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German experts fly in to tackle forest blaze

ADDIS ABABA - A team of German firefighters flew to southern Ethiopia Friday in an attempt to tackle two bushfires that have destroyed tens of thousands of hectares of virgin forest, state radio reported.

The experts, who will fly over the fires before deciding on how to bring them under control, were the first to respond to Ethiopia's appeal for international help.

One fire in the Bale region has already destroyed more than 40,000 acres of virgin forest and natural coffee forest, and is now approaching an important national park in southern Ethiopia, home to

several of the world's rarest mammal species.

The 1,500-square-mile Bale Mountains Park is home to half of the 400 Simien foxes in the world, as well as two other species found only in the Horn of Africa country-the Mountain Nyala and Menelik's Bushbuck.

"The fire has already approached the vicinity of the park and could engulf the whole mountain unless steps are taken to stop it," Tesfaye Hundesa, manager of Ethiopia's Wildlife Conservation Department, said.

Another fire fanned by

gusty winds in the nearby Borena region along the Kenyan border has destroyed more than 57,000 acres of forest.

More than 150 people have been arrested on suspicion of starting the fires, which have followed two years of drought in the south-

ern part of the country.

A team of South African firefighters is also expected in Ethiopia in the next few days. (Reuter)

Raging wildfire continues to cause more havoc

JIJIGA - The fire that broke out in Qorahe zone of Somali State has caused serious body burns on 20 people and destroyed 685 houses. Ato Ziad Ysiihak, Vice Chairman of the zonal council said the fire started at 3:00 PM Wednesday at a village called Bustariko and spread to all neighbourhood in due course. Ato Ziad said that although community members as well as woreda police exerted all out efforts to put out the fire they failed to save the village from destruction. The vice-chairman said an estimated 5,000 people were rendered homeless and are in need of emergency relief including food, clothes, shelter and medicaments.

Meanwhile, Ato Abubaker

Abdi, head of the state's disaster prevention and labour and social affairs bureau, said the bureau is making preparations for transporting urgently-needed relief supplies including plastic shelters and household utensils to the victims.

In a related news, the fire that has been raging in Odo Shakkiso, Bore, Uruga and Adola woredas of Borena zone has so far consumed 30,000 hectares of forests, the head of the zonal agricultural department Ato Teffera Wolde Medhin said. The fire has been gaining in intensity despite the efforts of over 2,000 residents to extinguish the fire. Ato Teferra expressed fears that the fire, if not contained in time, may encroach on neighbouring

states.

Meanwhile, the zonal police head Lt. Girma Merga said a total of 127 people have been arrested as suspects who started the fire.

In yet another fire news, the fire that erupted at a place called Yuga in Kersa woreda of East Hararghie zone last February 28 is still raging. Two children were killed by the raging fire, according to Corporal Seyoum Degefa, head of the public relations office of the zonal police said.

In the meantime, students of the Civil Service College have pledged to do their share in extinguishing the fire that is raging in Borena and Bale zones. (WIC)

IN THIS ISSUE

The perils of a motorist in Addis

U.S. summit on Africa plan charts course for future

- page 3

Life's Sweet & Sour

- Weekend Supplement

Science Report

- page 7

... and more

Fund raising, miraculous healing in three-day crusade

By Our Staff Reporter

ADDIS ABABA - Over 30 thousand Ethiopians have been meeting at the Addis

things by myself," he told people at the stadium, "only Jesus has the power to heal."