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Yilkal Kefale (PhD)



Shimelis Abdissa

PP Executive sets direction to intensify measure on terrorist groups

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA- Having deliberated on the current peace and security issues, the Executive Committee of the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) has decided to maintain the law enforcement measures against terrorist groups thereby neutralizing threats posed on the lives of people.

The committee started its ordinary meeting

here yesterday.

It is noted that the law enforcement agencies are taking appropriate measures to neutralize the radical factions and halt the danger they posed on the public wellbeing in accordance with the decision passed by the Ethiopian Security Committee recently.

Commenting on the issue to local media, members of the PP Executive Committee Yilkal Kefale (PhD) and Shimelis Abdissa asserted that measures that have been

taking against the Terrorist Shene other illegal forces across the country will be consolidated. Shene's recent killings of innocent civilians in Western Wollega Zone of the Oromia State proved the faction is the enemy of all Ethiopians.

Shimelis indicated the Executive Committee in its ordinary meeting denounced the recent cruel attack perpetrated by the T-Shene and decision has been made to intensify the

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First China-Horn of Africa Conference centers Horn peace, unity

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The First China-Horn of Africa Peace, Good Governance and Development Conference centered on peace, unity and mutual respect and wrapped up passing joint statements.

The two-day conference, which was a China-led initiative, was made possible with the full cooperation of countries in the region in Addis Ababa aiming at promoting peace, good governance and development. The conference discussed regional peace, development, and governance focusing on unity, candor, pragmatism, and mutual respect, a joint statement issued by the parties indicated.

According to the joint statement, the Horn

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The Guardian reports youths' suffering at T-TPLF hands

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Youths in Tigray are fleeing the region due to TPLF's forced conscription and starvation and the faction has continued recruiting youths in the war and intimidating the people to contribute money and food to its war efforts, The Guardian reported.

Approached by the British daily newspaper,

The Guardian, escapers have recounted the existing situation in Tigray as tyrannical administration. One of escapers, Danay, 30, stated he fled because the TPLF authorities have been intimidating the already starved residents to contribute money and food to the military. "They forcefully recruit, arbitrarily detain and decide whatever they want. On top of that, you see people dying

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Tesfahun Gobeay

Ethiopia receives over 30,000 refugees over last two years

• Becomes third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian government has received more than 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers mainly from South Sudan and Somalia over the past two years, the Refugees and Returnees Service (RSS) announced.

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News

President Sahlework condemns killings in Oromia

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- President Sahle-Work Zewde condemned the recent killings of civilians by terrorist elements in Gimbi District, West Wollega Zone of the Oromia State.

In her official twitter post, the President noted that she had a meeting with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Chief Commissioner Daniel Bekele (PhD) on the current human rights protection situation in the country, especially the recent killings of civilians in Oromia State.

Sahle-Work said she condemns in the strongest terms attacks against innocent civilians including children and women. "The respect and dignity of human lives should not be violated and degraded at any place. If we are accustomed to these kinds of horrific crimes, we will remain in the vicious circle of expressing condemnation and grievance. We should not be limited by issuing a grievance statement."



Sahle-Work Zewde and Daniel Bekele

German supports Ethiopia's TVET sector to include refugees

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA - The German Development Cooperation with partners commemorates World Refugee Day at the Nefas Silk Polytechnic College which is the first public vocational institution to include refugees in Ethiopia.

German Embassy in Addis Ababa, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, (GIZ) GmbH, the Ministry of Labour and Skills, the Refugee and Returnee Services (RSS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other stakeholders celebrated World Refugee Day at Nefas Silk Polytechnic College.

In a press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald the Embassy highlighted 'The Role of Inclusive Accredited Vocational Training in Advancing Protection and Solutions for Refugees.'

Nefas Silk College became the first public vocational college to bring refugees and Ethiopians together to learn in one vocational school with the support of the German Cooperation.

Accordingly, Ethiopia is home to more than 860,000 refugees, making it the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.

Despite having its own challenges, Ethiopia expands refugees' rights to access education, health, employment and other public basic services.

The German Government supports Ethiopia's vision to strengthen vocational



training and create job opportunities for refugees and Ethiopians.

The support includes financing of business ideas of refugees and Ethiopians growing out of the Entrepreneurship Centre at Nefas Silk College and technical advice to vocational colleges to set up the necessary institutional structure for an inclusive and market-driven training provision.

Nefas Silk College serves as a role model for refugee inclusion in TVET. So far, 600 refugees and Ethiopians graduated in sectors ranging from food preparation

and auto mechanics to textile and garment. Another five TVET colleges in Addis Ababa have taken up the inclusive approach.

The Programme supports the further training of trainers, labour market-driven revision of curriculum and the establishment of partnerships between TVET colleges and companies.

To-date, more than 3,300 Ethiopians and refugees have gained job opportunities in Addis Ababa, Benishangul-Gumuz, Somali and Gambella states.

T-TPLF bribes sex workers to appear as rape victim

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Terrorist TPLF leaders bribed commercial sex workers to allege members of the Ethiopian National Defense



Elias Michael

Force (ENDF) committed sexual assaults with a view to justifying the false rape-propaganda, a former Dimitsi Woyane radio journalist said.

Speaking to local media, the journalist Elias Michael noted that T-TPLF has had hidden agreement with some commercial sex workers in Tigray to play the script written to accuse the federal troops.

Majority of the so-called raped women during that time were sheltered in one of the camp built to treat victims. "I am sure that many of them were attracted by the support given by NGOs for rape-victims. However, I haven't seen real raped women."

As to him, commercial sex workers had received about 2,500 Birr from NGOs to witness a rape process. "Some commercial sex workers have told me that they had received the money to support their livelihood. Furthermore, some of them were colluding to accuse the government of Ethiopia and presented as victims. They were registered and regarded as university students raped by the federal forces."

Later, the then-president of Mekelle University exposed that they were not students at the university campus, the journalist indicated.

News

City launches 'Addis Ielijochua' project

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA- Addis Ababa City Administration launched a project called "Addis Ielijochua" (Addis for its children) which will be implemented under 'Let Ethiopia produce,' national movement.

The project was linked with the 'Let Ethiopia produce,' movement/campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Addis Ababa city Administration. Accordingly, the city administration launched this project yesterday in the presence of higher government officials.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the project, Trade and Industry Minister, Melaku Alebel associated with the project like 'one shoe for one student under 'Let Ethiopia produce,' movement run at schools.

So as to help Ethiopia effectively utilize its rich resources, shaping generation and working on education is very important. Appreciating the city government effort exerted in school



feeding and student material provision, Melaku urged all concerned to expand the practice and work together with city administration for the successful accomplishment of the project.

Some 942 million USD Ethiopia was spent over the last ten years. Hence, the launching of this project encourages manufacturing shoes and leather products for students within

the country which will significantly substitute import cost.

While manufacturing industries are expected to manufacture quality and health shoes and uniform products at affordable prices to help substitute imports and erase hard currency shortages.

Last year, over 1.5 million shoes were

manufactured and distributed to security institutions and also 800,000 shoes manufactured and disbursed to Addis Ababa students and its surrounding, he added.

Addis Ababa City Administration School Feeding Agency Director, Anchnesh Tesfayesaid that families who are unable to assist their children with quality education and education material have got relief following the implementation of school feeding.

Human centered action for Addis residents is not just part of our plan, but it is really practical helping action. Accordingly, over 10,000 citizens in the city have accessed meals in the feeding center besides over half a million students benefiting from the school feeding program as well as the program also helped some 13,000 mothers to be employed.

City administration has provided over 799,000 students with school uniforms and has been undertaking many more schemes aimed at helping students in the city, it was learned.

Ethiopia receives...

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), RRS Director- General, Tesfahun Gobeze said the country has received about 30,000 newly displaced people from South Sudan and Somalia over the last two years.

Noting major refugee camps are found in Gambela, Benshangul Gumuz, Somali, Afar, Tigray and Amhara states, Tesfahun indicated more than 80,000 immigrants are also residing in Addis Ababa. "Though we have been challenged by COVID-19

pandemic and the unrest in some parts of the country, we are striving to avail decent service to refugees even in this difficult time."

"As a founding member of the first international refugee agency, Ethiopia is now making significant contribution to the effort to host the world's third highest number of refugees. We have also long history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers even before the internationally recognized law ratification."

As to him, refugees and asylum seekers

were allowed to live in Ethiopia before the 1951 and 1967 international conventions adoption. Currently Ethiopia hosted more than 870,000 refugees that come from more than 26 countries. Most of the refugees are from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan.

Every individual has the right to seek protection here in Ethiopia if they feel insecure because of their identity or political affiliation. We are also responsible for recognizing refugees and asylum seekers, Tesfahun said.

PP Executive sets...

military response to the radical element's cruelty. The active participation of the public in exposing wrong doers and their cooperation with law enforcement bodies at various levels has been a primary factor for the success of the operation.

In accordance with direction set by the National Security Council, law enforcement measures have been carried out in various parts of the country with a view to addressing the public's quest for peace and order, Yilkal said. "Actions have been taken to neutralize further threats posed on the lives of people and the enormous damage caused on private and public properties by irregular and anti-peace elements, notably T-Shene."

The two members of the PP Executive Committee highlighted that any attack against civilians in any part of the country is a matter for all Ethiopians.

The Guardian reports...

from starvation and curable diseases...."

Another escaper, named Ibrahim, also told The Guardian that he did not have much problem with starvation, but he doesn't want to go to war. "I just don't want to kill people."

When the first 20 aid trucks arrived in Mekelle in April, after the truce, Tekele (now sheltered in Jari Camp in Amhara State) and his family were hopeful that they would finally get some respite. "I had seen the World Food Program aid trucks. But the aid was not distributed. The reason the authorities provide to the media is shortage of fuel. But

even private trucks have access to fuel and are operating, let alone the government."

Tekele further noted that the starved community in Tigray hardly gets the aid. "Meanwhile, TPLF authorities bother us every day to contribute from what we have. They have absolute power. They embezzle, and at times distribute the little aid that gets in based on political affiliation."

Another interviewed man, Mehari, who has two children, has also told The Guardian that in April he was ordered to contribute 10,000 birr to the TPLF military. "The papers are stamped by public offices. If you refuse to

contribute, they arrest and threaten you to contribute. They arbitrarily decide who should pay, and how much. They passed an order recently that people from 40 to 55 should also join the army. Even families who previously sent five sons and daughters to the army are being forced to send more. The orders have the Tigray government office stamp. If you refuse or go into hiding, the authorities arrest your parents."

A significant number of escapers who accused the TPLF of aid embezzlement and unfair treatment are now sheltered in Jari Camp, located in Amhara State.

First China-Horn...

of Africa countries pledged to work together to maintain peace and security. They agreed devise a peaceful resolution to regional problems thereby jointly addressing natural disasters and upholding a coordinated approach to combat cyber security, terrorism, illegal arms, and human trafficking, among others.

Noting the challenges confronting regional peace and security, participants uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, work together to maintain peace and security

in the region, and build a Horn of Africa where the guns are silenced for sustainable peace.

The Parties are ready to step up high level engagements and exchanges at all levels to enhance mutual political trust and keep improving relations among the countries in the region. Knowing democracy immensely contributes towards national peace, stability, and development, the parties agreed to advocate for democracy and inclusive participation.

The Parties reaffirm respect for each

other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, commitment to non-interference in the other's internal affairs, respect for countries' independent choice of development path, values and social systems. The Parties remain committed to peaceful resolution of regional problems independently supporting multilateralism, opposing unilateral sanctions as well as external interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region.

The countries of the region commend China for its strong relations with the region in

investment, the building of development projects, and assistance in fighting COVID-19. The parties finally called on the international community to increase accessibility and diversity of development financing and work together towards the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

High-level government officials from Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and China attended the two-day conference held in Ethiopia's capital-Addis Ababa.

Opinion

Roles of industrial parks in augmenting economy, improving citizens' life

BY GETACHEW MINAS

An industrial park is part of an urban area that is reserved for industrial purpose. It is separated from residential areas. An industrial park may have warehouses, distribution centers, ports or factories. Some industrial parks provide tax incentives for businesses to encourage them in locating within the estates. An industrial park is thus a part of a city that has been designated, selected and earmarked for industrial development. It is a variant of a business center, which may have offices and light firms. The park may include firms that provide manufacturing, transportation, and storage facilities. It can be an instrument for bringing enterprises together to provide services that are complementary to each other.

An industrial park can consist of production, transportation, and storage facilities in the same area. This may embrace chemical plants, plastics manufacturers, food and beverage processors, and steel manufacturers. Major industrial parks may consist of international shipping centers, ports, as well as a railroad and numerous freeways with access to major trucking routes. Types of businesses located there may include storage facilities, distribution warehouses for goods and spare parts. The industrial parks may be structured to bring together complementary services and features that will benefit the firms that occupy space there. Ports provide access for commodities and finished products to be brought to major industrial centers for distribution. Cranes and other equipments available at the industrial park are used to transfer the cargo to trucks and trains.

Cargos may be stored at warehouses located within the industrial park. Manufacturers based in an industrial park that has port access and can quickly procure the materials they need to create their products. However, the concentration of these firms in the industrial parks may raise environmental concerns. Pollution may be magnified by the "close" proximity of manufacturing facilities, machinery, and heavy transportation. The grounds where these facilities operate can build up with contaminants that make the surrounding area undesirable for residential or retail trade. The constant movement of cargo on trailers may lead to traffic congestion in the area. It is not uncommon for lower-income housing to be located in congested zones adjacent to industrial parks. In these areas, the potential for excess noise, traffic, and pollution can drive down housing prices or rents in the surrounding residential market.

There may be a shift away from heavy manufacturing in the industrial parks in favor of "service" industries. This may lead to some people to question the impacts of the proliferation of industrial parks. It may also lead to the decline of domestic manufacturing and to a rise in services such as shipping of commodities

and products which surge in volume as consumption increases. This situation may be reversed as economic factors make it cheaper to manufacture a wider variety of products. One factor is land, which is designated by fixed spatial boundaries. It is a factor of production the market value of which impacts the market prices of commodities. In Ethiopia, the State has a monopoly of land which may not lend itself to competition with the private operators. With this situation reigning in the country, free-competition within the industrial parks may remain an enthralling and fascinating factor.

Apart from industrial parks, Green Tech is a type of technology that is considered environmentally-friendly based on its production process and supply chain. But, it may be "vulnerable" to free competition, with dynamic pricing that attempts to regulate demand by increasing prices without increasing supply. Though favorable, the Green Tech may not be efficient and productive due to environmental considerations. The market prices of outputs of Green Tech may be high as its supply is limited to small plots of land. It may not satisfy the demand of the urban population for green produces such as fruits and vegetables grown in urban areas. Urban land is limited as it is claimed by residential areas, light and heavy industries and industrial parks. Considering the health benefits of the Green Tech, it is possible to implement policies and strategies that give priority to urban agricultural undertakings that produce for both the domestic and external markets.

Considering the potentials of the industrial park, which is also known as industrial estate or trading estate, it is an area or zone planned for the purpose of industrial development. It may be thought of as a larger version of a business park. Industrial parks are known for being relatively simple to build; they are quickly erected single-space steel buildings, usually attractive. Industrial parks are mostly located on the edges of the main residential area of a city. They are normally provided with good transportation access, including road and rail. Mostly, a large number of industrial estates are located along rivers and close to transport facilities. Another common feature of industrial parks is a water tower, which helps to hold enough water to meet the park's demands and for firefighting purposes. The industrial park also advertises its locality, with its logo.

The idea of setting land aside through a type of zoning has several purposes. It dedicates infrastructure in a delimited area to reduce the business cost of the infrastructure. Such infrastructure includes roadways, railroad, ports, high-power electric supplies, communications cables and water supplies. It attracts new business by providing an integrated infrastructure in one location. It gives eligibility of the industrial parks for benefits. The zone

also helps to set apart industrial uses from urban areas for reducing environmental and social impact of the industrial uses. It provides for localized environmental controls that are specific to the needs of an industrial area. For the manufacturing firms located in industrial parks, their productive performance is important to cover the costs of infrastructure and services. This cost may be a serious factor for the competitiveness of firms.

There are some observations on industrial parks that achieve different degrees of success. Some of these parks have been established with only "limited" access to a nearby highway, basic utilities and roads. Public transport options may be limited or non-existent. Industrial parks in developing countries, including Ethiopia, also face numerous other difficulties. These include shortage of skilled labor and the crowding together of drastically different industrial sectors which often lead to low quality outputs. For example, an industrial park specializing in a given tech may find it difficult to coordinate or form a cluster with others located in the same area. Where land is scarce, they may not be able to use flats, For housing different firms. These firms have to use cargo "lifts" that serve each level of the flat, providing access to each lot.

In Ethiopia, incentive packages are provided to investors in industrial parks. These include income tax exemption, customs duty and other tax exemption. Consequently, the country has become a preferred destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and emerging center for manufacturing in Africa due to its political stability, stable socio-economic governance with sustained peace and security. However, in recent years these positive conditions are being eroded by terrorists and power mongers that aspire to destabilize the political, economic and social environment in the country. Though favored for its wide-ranging incentive package in priority sectors and export-oriented investments, the civil strife is becoming a problem.

Despite the conflict and social tension in some parts of the country, the initiative in the development of modern industrial parks is very conducive for economic activity. Africa's world-class Ethiopian Airlines flying to several destinations is a contributing element for industrial parks. Also, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the largest hydroelectric power dam in Africa, the construction of which is being completed, expected to generate additional electricity for domestic use and export. The expansion of the telecom services is a major input in the development of new industrial parks. The expansion of these parks is assisted by favorable market factors, including the size and growth of the Ethiopian population which is currently estimated to be about 115 million, out of which sixty million is

active labor forces.

There is also access to neighboring markets for nearly all export commodities from Ethiopia. It has preferential access to African regional markets, serving millions of people. It has a strategic location with proximity to favorable markets. Moreover, the country has factors that are conducive to economic growth, including moderate GDP growth, stable and conducive macroeconomic environment leading to structural growth and transformation from an agriculture-led economy to an industrial one. With this favorable economic environment, the government currently gives high priority to industrial parks development and expansion. The park includes investment area open for the private sector, both domestic and FDI.

Modern parks are under construction and expansion. They are located along economic corridors, connected to ports by road and electric-powered railway lines. It is anchored on various principles indicated herewith:- **Specialized Parks:** enhancing economy of scale and efficiency through the development of specialized/clustered industrial parks; - **Export Promotion:** government provision of industrial park incentives targeted at increased export performance and competitiveness; -**Sustainability:** maintaining high environmental standards through the use of renewable energy and zero liquid discharge (ZLD) technology; - **Vertical Integration:** enhancing forward and backward linkages in the economy; and - **Skills development and competitiveness:** developing workers' skills for competitiveness.

Investment laws of Ethiopia provide a wide-ranging incentives package for investments in priority sectors of high export potential, especially targeting industrial parks developers and enterprises. There are fiscal incentives and income tax exemptions for industrial parks, including customs duty exemption. There is access to industrial park space at promotional rate. The industrial parks enjoy non-fiscal incentives including one-stop shop service, customs facilitation and expediting visa procedure. There is a guarantee against expropriation. The right to own immovable property and remittance of fund is guaranteed by the State. Industrial park developers and enterprises have the right to open and operate foreign currency accounts and they also benefit from a special tax and other financial incentives package that is coupled with efficiency-enhancing facilitation support and investment protections. In addition, the role of the government in maintaining peaceful environment for industrial parks is remarkable and attractive to new investment.

Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

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Editorial

Green Legacy Initiative: Worth replicating

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has launched this year's edition of the Green Legacy Initiative, a grand greening campaign which envisages to plant more than 20 billion seedlings in four years. Launched in 2019, the Initiative stands as a big national project that aims to improve the green or forest coverage of the country as well as contribute to the economic development of the country by assisting carbon trade as well as marketing fruits.

As a big project the lesson left by the Green Legacy Initiative is worthwhile in executing other development projects that the country needs badly.

Ethiopia is a developing country. It needs to speedily implement various development projects. To mention some, it has to build residential houses, roads, power plants, public facilities ... etc. In addition to the technical issue, the construction of such projects needs adequate knowledge, experience and commitment.

As can be recalled the former administration used to initiate many development projects. While some of the projects went operational many others faced defects in design, planning, budget and even implementing. As a result they have caused wastage on the meager resources of the country in addition to the failure to deliver the desired service on time and as per the intended standard.

Therefore due attention should be given for commitment to see projects completed on the right time, with the right standard and budget. In this regard the transplantation of seedlings through the green legacy initiative should be seen beyond planting trees.

In addition to the government authorities, the general public, academic institutions, civic, society, media, religious institutions across the nation all work for shared goal. This increases the synergy between the various stakeholders of such national affairs

and brings them all towards a common path of development and prosperity.

This is an opportunity to lead all other development projects effectively. The people should be on the same level of understanding as to the priority of the development projects. Second they should exercise control over the success of the project as owners. They must not sit passively and watch when their tax money is invested in something which is not their priority, or when development projects get wrecked by irresponsible individuals or groups.

The inspiration that the successful implementation of the Green Legacy Initiative creates is of immense value. It inculcates confidence of ability to execute big and necessary projects in the country. This is a necessary contribution as it can unfetter the peoples mind from the attitudinal chain of perceiving big projects as unachievable, or impossible. It makes the leaders and the people to wish, plan and work for big goals.

Furthermore, the project teaches people to carry out such important feats with their own capacity and resources. Even though there are friends to support them, it is important to always remember that they should not wait until people lend a hand. It is rather better to initiate, and then as much as possible to accomplish one's own projects with own capacity.

For these and many other reasons, the Green Legacy Initiative must continue to be executed with the current level of effectiveness. The experiences and achievements of the Green Legacy Initiative should be well documented and preserved. Countries in the Horn as well as the entire Africa need to emulate this lesson. Of course, AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat vowed to support the initiative and replicate the lesson learnt.

Opinion

Defusing past grievance, aspiring better future

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The question of national dialogue was raised by various political groups, individuals and citizens at large at least in the past three decades. The motive behind making dialogue was resolving grievances committed by regimes and social groups for centuries and to make the future bright.

The current government, paying due attention for a national dialogue, has given green light for the formation of a national commission and the parliament endorsed it. The commission announced that it will commence works on November 2022.

The proclamation has given the mandate to the Commission to do its activities independently and to prepare agendas which are going to be discussed. The national dialogue will not be conducted between the government and the Political or other groups but it is among citizens.

It is expected to be inclusive and even though narrowing the differences on

every matter might be hard, the major objective of the dialogue must be to reach consensus at least on critical issues. There are factors motivating citizens to conduct national dialogue and the first one is to redress the past misdeeds committed by the different regimes. The other is to create trust between ethnic groups and citizens' and create better future for all.

History tell us that many countries including the United States, Germany and Italy were established by force and evolved to democracy after many decades of rigorous efforts. African countries also got the current political map by colonial powers imposed forcefully. The Ethiopian case has also its own process.

The coronation of Emperor Haileasilasie in 1931 reversed the situation and denied traditional self-rules that were being exercised and implemented the project of the formation of centralized government.

When nation formation took place there was no modern education and way of life, institutions and technology etc. Physical power and weapon were more

important than knowledge. Therefore kings and regional lord's exercised their power through force and resisting king's power was not tolerable. It should be kept in mind that the subjects under such harsh rule regarded kings as they were appointed by God hence opposing them mean offending God.

After the introduction of modern constitution in 1931 the violation of individual and group rights was continued. In that era almost 99 percent of the population was illiterate and in such a way asserting groups or individual rights were unthinkable. The advent of college education in 1950s created elite groups which perceive Ethiopia as a conglomerate of suppressed ethnic groups under the imperial rule. The 1974 popular movement which ended the imperial rule gave way for the assumption of power by the Derg regime but political repression continued similar to the past.

The Derg regime did not show tolerance for decent ideas and many lost their lives because of their political stance and

violation of citizens and group rights is continued to date. The violation of rights in the modern era was carried out not only by states but also by non-state actors including opposition political groups and other interest groups. The current generation which belongs to the various ethnic groups is not responsible for the past misdeeds. But one way or another, the problems that previous generations have created is affecting the current one. At this juncture, the new generation should get the respite to chart out its destiny. It is good that most individuals who have conspicuous roles in the past mishap are publishing books, by and large, helping the generation to understand the situation.

Meanwhile, the proper handling the planned national dialogue would put the final nail on the coffin. If all parties leave their adamancy behind and work to give lasting solution to the major problems, current and forthcoming generations of Ethiopians will see a better future.

Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Applying functional mechanisms to stabilize the hard currency reserve, the market

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The exchange rate between Birr and that of Dollar in the black market is alarmingly widening and the difference rose to 20 Birr as compared to the formal bank rate. Some argue that after the allowing of the importation of commodities through Franco Valuta, the demand of Dollar in the black market is increasing and the rate is rising.

In fact, the intention of the introduction of Franco Valuta is to stabilize the market by allowing importers to import goods free of tax. To that end, the government lost 30 billion Birr from tax which would have been spent for development endeavor.

Currently, the exchange rate in the parallel market has reached one Dollar to 72 ETB. In the formal bank system, however, one Dollar is exchanged for 52 Birr. As a result, the gap between formal market and the black market has risen to 20 Birr. According to financial economic experts, such gap is very high in which the nation had ever experienced.

Some business men resorted to obtain hard currency from the black market to import goods through Franco Valuta and the increasing demand for hard currency from parallel market ultimately widened the gap of Birr vs. Dollar exchange rate. Nevertheless, the government is trying its level best to narrow the gap between the formal and the informal market.

However, though such situation is considered as one factor, the commodity price hike in the world market also brought its own impact for the decline of the value of Birr.

In this regard, Professor Almayehu Geda, an Instructor in the Department of Economics at AAU said that the widening gap in the exchange rate of Dollar vs. Birr in the black market is attributed to the price inflation of commodities in the market. Moreover, the official devaluation of Birr against the Dollar by the National Bank of Ethiopia further widened the gap.

Be it by Franco Valuta or by other factors, the continuation of the exacerbation of the gap in the exchange rate of Dollar vs. Birr poses other economic troubles. One of the problems which can be mentioned here is that the exacerbating of the widening gap might force Ethiopian Diaspora to send remittance through the parallel market channel which in turn reduces the dollar coming in the formal channel and leaves the nation to the disadvantageous position. The practice might also reduce the nation's capacity of reserving hard currency.

Similar to the black market, in the last four years the value of Dollar is increased by 120 percent in the formal market. In the black market the value of Dollar is increased in unprecedented manner and unless it is contained, the living cost of the ordinary citizens will be precarious and brings a



negative consequence in the economy. Therefore, the government should take necessary measures to narrowing the gap.

Manager of Zemen Bank, Dereje Zenebe, on his part said that the first step to handle the matter is that the government should identify the factors that aggravate shortage of hard currency in banks.

He further said that commodities that are listed to be imported by Franco Valuta such as wheat, edible oil and sugar price in the world market has been sky rocketing. Hence, importation of those commodities needs huge amount of hard currency and such situation in turn aggravates shortage of the hard currency. Therefore, it is essential to manage Franco monetary system in a cautious manner.

Obviously, importers need hard currency to run their business but obtaining Dollar from banks in the formal market might consume their time. Consequently, they might be forced to look for the black market this in turn increases the Dollar price.

According to financial experts, the widening gap of exchange rate between the local currency and that of hard currency might drain foreign currency to the black market for comparative advantage which in turn makes the banks the loser. And in the long run, banks might face shortage of budget even to run their day to day business.

As to professor Almayehu, reducing inflation can be taken as a measure to tackle shortage of hard currency in the banks. In addition, holding the official devaluation of the value of Birr by the National Bank of Ethiopia for the time being is essential. On the other hand, to keep on the inflow

of remittance in the formal channel, the government should set special price for the Dollar –Birr exchange rate so that remittance senders develop confidence to send their money through the formal channel which boosts the nation's currency reserve.

Others who have rich experience in purchasing Dollar from the black market said that black market gives way for illegal trade, money laundering for criminal activity beyond the national territory, strengthen drug and weapon smugglers which pose violence, facilitate corruption, weaken institutions and divert the market from formal channel. Therefore, the government should consciously take remedial action.

Yared Hilemeskel is a financial economist with long experience in managing financial company in the United Kingdom. As to him, in Ethiopia, there is no shortage of currency but what makes the currency scarcity pervasive is that the government's incorrect financial policy which inherited from the previous socialism oriented regime.

He further said that by the year 2010 EC, Ethiopia has had 23.5 billion Dollar currency reserve. It also could attract 17 billion Dollar from abroad in the form of Foreign Direct Investment in such a way it would have obtained five billion Dollars as profit but it remained unable, because the governing law that hampered exporters not to do so.

The law also makes shy away people not to show interest to deposit hard currency locally. For example, if an Ethiopian soldier serving under UN peace keeping mission in a country wants to deposit the

Dollar that he obtained as a form of salary in Ethiopian Banks, he is only allowed to get back his money in the exchange of Birr based on the existing exchange rate. Therefore, in order to secure his advantage, he might be forced to open bank account in other neighboring countries to deposit the money where he could get back in Dollar.

There are also Ethiopians working in the Ethiopian Airlines who are paid their salary by Dollar but because of the above mentioned reason, they deposit their Dollar in foreign banks. Other Ethiopians residing in other countries and working for Ethiopian Airlines' ticket offices do not bring and deposit their Dollar here because if they deposit here they will get it back in the form of Birr. As a result, they will be forced to deposit it in foreign countries.

The other law which discourages people not to deposit their Dollar in the Banks is that when exporters obtain Dollar from foreign market, the existing law stipulates them that unless they use it within 28 days, it will be exchanged in to Birr because of this, they are obliged to import other commodities. Thus, the rule should be seen critically because it negatively impacts the accumulation of currency reserve in Ethiopia. If a sesame exporter, for instance, who obtains one million Dollar and wants to establish a factory, he is unable to withdraw the same currency when his money reaches to five million Dollars because his deposited money will be exchanged into Birr in the bank after 28 days.

Therefore, the government should introduce new laws to encourage Ethiopians deposit their currency in banks for long, the scholars suggested.

Art & Culture

Alemu Aga: Master of Ethiopia's traditional musical Instrument 'Begna'

COMPILED BY HIZKEL HAILU

Alemu Aga is an Ethiopian master of 'Begna'. This multi-secular ten-stringed lyre has a special place for the Orthodox Christians. According to oral tradition, the *Begna*, also called David's Harp, is the instrument given by God to King David. It is closely associated with faith and mostly played on religious occasions in Ethiopia.

During Lent, the instrument is often heard on the radio and around churches. The instrument is also known for its meditative qualities.

"The listeners, no matter if they are old, young or foreigners, even if they don't understand the language, the sound that comes out has the power to make them very quiet," Alemu Aga tells Radio France International (RFI).

The repetitive melodies of the *Begna* are accompanied by songs, poems or prayers that are almost whispered. "In the songs you have two messages. One is that life in this world is useless; of course from a religious point of view. The other thing outside of the religious thing is that the messages are sent by words that have double meanings.

You want to say one thing but you don't want to say it directly so you use words that have double meanings. If you have any complaints to say to God or officials, you use those kinds of words," says Aga.

Born in 1950 in Entoto, Alemu Aga began training when he was twelve years old with a renowned master, Aleqa Tessema Welde-Ammanuel, stayed next door to his family. "My teacher came from northern Ethiopia. One day when the Emperor Haile Selassie was participating in a church ceremony, my teacher was playing the instrument.

The Emperor told him to come to Addis and to teach this instrument because it is a traditional and very old instrument that has spread from generation to generation," he explains.

Alemu taught *Begna* at Yared Music School for seven years, and for decades welcomed students and young musicians in his shop in Addis Ababa. The *Begna* saw resurgence after the years of the Derg regime (1974-1991) during which the instrument was banned from radio broadcasts.

Since the early 1990's Alemu Aga has travelled to many different countries to perform with his *Begna* and to present it to a wider audience. He was recently invited to play in Bourges, central France, in a concert organized by the Festival de l'imaginaire where RFI met him.

The *Begna* is the oldest of Ethiopia's musical instruments and, over the centuries, has undergone variations like the Kirar, a five-or-six stringed bowl-shaped lyre, used notably by some Ethio-jazz musicians in their compositions.

Aleqa Tessema began teaching at Ras Desta School, where Alemu was a pupil. As well as studying the *Begna* at school, Alemu carried his master's instrument to and from



school, and thus benefited from more of Tessema's time.

He went on to study geography at Addis Ababa University, and after graduation went to work as a geography and *Begna* professor at Yared Music School, where for seven years he also taught *Begna*. Alemu went on to become an acknowledged master of the instrument, first recorded in 1972 by Cynthia Tse Kimberlin for a major UNESCO collection, and performing and broadcasting around the world. In 1974, however, the Derg military junta came to power in Ethiopia; their anti-religious policies also included the banning of the *Begna* from radio broadcasts, and the closing down of the Yared School's teaching of the instrument. As a result, Alemu Aga decided to give up his teaching post in 1980, and opened a shop in Addis Ababa Piazza district.

For a time he played only in private, but the collapse of the Derg's regime led eventually to a change in state policy, and Alemu again began to teach and perform in public. Since the early 1990's Alemu traveled to many countries to perform with his *Begna*.

In 1995, together with the famous Kirar player Asnakech Worku, he released the album "Ende Jerusalem" for Acoustic Music in Germany. In 2009, he released the CD "The *Begna* of Elders - The Harp of David in Ethiopia" as well featuring the *Begna*

music of Seyoum Mengistu, Admassu Fikre and Tafesse Tesfaye.

By the same token, talking on any subject with Alemu Aga, one cannot help but be taken aback by the exceptionally smooth and enchanting tone in which the veteran

Begna performer utters his measured responses. Of course, given the gracious and calm mood displayed on all occasions by one of the few living authorities on the *Begna* instrument, it could still be possible to pass Alemu Aga's spiritual and melancholic sounding tones as mere natural endowments of that exceptional man. But take the scores of *Begna* lyrics Alemu is known to sing again and again, especially during fasting seasons, on the national radio and you have just begun to appreciate the high degree of sublimity (as they call it in the theatre) that the personality of Alemu has afforded to the art of that unique Ethiopian treasure.

True enough then that in manners, speech and strict Orthodox Christian way of life, the personality of Alemu Aga, to say the least, could be described as all *Begna* in itself. And this is due to the fact that all the enchanting monotony of lyrical sounds that the traditional string instrument is capable of producing, together with the strict spiritual messages the lyrics carry, have almost perfectly captivated the psyche and physique of the virtuoso performer. "In performing with the *Begna*, one is only supposed to appropriately reflect strictly spiritual and holy messages. Anything less and worldly than that, like modern music, is not attributable to the purposes of the *Begna* and is hence disrespectful," he says.

“The listeners, no matter if they are old, young or foreigners, even if they don't understand the language, the sound that comes out has the power to make them very quiet”

The Green Legacy Initiative: Phase IV

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges the world is currently faced with. Ever since the industrial revolution began, there has been a consistent and steady increase in temperature of the earth and the consequences have been noted with the erratic behavior of climatic conditions all over the globe. Extensive drought materializes in unexpected seasons as do excessive rain resulting in massive inundations and devastation. Wild fires erupt in various corners of the world and the damage has been extremely damning. All these are direct consequences of climate change that continues to haunt humanity.

Deforestation has been a widespread phenomenon for various reasons including the search for inhabitants to build urban areas where they can live comfortably. Forests were brutally eradicated due to such expansion of urban areas and constructions of various sorts. The search for more land for farming activities, the extensive usage of coal for energy and woods for fire as well as construction has contributed to massive and relentless deforestation without the concern of replacing the areas destroyed.

Population has been growing at astronomic pace particularly in the developing world and such pressure has brought more challenges in the attempt to feed all this increasing population as food can only be found through extensive and intense farming. The need to provide adequate food to all the people of the world has put immense pressure on land and in the search for available land, forests had to be sacrificed almost indiscriminately and wiped out so that there is abundant land for agricultural works.

Food security is a real challenge in most of the developing world with Africa on the top of the list. Ethiopia has been struggling to meet its food supplies to its ever growing population. This has increased the pressure on the environment as more and more constructions are carried out without taking into consideration the negative consequences of these series of acts that materialized along decades of deforestation. Survey shows that four decades ago the Ethiopian forest coverage was about thirty five percent of the land but now it has dwindled to only four per cent.

Pollution is another factor that has contributed to the heating up of the world even beyond the immediate health issues linked to respiratory complications that we experience in several industrialized and densely populated countries. Certain cities have reached alarming levels of air pollution despite the massive efforts of containment. Nowadays the usage of coal is being severely restricted while cars are made in such a way as to reduce the pollutant fuel. Fuel is being replaced slowly by chargeable electric vehicles. Many industrial plants have received warnings of closure if they do not restrict their emissions.

The Green Legacy Initiative also has the result of contributing to creating employment to youths who are engaged in preparing the tree seedlings in the tens of thousands of nurseries

A series of researches have been carried out through the years and scientists continued to make alarming discoveries on how the current trend is highly dangerous for the planet and humanity in general. They have determined that the current temperature trends are not sustainable and should be severely curtailed. Every industrial power is required to limit all activities that put in danger the environment.

Conferences have been held to outline future strategies to save the world and alternative use of energy has been prospected. Limiting temperature rises and reducing climate change has been suggested. One of the factors that can solidly contribute to the alleviation of temperature and help regularize the erratic behavior of the

weather is the re-afforestation of the planet. Every country needs to not only conserve the environment but also contribute more to such efforts through planting trees. This is where the Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative lies.

Ever since the reformist government has come to power, there has been this immense initiative of planting billions of trees. It began in 2019 with the plan of planting 20 billion tree seedlings in four years. However the results recorded seem very successful. Above all the involvement of the public has been overwhelming earning recognition even abroad.

This multi-year momentous campaign has been promoted and advanced by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed along with his aids. Planting a medium of five billion tree seedlings in four years was planned but already 18 billion have been planted in three years. This year more than seven billion tree seedlings have been prepared for the rainy season.

The official launch of the Green Legacy Initiative Phase IV took place on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 with the Premier Abiy Ahmed taking the lead along with former prime minister Haile Mariam Dessalegn and former president Dr Mulatu Teshome as well as the deputy premier and foreign minister Demeke Mekonnen.

The numbers show that more than twenty million people have taken part in the campaign. The awareness of the people has also increased. Protection of the environment is becoming a priority to the people. This has been included in the curriculum of students, teaching them to be conscious of the issue and acting accordingly. They are taught to keep clean their neighborhood, schools, etc. from pollutants such as plastic bags and other kinds of rubbish. They are being taught about recycling as the world avails limited resources.

Planting trees has a number of advantages in terms of contributing to the cooling down of the temperature, increasing rainfall that we need for agriculture and drinking water. Drought has become cyclical and even this year we have seen several areas in the country affected by drought killing thousands of cattle and threatening the livelihood of millions.

The UN continues to warn of severe food scarcity to millions in the Horn of Africa while appeals for more funds have intensified. But the world is faced with urgent challenges such as the security issues in Europe and elsewhere. Food prices have skyrocketed raising more alarms in the developing world that are food insecure. The Russia-Ukraine confrontation has worsened the case.

Inflation has become a major threat throughout the world and economists are battling such trend which negatively affects the poorer nations. Ethiopia is one

of the victims of spiraling inflationary trends. Already we have a stretched and stressed economic situation due to various issues such as the overall security situation particularly in the north where the consequences of two years of continued battles have left their mark with the depleting of immense resources allocated for the conflict endeavors. The class of population that already used to struggle to make ends meet is now more pressed due to price hikes. For instance fertilizers which are vital to the Ethiopian farmer have registered incredible price rises, so has the price of fuel. The effects create a cascading situation. It becomes a vicious circle.

However, despite this gloomy picture we need to nurture hope that the future can be better if we continue to cover our country with greenery and expand export. Besides more fruits need to be along with indigenous plants with a high probability of blossoming. The recent experiment carried out in the south around Wolayita Soddo of fruits and vegetables has been hailed a huge success. The country has earned eighty million dollars from the export of fruits such as avocado, papaya and mango. The recent visit of the premier to the area has shown to Ethiopians the extent of this new initiative of not only planting tree seedlings but also fruits that have commercial value. If this initiative is taken to another level, there could be more fruits grown and more export. It could also help satisfy the food needs of the people.

The Green Legacy Initiative also has the result of contributing to creating employment to youths who are engaged in preparing the tree seedlings in the tens of thousands of nurseries. Besides, those who work at various levels in the logistics and preparations of the holes for the planting of the seedlings have been engaged and earn a living through this activity.

Reports show that every preparation is ready for the planting of the billions of tree seedlings across the country. The premier has urged all those who can engage in this activity of planting tree seedlings to do it with commitment and continuity throughout the rainy season. He was talking of planting scores of seedlings every day for three months thus meeting the target of planting more than seven billion seedlings.

Looking at the outcome of the previous three seasons about eighty percent of the seedlings have taken root and grown but more is expected in terms of taking care of the planted seedlings. What is more, the premier has been vocal about the idea of expanding this process to neighboring countries with the provision of millions of tree seedlings to them because the phenomenon of climate change is a problem for all humanity and not only for a few countries. The solutions must also assume global behavior with shared approach and common strategy.

Law & Politics

WFP- telling half the truth

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

TPLF heeds to the calls for peace and truce, only when it suffers serious military setbacks and needs time to regroup and recuperates. Almost a year ago this week, When the federal government declared the first unilateral ceasefire, the TPLF described it as a joke and continued its military adventurism to spread the humanitarian crisis in Northern Ethiopia. But last March, after suffering a humiliating blow on the battlefield, the TPLF quickly accepted the federal government's offer of an indefinite humanitarian truce.

Following the declaration of the humanitarian truce, the good news of the successful delivery of humanitarian supplies to Tigray came frequently. And the size of the convoy of aid trucks snaking the road to Tigray continues to rise to this day. The sight of these humanitarian convoys would spark optimism that a lesser number of Tigrayan mothers and children would go to sleep hungry and many would get free access to basic medicine to maintain their health conditions. Is that really the case? The picture best symbolizes the whole truth about the humanitarian aid activities in Tigray is the picture of a man trying to fill a can with perforations at its bottom.

Elias Michael is a journalist who recently escaped from the tyrannical rule of TPLF in Tigray. As a man who worked with the TPLF propaganda machine for several years has a better understanding of the whys and the wherefores of TPLF politics. Speaking on the humanitarian aid supplies reaching Tigray, he recently said: "we see the aid trucks and the planes continuously flowing into Mekele. But the Tigray people are wondering where all the loads of aid supplies are ending up. Some Tigray mothers are sarcastically asking if the trucks and the planes are bringing in the wild Wanza fruits that currently inundated the marketplace instead of wheat." Despite the sharp rise in volume and frequency of humanitarian supplies, the scarcity of food and medical supplies to the ordinary Tigrayan civilians remains a dire situation.

Michael further explains; "Rumors have it that medical aid supplies are being diverted to business owners who have connection links with the TPLF leaders. These people commit the crime under the cover of being a local NGO. Thus they offer humanitarian medical supplies to the Tigray people at an extortionate price. The money they make would be shared among the business people and the TPLF leaders. Similar immoral crimes are

It is a sure thing that by now the WFP Chief has a clear understanding of which party is really committed to facilitating unhindered humanitarian access to the Tigray people, and which party is sabotaging the whole process

being committed with regards to the distribution of the humanitarian food supplies."

The humanitarian aid supply distribution in Tigray does not prioritize the weak and the vulnerable section of society; the powerless, hungry mothers, children, and the elderly. TPLF leaders have implemented a guideline prioritizing families of TPLF fighters and people working for the TPLF administration as the top beneficiaries of the humanitarian food supplies. "Over the last year, an ordinary civilian Tigrayan family could not get more than four rounds supplies of food aid," says Elias.

The injustice being done by TPLFites against their own people with regards to the distribution of humanitarian supplies has also recently been exposed by reports by the British newspaper the Guardian. Strangely enough, the report was filled by a freelance writer well known for her pro-TPLF stance. This is indicative of how the immoral sabotages being committed by TPLF against its own people is getting intolerable even among some TPLF sympathizers.

One of the Tigrayan who was approached by the guardian said: "I had seen the WFP [World Food Programme] aid trucks. But the aid was not distributed. The reason the authorities provide to the media is a shortage of fuel. But even private trucks have access to fuel and are operating, let alone the government. The aid that gets in is hardly reaching the starved. Meanwhile, TPLF authorities bother us every day to contribute from what we have. They have absolute power. They embezzle, and at times distribute the aid that gets in based on political affiliation."

The WFP Director-General was in Ethiopia last week to have a first-hand experience of what is actually happening on the ground with regards to humanitarian aid activity in northern Ethiopia in general, in Tigray in particular. It is a sure thing that by now the WFP Chief has a clear understanding of which party is really committed to facilitating unhindered humanitarian access to the Tigray people, and which party is sabotaging the whole process.

Of course, at the end of his two-day stay in Ethiopia, he gave credit to the Ethiopian government for the unprecedented rate of inflow of humanitarian supplies to Tigray. "The humanitarian truce itself has opened up greater access for our operations.

We have now moved about in the last 60 days.....probably 2,500 trucks, mostly food but also other items of support for the people in the region." The WFP Chief commended the Ethiopian government's real commitment that translated into actions.

But that is not the whole truth. The WFP Chief should have exposed and condemned the well-evidenced acts of sabotages of TPLF that jeopardizes the objective of humanitarian activities for the Tigray people. As mentioned previously, Tigrayan eyewitnesses and independent media outlets are accusing TPLF of using the humanitarian aid to fuel its war of aggression rather than facilitating conditions to meet its intended objective—saving lives of Tigrayan Civilian death from hunger and lack of basic medications.

Nevertheless, it is good to see international agencies leaders, and politicians come the way to Ethiopia to see for themselves reality on the ground instead of confining themselves to reports. At least, David Beasley has set an example to Anthony Blinken, who never set foot in Ethiopia since he took a position as a US secretary of state for almost half a year now, but made several comments about Ethiopia most of which are by in large based on misinformation.

Even though the WFP Chief did not say it, he knows in his heart, that the Tigray people would continue to suffer hunger and lack of basic medicines, as long as TPLF is allowed to continue sabotaging the humanitarian aid effort to advance its political and military objectives which only serve the interests of a criminal enterprise. TPLF's history testifies that the Terrorist group always uses humanitarian aid as an opportunity of amassing money at the expense of the misery and death of the Tigray people. Former TPLF fighters themselves have testified on various occasions that during the 1985 famine in Ethiopia, TPLF leaders diverted 95 percent of humanitarian aid supplies worth over 100 million USD which was targeted to be distributed to drought-affected people of Tigray.

That immoral and anti-people nature of TPLF, which international humanitarian agencies like WFP fail to expose, is well explained early this month by an editor of New Zealand-based online news media saying: "Given the previous experiences of TPLF in aid diversion and taking its advantages of humanitarian operation for the purpose of military conflicts, it is entirely reasonable for both the Government of Ethiopia and any other observers to consider the distinct possibility that this is happening again."

Women in Focus

Real queens fix each other's crowns

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Mickal Mamo is the founder of Adey Reusable Sanitary Pads Company. She is one of the women who came up with innovative solutions to curb challenges regarding affordability and accessibility of sanitary pads faced by girls and women both in rural and urban areas.

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, she has earned her first degree in Business Administration. Prior to engaging in manufacturing reusable pads, she has been serving in various national and international business organizations at different levels.

In 2017, she again joined another business which was producing children apparel. But, once she found out that most girls in rural school miss out on class every month because they cannot access affordable sanitary pads to use during their menstrual cycles and similar challenges were faced by school girls who are from low income families in the urban areas, she started making reusable sanitary pads.

Before it got the name 'Adey' about one and half year ago, the company has been running for over three years manufacturing reusable sanitary pads.

Currently, Adey Reusable Sanitary Pads Company is closely working with organizations such as 'I care' and 'Jegenit' to address the pressing challenges faced by school girls in terms of sanitary pads at times of menstruation.

The Ethiopian Herald has stayed with Mickal Mamo to go over her career and the overall activities of the company. Enjoy reading.

Tell us about your career journey and how you come up with the idea of making reusable sanitary pads?

Frankly speaking, I have never thought of making sanitary pads though I was engaged in making kids apparel. Given the fact that children wear are usually made from selected cotton materials with high quality, many people used to ask me to produce sanitary pads since the pads need as much high quality materials as children's wear needed.

As I think about the impact that it could make to the society, I started assessing the situation in my neighborhood 'Legetafo' where my company was located as well as the schools in the area. What we found was really heart-breaking. Through our assessment, which took us over three months, we learnt that school girls had been missing out more than four to five school days because of their period. Taking that as an initial point, we started manufacturing reusable sanitary pads. Once we have started manufacturing, we accidentally found out that there were displaced people in the area. Thus, we decided to provide them with the sanitary pads. Taking baby steps as well as advancing the products based on customer's feedback, we are here today.

When did you establish Adey Reusable Sanitary Pads and what are the core



Mickal Mamo, founder of Adey Reusable Sanitary Pads Company

“More importantly, I came to understand that so long as menstrual poverty is existed; curbing the challenges that most girls and women are facing is unthinkable”

values of your company?

Here at Adey's Sanitary Pads, we are committed to ensure that menstruation could never be an obstacle for women, needless to mention that accessibility and comfort are equally our important values.

Though creating access to customers where the problem is aggravating is essential, we also strive to meet our customer with healthy and quality sanitary pads.

In what ways that the sanitary pads you are producing is different from other similar products?

First and foremost, the fact that I use a material that is designed to make kids clothes would make it different since it is high quality cotton and it keeps users from irritation that may occur during using other sanitary pads.

Secondly, we use over 12 materials to manufacture the product which basically gives it comfort, safety and leak proof cotton; and it could be used for 8 hours without discomfort. Moreover, the absence of polisher (coloring materials) would also give a great point regarding health issues.

What are the major challenges that you encountered so far and what lessons did you learn from the process?

The natural and manmade disasters that happened in the country have been bottleneck as we could not be able to address certain areas in the ten states.

The fact that raw materials are getting too expensive especially after the outbreak of the pandemic is challenging. Let alone the aforementioned problems, but the high taxation that the government puts on the raw materials by itself is problematic.

Our company is engaged in activities such as advocacy. Thus, we were tied up with lobbying the government to make 'tax free period' and remove taxation imposed on either or reusable or disposable sanitary pads.

Coming to the lesson I took from the process, I say that learning is a daily routine in this business. As a person who was brought up in the city, I used to think that the problem related to sanitary pads accessibility was limited to rural areas and thought that the numbers were exaggerated, however; the reality was beyond that. I was amazed to learn that the challenge is equally existed in the cities.

Not only I learnt that the challenge is still surfaced even in urban areas where actually the focus is entirely given to remote areas, but I have also come to realize that girls from low income families in urban areas are also being challenged by the affordability of sanitary pads.

More importantly, I came to understand that so long as menstrual poverty is existed; curbing the challenges that most girls and women are facing is unthinkable. Whenever we think about girls/women empowerment, it is vital to take in to account that the menstrual poverty is a major challenge that needs to be addressed timely.

Do you think the society is fully aware about the challenges that most girls/women go through regarding menstruation and its impacts?

As a society, we are lagging way behind not only in understanding the impact it put on girls/women in various aspects; but also on debunking the taboo and misconception associated with menstruation.

However, we are committed to promoting awareness creation activities mostly for various high schools. We believe that there has been a great progress in breaking the taboo as we offered all inclusive trainings.

Through the training we provide on our pilot projects on schools, not only the girls are getting brave to ask for sanitary pads but the boys are being more understanding and supportive during that time of the month.

What is your take on the movement of making pads tax free; and what do you suggest?

I believe the government needs to consider that by making tax free period, it alleviates its own burden. It is to mean that most girls in Ethiopia could not access sanitary pads and there are also girls who know nothing about menstruation and sanitary pads.

In this regard, through creating enabling environment such as allowing tax exemption for manufactures of both reusable and disposable sanitary pads, it can curb the challenge and bring about sustainable sanitary products for women and lessen their burden.

Moreover, just like it provides school uniform, learning materials and feed students, government needs to take in to account that sanitary products are also necessity for girls and due attention should be given.

As we understand that joint effort is vital, we are also doing our level best to curb the challenge in collaborating with institutions such as Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Addis Ababa Women Bureau and other initiatives such as 'I care and Jegenit'.

What are your best accomplishments so far?

As parts of our activities that are carried out in partnership with our stakeholders, we were able to reach out to more than 31 thousand girls and women.

The training we provided in concert with 'I care and Jegenit' for over 12 model schools, also includes teachers (gender issue), legal experts, women low income and internally displaced women.

What messages would you like to share with our readers?

Menstruation is not luxury, it is necessity. The tax that is posed on importing raw materials for reusable sanitary pads including disposable pads, are creating more gaps in addressing the accessibility problem as it affects its affordability. Thus, attention should be given and the government needs to be understanding and discharge its responsibilities.

International News

Analysis: Trump's election lie becomes a big problem for MAGA Media

New York (CNN Business) A version of this article first appeared in the "Reliable Sources" newsletter. You can sign up for free right here.

Donald Trump's Big Lie is becoming a big problem for the media outlets that comprise his powerful propaganda arm.

On the same day that the former president's scheme to remain in power was further exposed at another January 6 Committee hearing, Fox and OAN suffered legal defeats in court related to their advancement of his election lies. And last week, on Thursday, Newsmax also suffered a legal loss.

So far, the right-wing media outlets that peddled Trump's false election narratives have had little luck winning in court against the voting tech companies suing them for billions of dollars. It is early in the process, of course. But the string of defeats these media outlets have suffered indicate that these lawsuits have some teeth to them.

The cases also point toward the fact that Trump's election lies will be litigated in court, through multiple cases, regardless of whether the Department of Justice pursues charges against him or not...

The Murdochs and "malice"

The most significant legal development on Tuesday was in regard to Fox. As Bloomberg's Erik Larson and Mike Leonard reported, a judge ruled that Fox Corporation, Fox News' parent company, can be sued by Dominion "because Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch may have acted with 'actual malice' in directing the network to broadcast conspiracy theories alleging the 2020 presidential election was rigged."



In the decision, Delaware Superior Court Judge Eric M. Davis cited reports that Murdoch privately expressed he knew Trump lost the election. Davis also cited editorials in other Murdoch-run outlets, such as The Wall Street Journal and New York Post, that condemned Trump and encouraged him to accept defeat.

"These allegations support a reasonable inference that Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch either knew Dominion had not manipulated the election or at least recklessly disregarded the truth when they allegedly caused Fox News to propagate its claims about Dominion," Davis wrote. "Thus, Dominion has successfully brought home actual malice to the individuals at Fox Corporation who it claims to be responsible for the broadcasts."

The loss again raises the question as to whether Fox will try to settle the \$1.6 billion lawsuit before it reaches the stage of discovery. And if it does attempt to settle, will Dominion allow it to do so? Or will the voting tech company, which has said it aims to clear its name through its lawsuits, want to see the case through?

>> Fox isn't commenting on the matter, though it has in the past defended its

coverage and said it was "proud" of it. Bloomberg noted Fox's reps didn't respond to messages seeking comment. And when I checked in on Tuesday evening, I too didn't hear back...

OAN also loses in court

Meanwhile, the right-wing conspiracy channel OAN suffered a loss at the hands of a different voting tech company, Smartmatic. US District Judge Carl Nichols ruled against the media outlet on Tuesday, allowing Smartmatic's lawsuit to proceed, CNN's Tierney Sneed reported. OAN had sought a dismissal on grounds that Nichols' court didn't have jurisdiction. But Nichols rejected the argument...

>> OAN did not respond to my requests for comment on the matter...

"All because of lies"

BY AN PHUNG:

For years now, Trump's lies and unproven conspiracy theories have been front and center in most of the media coverage about him. Rarely do we get to see the other side — the human toll of his incessant lying. But in Tuesday's 1/6 hearing, Wandrea "Shaye" Moss and her mother Ruby Freeman "flipped the script," as Marshall Cohen, Jeremy Herb, and Zachary Cohen wrote in their recap.

The two election workers from Georgia provided troubling and tearful accounts of what it was like to be targeted by Trump and conspiracy theorists who accused them of manipulating ballots. Moss said she "gained about 60 pounds," stopped going out, and added that she "second-guess[ed] everything" that she did. "It's affected my

life in a major way, in every way — all because of lies," she said. The extremely online crowd might have some idea of what it's like to be targeted in this way, but Moss and Freeman's testimony brought into sharp relief for a national TV audience what it's like to have your life turned upside down because of the former president's lies...

Who's watching?

BY BRIAN STELTER

After what Jake Tapper called an "upsetting and distressing day of testimony," full of personal stories from election officials and workers "whose lives were upended by Donald Trump, by his minions, by his mobs, and by his election lies," one had to wonder about the impacts on the intended audiences. Political junkies are paying attention, and DOJ lawyers, but many Republicans continue to argue that the Trump-aligned audience has tuned it out. Former Trump WH chief of staff Mick Mulvaney cited Tuesday's "compelling testimony" but said, "Judging by the ratings (and FB comments) people who need to see that aren't watching. If the Committee wants to change minds, they need to reach people who think Trump won. That doesn't seem to be happening."

Fox showed the hearing again, but moved on very quickly afterward. □ "They're methodically laying out this case," Bret Baier said on Fox later in the day. □ But his guest, Sen. Tim Scott, □ said "I have not taken the time to watch the hearings. I feel like the best use of my time is fighting the inflationary effects." He called the hearing "made for TV" □ and said (answering Baier's question) that if Trump is the 2024 nominee, "of course we support him. □"

More than 1,000 people killed after magnitude 5.9 earthquake hits eastern Afghanistan

(CNN) Afghanistan was rocked by its deadliest earthquake in decades on Wednesday when a magnitude 5.9 earthquake struck the country's east, killing more than 1,000 people and wounding many more, according to a regional official.

The humanitarian disaster comes at a difficult time for the Taliban-ruled country, currently in the throes of hunger and economic crises.

The shocks hit at 1:24 a.m. local time on Wednesday (4:54 p.m. ET on Tuesday) around 46 kilometers (28.5 miles) southwest of the city of Khost, which lies close to the country's border with Pakistan, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

The quake registered at a depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), according to USGS, which designated it at yellow alert level -- indicating a relatively localized impact.



Most of the deaths were in Paktika province, in the districts of Giyan, Nika, Barmal and Zirok, according to the State Ministry for

Disaster Management.

The death toll stands at more than 1,000

and at least 1,500 people have been injured "in Gayan and Barmal districts of Paktika province alone," Mohammad Amin Hozaifa, head of Paktika province's information and culture department, told CNN in a phone call Wednesday.

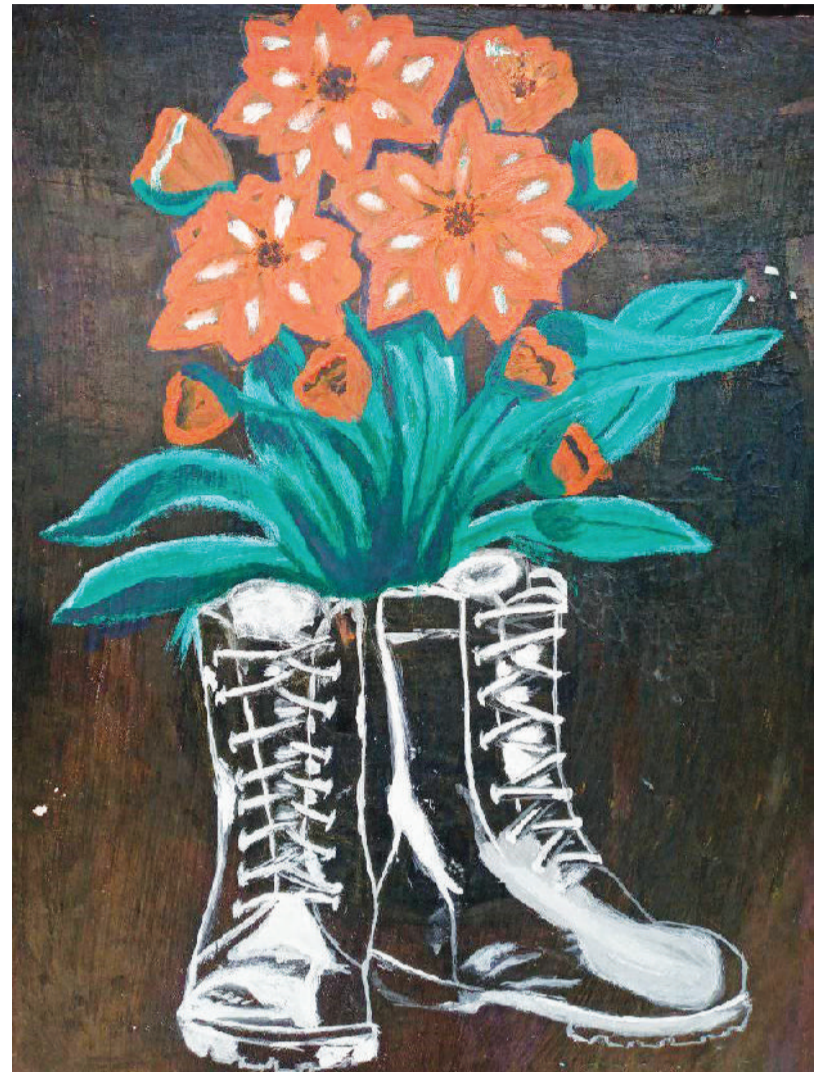
The official expects the number of casualties to rise as search and effort missions continue.

In this photo released by state-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans evacuate the wounded following the quake in Paktika province, eastern Afghanistan.

In neighboring Khost province, 25 people were killed and several others were injured, and five people were killed in Nangarhar province, the disaster management authority said.

Photos from Paktika province, just south of Khost province, show houses turned to rubble with only a wall or two still standing amid the rubble, and broken roof beams.

Society



How much is the price of peace?

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

There is always power within art to convey a message. There is a saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” In this regard, children are experts at expressing their thoughts through pictures better than words. Whenever there is internal conflict within their mind, children prefer to express their feelings either through their cries or their paintings.

The early humankind had used his hands to make tools not only to hunt his prey but also to protect himself from external attack. In the later ages, when the brain capacity of the primitive man developed, those hands that had been used to make weapons for the sake of survival also started drawing paintings in the cave.

Be it for religious purposes or for the sake of art, man had been using pictures for millennia. The archaeological findings in ancient Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece and Rome are good indications for this. Due to this, and of course additional reasons, painting and mankind have strong attachments.

This is an era where art and human beings have become more and more attached. Thanks to technology, the previous way of painting style has now changed and become easier for art lovers. Because of digital technologies, people have now become more and more interested in art. This is especially true for children who are experts in expressing their feelings through painting.

Sources related to child psychology are indicating that children’s paintings have received much attention on the part

of teachers and educators. There is a common stand among child psychologists that the kind of colour children use or type of drawing they paint can give precise information about young artists and their internal feeling. Those children who live under unstable systems use their art as a means to express peace. Their dire desire about family, political stability and peace can be reflected through their art works. In the same token, those children who are living under peaceful conditions draw paintings that reflect their internal peace, attachment with family members and classmates.

Lately, this journalist had a chance to interview young artists at Ambo University, Laureate Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin Research Centre. Bontu Angasi, is a 14 years old artist in Ambo Town. In her painting, Bontu tried to draw pictures and depict her feelings about peace. Her painting portrays a hand that holds a gun to shoot a white bird, which is a sign of peace.

According to Bontu, we are found in an era where every human kind is disrupting the peace and stability of the planet. This is either in a conventional form of war or through carbon emission. The world is made to meet the interest of humankind. However, due to their inordinate selfishness and greediness, people are destroying the planet by fighting each other all the time. The wars took place in Syria, Yemen, Libya among others good examples of this. Everyone speaks about peace but every hand is working to destroy the aspired peace. Children are becoming victims of protracted war

and conflict. Women also encounter problems including rape and other forms of violence. In this regard, we should stop for a moment and think about the value of peace and the cost we incurred on ourselves because of all the war we had been through. This world is destroying its peace by its own hands. It is committing a suicide. Its people are exposed to hunger, displacements and non-stop war.

When asked where the idea to paint her drawing came from, Bontu said that the life we are leading is the source of the idea. The whole world is going through war and conflict. For this reason, as member of this planet earth, my friends and I have expressed our feelings through art.

According to Bontu, people forcibly displaced; mothers lost their beloved children because of unjust war. To this end, everyone should take action to bring sustainable peace. “We are fighting because of religion, ethnic issues and others. We are sacrificing our lives for cases that can be resolved easily. Peace is not something to be compromised. The price of peace is priceless. Leaders and politicians should promote peace and dialogue at the expense of war and conflict.”

The other artist whom this writer met at Ambo University is Aron Shimeles. Like that of Bontu, Aron has expressed his desire for peace through art. In his painting, Aron has tried to show the values of tolerance by drawing a painting that portrays hands holding each other and various religious institutions are attached to those hands.

According to Aron, religious intolerance is one reason behind conflicts in Ethiopia. Respecting the value and interest of others should be the core value of every religion. However, by violating this core value, people are fighting each other and sacrificing their lives. To this end, we should nurture the old culture of respecting and loving each other. Aron said, religious leaders should take the lead in guiding their followers towards peaceful coexistence.

The other young painter preferred to be anonymous. In his painting he has expressed his feelings about peace and stability. There is a pair of soldier’s boots which represents a vase. Within the boot there are blooming rose flowers. When asked what the boots and the roses represent, the young artist said, “Let’s say ‘No’ to war and plant peace. The flower represents a bright future where we see hope and stability. The soldier’s boots represent peace that could only be achieved by dialogue not with war.

Indeed, as it was indicated by those young artists the price of peace is priceless. However, by neglecting this fact man is paying unnecessary prices. Innocent people are dying because of man’s rigidity and failure to respect the values of others. In this regard, working for common good is the only direction Ethiopia has to stick to. The future generation needs a stable environment which is free from conflict. Working for peace through dialogue is the only way which can bring the peace that we, Ethiopians, aspire to have.