its contribution to ensure food security. DuPont Pioneer has been engaged in maize seed distribution in Ethiopia for the last 23 years. The plant and warehouse were built in collaboration with USAID (state media, May 18).