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President urges graduates to be problem-solvers

- AAU graduates 5,058 students

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA - Addis Ababa University yesterday graduated 5,058 students in various fields of studies with first, second and third degree programs.

On the occasion, President Sahlework Zewde said that the graduates should apply their academic knowledge practically, fight ill behaviors together, and turn the country's challenges into opportunities.

President Sahlework stressed that it is time to work jointly to the benefit of the country

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Photo : Tsehay Nigusie

Finland lauds gov't commitment to peaceful resolution

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Finnish government has lauded Ethiopia's peace efforts and renewed commitment to supporting the latter's decision to peacefully resolve the northern conflict and hold inclusive National Dialogue.

Discussing a range of issues with House of Peoples' Representative Foreign Relation and Peace Affairs Standing Committee

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4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Victim tells heartbreak story

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Three to four civilians are getting massacred in Welega, western Ethiopia either targeted or randomly each week, stressed a victim of a recent civilian killings in the town.

During his stay with foreign media, Hailu T Dhufera who lost his heroic father to an armed group in Welega indicated that the people, whether grew up there or not, are very terrified to speak up as speaking up might be the source of their death.

He added that: "Though many of us do not get to hear it, people die each week whether in a targeted or random occasion. My father was massacred trying to defend a woman and her child who were harassed by an armed group. On his way to give fertilizer to farmers that he purchases from Nekemt, he confronted the group who forcibly stopped their car and started harassing a mother and

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News

EPA plants tree seedlings at Entoto Botanic Garden

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) has planted different species of tree seedlings as part of this year's national Green Legacy campaign at Entoto Botanical Garden.

As part of this year's Green Legacy initiative campaign, the EPA's employees planted a number of seedlings at the Entoto Botanical Garden yesterday.

At the event, EPA General Manager Getenet Tadesse said that EPA has been launching panel discussions on essential national agendas in twelve cities including Green Legacy Initiative. It has commenced green

legacy initiative for the first time in Jimma town involving various community sectors including competing parties.

"We have conducted panel discussions in six towns on various essential national agendas. This kind of activity is what all institutions, particularly media houses should do it in a bid to hear all voices of the community."

Only planting the tree seedlings is not enough, paying due attention for survival of tree seedlings is a must, he said.

"The goal of planting tree seedlings is mitigating climate change, deforestation and other natural and manmade consequences. The effort would be redoubled in coming years."



Photo: Eyob Teferi

PM Office initiates home renovation program in Shashemene

BY MESERET BEHAILU

SHASHEMNIE - The Office of the Prime Minister launched the winter season home renovations program for the low-income community in Shashemene town.

On the occasion, Shashemnie Town Administrator Wosho Kadir said that the town is back to its peaceful status after the massive damages by the enemies two years ago.

Office of the Prime Minister and its subsequent institutions launched the volunteer service program in renovating 35 elderly homes in the town.

The town administration gives due attention to renovate the elders home

during the past four years and welcomes the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) initiative of helping the needy, he said.

As to him, the town is known for accommodating numerous ethnicities harmoniously.

"Currently, the town is working to recover the massive infrastructural damages by the enemies two years ago. More than 800 homes have been renovated in the past two years following the damage," he added.

Beneficiaries of the home renovation expressed their gratitude to the PM initiative and the town administration for its commendable role.

Diaspora organizations urged to actively engage in National affairs, dev't

ADDIS ABABA /ENA/ - Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, Ambassador Redwan Hussein called on Diaspora organizations to enter Ethiopia and actively engage in the affairs of the country.

The adviser made the remark at the launch of the 22nd annual conference of Badr International Ethiopian Muslim Organization in Addis Ababa on Friday.

The conference is expected to discuss on various national issues including ways to realizing peace and development in Ethiopia during its ten day deliberation.

Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Redwan said the conference would be a good experience to harness the potential that Ethiopia has in the Diaspora.

In addition to enabling the Diaspora to work for their country and make a difference, such conferences can help to tackle Ethiopia's problems.

He said the realization of the conference will inspire other Diaspora organizations to carry out similar programs in Ethiopia.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano called on the Ethiopian Diaspora organizations across the world to strengthen their ties like Badr International.

Birtukan who is also chairperson of the "Eid al-Fitr-to-Eid al-Adha," the Great Ethiopian Home Coming Initiative committee, further noted the 22nd conference will provide an opportunity for the Diaspora to maximize their engagement at home.



Ambassador Redwan Hussein

She also urged other Diaspora organizations to strengthen their efforts for the benefit of Ethiopia by holding their annual meetings in their country.

Ahmed Worku, President of Badr International Ethiopian Muslims Organization, said his organization will strive for the betterment of Ethiopia that accommodates all interests without any differences of religion.

He also expressed his organization's determination to work with the government.

Badr Ethiopia is a leading Ethiopian Muslim organization outside of Ethiopia and a non-governmental, not-for-profit, non-political, grassroots umbrella association that is dedicated to advancing the social, civic, network, and spiritual fabric of Ethiopian Muslims in North America and around the world, it was indicated.

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General Manager

Tel. 011-126-42-22

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Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew
email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city
Woreda - 05, House No---
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desta Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

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Editorial

Ethiopians would prevail at the end!

Despite the series of challenges that it is facing now, Ethiopia will pass the ordeal and continue to shine again as a symbol of freedom and developmental success. Auspicious and optimistic Ethiopians never lose hope and surrender to the temporary challenges that are often posed as traps to their glorious march towards prosperity.

Challenges are not new to the people and the country. If we see the modern history of the country, Ethiopians have beaten the various troubles that are apparently difficult to pass. For instance, when Emperor Menelik II started consolidating the modern state of Ethiopia he had just to deal with the after math of war and conflict waged against the country by external forces. In addition, he also had to face the backbreaking consequences of the massive extermination about 90 percent of the cattle in the country due to an unprecedented type of cattle disease. This was a very severe strike on the back of the country's economy with a capacity of building nation and fending of foreign enemy.

However, the reality that happened on the ground was paradoxically to the contrary. The people from all corners of the country joined hands and fought the invading Italian forces and defeated them at the battle of Adwa. As a result, the victory at Adwa is still remembered as a didactic source of inspiration both for nations as well as individuals to fight for one's freedom and sovereignty despite being poor or backward. Sovereignty is not to be compromised under any circumstance.

Regarding endurance of challenges to guarantee ones rights and dignity the victory at Adwa is only the first incident. Many such incidents have occurred in the country throughout the decades that followed.

For instance, the country was invaded by the fascist Italian forces and

brutally attacked in the 1930s. Further, the country has fought bloody war with Somalia since the 1950s that continued to the 1980s. It has also suffered a protracted civil war with various armed groups. In almost all of the wars that the country fought there was heavy handed involvement of foreign forces who would like to discharge their objectives through proxies either at home or neighboring countries. But all these efforts were thwarted in the same way as the occupation forces faced at the Battle of Adwa.

Those who try to exploit the unmet needs of groups in Ethiopia and neighboring countries do not take lesson from their failure at the battle of Adwa and still have continued to stir war and conflict in the country.

The recent incident along the Ethio-Sudanese border is also outcome of such intervention of foreign forces. Their hands also extend to their proxies, TPLF and *Shene* who are conspiring to carry out the terrorist massacre and aggression to make sure that the demands of their bosses are met.

Yet these attempts have hardly succeeded. As Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) told members of parliament recently, the country has faced grey war because of the foreign intervention.

After realizing that they cannot succeed in the civil war and terrorist aggression these antagonistic forces have turned to extort the country by levying sanctions and spreading fake news. But the hard truth is all their efforts would never come true in the face of the people that have conquered brutal aggression.

The only problem they may create is to cause the decimation of innocent civilians through their proxies and destructive propaganda war. All sides must understand that it is only a matter of time until Ethiopians come out victorious conquering all the odds posed against them.

Opinion

The financial system Africa needs

BY VERA SONGWE

Africa's vast economic potential is no secret. But tapping it will be possible only if major developed countries and emerging economies work together to design a more inclusive and effective global financial system that meets the continent's liquidity and debt-sustainability needs.

For African economies that have yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine could not have come at a worse time. The economic wounds of the previous crisis had been stitched up, but more time was needed for them to heal, let alone for the scars to fade. Now, commodity-price spikes and supply-chain disruptions are compounding inflationary pressures, causing currencies to depreciate and food and fuel costs to skyrocket. Since the war began, oil prices have reached their highest levels since 2008, wheat prices have soared to 14-year highs, and fertilizer prices have surged by nearly 30%.

These macro trends have high human costs. As many as 25 African countries depend on wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine. Rwanda and Tanzania import over 60% of their wheat from the two countries. That figure is nearly 70% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exceeds 80% in Egypt. Russia alone supplies 45% of Namibia's wheat, and 100% of Benin's. With grain products often accounting for a large share of local diets, the risk of hunger and undernourishment is rising fast – and not just for low-income households. But many African governments have little scope to respond to this escalating crisis. Pandemic-related uncertainty led to massive capital flight from the continent, output shrank, and countries' debt burdens grew heavier. Over

\$40 billion in debt repayments were due in 2021, and debt service is expected to exceed 7% of Africa's GDP in 2022 even before the Ukraine crisis and the US Federal Reserve's interest-rate hikes.

As the crisis has intensified, access to international capital markets has tightened. Ghana and Tunisia are virtually shut out, and countries with greater access, such as South Africa, face onerous rates. Nigeria recently sold \$1.25 billion in dollar bonds, due in 2029, with a yield of 8.375%. Africa's current plight reflects a fundamental international failure. The continent's integration into the global economy over the last several decades has not been accompanied by changes to the global financial system aimed at ensuring that its needs – both for growth and support in times of global crisis – are met. Such changes include accelerating the effort to reform the G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatments and expanding it beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. It also means improving African countries' market access. While over 23 African economies have accessed the Eurobond market over the last four years – and emerging African economies do so regularly – they remain weighed down by low credit ratings, wide interest-rate spreads, and negative investment-risk perceptions. While this may take some time to correct, markets have tools with which to address the illiquidity of Africa's bonds, thereby reducing costs for African borrowers and crowding in more financing.

Secondary markets for trading African bonds typically lack depth. With the G20's support, however, a "repo" (repurchase) market can be created, with bonds used as collateral to access affordable loans. The G20 economies

– and the international community more broadly – have pledged to help ease African countries' debt burdens. They must deliver on this promise. But they must also begin to lay the groundwork for a real-sector recovery, underpinned by investments in energy, infrastructure, and services to support trade and job creation. African countries also need currency markets at scale. In providing financing to Africa, the international community cannot depend on instruments designed for low-income countries. After all, nearly 78% of Africa's GDP and 75% of its population (including many of its poor) are concentrated in middle-income countries. Fast-disbursing non-program instruments at the International Monetary Fund represent another possible solution. The IMF's proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust is a step in the right direction. But the RST, as currently designed, has some flaws, including overly restrictive conditions for access and a focus on long-term, rather than emergency, support. Without immediate assistance, the long term will be precarious for many. As it stands, countries accessing the RST would be required to have a regular IMF program in place. To ensure that the RST helps all countries in need, this requirement should be removed. Moreover, to avoid excessive funding delays, RST disbursements should be divided into two categories: smaller loans with less conditionality that can be delivered quickly to enable countries to respond to balance-of-payment shocks, and larger loans that require countries to enter into standby arrangements. As a long-term facility, the RST would enable funding for investment in sustainable infrastructure – projects that would offer reliable returns, advance the net-zero transition, and support economic

diversification. The Economic Commission for Africa estimates that investment in green projects can lead to the creation of 2.5 times more jobs than the equivalent investment in coal- or fossil-fuel-based alternatives. With Africa accounting for less than 1% of global green bond issuance, the upside potential is enormous.

Finally, the world must make the most of special drawing rights. SDRs (the IMF's reserve asset) can become a true game-changer, easing debt pressures, spurring investment, and driving progress toward inclusive prosperity. But, as economic conditions tighten, a new allocation must be considered to help countries deal with pressing needs. In the future, automatic triggers for new SDR releases, as well as a new allocation system, are needed to deal with the current inequity in allocation. Of the \$650 billion in SDRs the IMF allocated last year, only \$33.6 billion went to African economies. Developed economies received \$420 billion, even though the median high-income country uses only 6% of its SDRs, compared to 53% for Africa. Africa's vast economic potential is no secret. But tapping it will be possible only if major developed countries and emerging economies work together to design a global financial system that meets Africa's liquidity and debt-sustainability needs.

Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, is Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Source: ECA

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

News

MoTI launches green legacy initiatives in Hadiya

BY HAILE DEMEKE

HADIYA, SHONE – Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) has launched Green Legacy 2022, annual tree planting campaign in Hadiya Zone, Shone woreda which is part of the fourth green legacy planting campaign.

Lunching the campaign Industry Minister Melaku Alebel yesterday said that the today's program is part of the national green legacy initiative and the ministry is also working on encouraging the society to actively participate in the campaign, creating awareness and making the society the owner of the initiatives.

Ethiopia has long tradition of planting seedling, but due to the growth of the number of population the country's forest coverage is gradually dwindling from time to time. Accordingly, the nation has a target of planting 6 billion seedlings during this rainy season, which is part of boosting the forest coverage of the country and over 18 billion seedlings has been planted across the country in the past three consecutive years. Out of the 18 billion seedlings planted over the past three years over 80 percent of them have grown and the campaign will continue, he noted.

Environment is affected when the production and productivity is reduced and the initiative plays significant role in increasing productivity, protecting environment and others. The ministry



is working on expanding co-friendly manufacturing industry, he said.

He indicated that the gradual reduction of the forest coverage has been resulting for conflict, environmental degradation and others. The initiative plays significant role in curbing such kinds of problems and the government of Ethiopia is working with commitment in recovering the environment and boosting the forest coverage of the country.

He urged the community to discharge their role in planting seedlings, protecting environment, and the green legacy

initiative was organized by minister in Shone Woreda of Hadiya Zone mobilizing the community from the area to plant seedlings to leave their legacy in the Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative.

Hadiya Zone Administrator Abraham Mecha said that the linkage between industry and environment is crucial to ensure the overall development of the country and the zone is working with commitment as part of green legacy initiatives. Linking the two sectors is crucial so as to ensure development

also protect the environment as well, he indicated.

Hadiya Zone has untapped potential in tourism and working on developing the tourism sites. On the other hand, the zone has providing fruits and other products to the capital and the initiative plays crucial role in boosting productivity, he noted.

Shone City Mayor Mesfin Temesgen for his part indicated that the society has been actively participating in the national tree planting campaign and will continue to discharge our role in this part, he indicated.

It is to be recalled that the 2022, annual green legacy tree planting campaign was officially commenced at Gulele Botanical garden with the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and senior government officials.

The stakeholders from the ministry and others were presented in Hadiya zone to plant over 3,000 seedlings.

Launched in June of 2019, the Green legacy initiative aims to curb the effects of climate change and deforestation in Ethiopia and the country has planned to plant 20 billion seedlings within a period of four years out of which 18 billion of them were planted so far, it was learnt.

Green Legacy Initiative is a national agenda which aims to boost the country's forest coverage to 30 percent by 2030. More than seven billion seedlings have been prepared for this year's planting campaign.

President urges graduates...

through countering all odds and any divisive behaviors based on race and religion.

"Graduates should nurture and repeat our patriotic forefathers/mothers' deeds,

cultivate the culture of industriousness, and serve the public at large," she said.

Accordingly, AAU has been contributing its level best regarding providing qualified and well-trained educated labour force needed

in agriculture, industries and other sectors.

On his part, AAU President Prof. Tassew Woldehana said that currently the University is teaching over 40,000 students and has opened 11 research institutes and two technology institutes.

"Today the University's graduates over

5,000 students out of this 40 percent were graduate students and 33 percent were women. Every graduate is expected to help the country with research," he said.

Accordingly, AAU has been serving Ethiopia through teaching and researching in various fields for the past 72 years.

Victim tells heartbreak...

her child."

He went on saying: "My father is an outspoken person. He sacrificed his whole life for the community. Every time, his house would be occupied by college students who went to Welega from remote areas to study."

The society is confused and stuck between groups be it a tiny group or highly organized. To the worst of this situation, unemployed youths in the area are taking advantage of the situation and are robbing the society, he underlined.

"I don't think they are willing to end the chaos because they are benefitting from it. If you are able to ask a random person some 200 thousand, you are wealthy so why do you end it? It has been the job opportunity and political interest extending mechanism for many."

He noted that his only hope for the society is bringing up alliances, dialogues and

ignoring the unnecessary ethnicity tag otherwise he stressed that there is no way to bring the nation together.

Asked about what these groups wanted to provoke, he argued that the armed groups have lost their agenda and intention by saying "If they have political agenda, this is not the way they would struggle. Logically, what they are doing does not make any sense and have nothing to do with politics. A group with pure political interest would not do such things to the community," he emphasized.

Even beneath his pain to the loss of his father, who was a government employee that served his district as lawyer, legal consultant and who was also farmer, he expressed that his father, even in his last moments, stood by his principles. However, he unveiled his fear for the rest of the families who still reside in the area.

Finland lauds gov't commitment...

Chairperson Dimma Negewo (PhD), Finnish Parliament member and Special Representative for Horn of Africa Suldaan Said Ahmed and Finnish Ambassador Outi Holopainen on Friday said that their country is willing to work with Ethiopia in a bid to foster bilateral relationship between the two countries.

The Special Representative for Horn of Africa has applauded the commitment of the government to peacefully solve the northern conflict and its effort to hold National Dialogue. The participation of the youth is of paramount importance in realizing the effort as the country houses a number of youth community.

"The Finnish government is committed to supporting both the peace talks and National Dialogue processes. It is a great initiative to sustain peace and stability across the country. It is time to solve any kind of conflict in the region. We are committed to help sustain peace and stability in the Horn of Africa," he added.

He further stated that National Dialogue is important for countries like Ethiopia possessing different ethnic and religious groups. Involving and understanding all sectors of community is equally important as well.

"As a longtime partner, Finland stands by the side of Ethiopia to support both processes as they would like peace to prevail in Ethiopia. Finnish Parliament Horn of Africa Friendship Group has a good connection with parliament of Ethiopia and Horn of Africa," he stated.

House of Peoples' Representative Foreign Relation and Peace Affairs Standing Committee Chairperson Dimma Negewo (PhD) on his part said that Ethiopia has been committed to preserving human rights and set up a joint commission to investigate the abuses took place in Tigray State. The country is willing to resolve problems through the process of National Dialogue as well as peace talks.

Opinion

Housing construction as part of urban development

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

According to the United Nations Charter, obtaining residential house is the right of all citizens. The Ethiopian constitution also endorsed that citizens have the right to live in a place where suitable environment is availed and constructed in the standardized manner. In the country where population growth is the highest such as Ethiopia meeting the basic needs of citizens such as food, clean water, residential house with better sewerage system is not an easy one and needs land, huge amount of money, man power and technology.

The construction of residential houses in the city also must put account citizens affording capacity, whether it is environment friendly, go in line with the master plan. The construction of residential houses in addition to meeting citizen's demand, it has various values.

The sector creates job opportunity to thousands, market opportunities to cement industries, query, electric line installers and moreover boost the transportation sector.

In the city the demand for residential house is increasing from time to time due to population growth. The natural birth and rural-urban migration put pressure on demand. On the other hand, due to shortage of supply and high construction cost the price of house is increasing from time to time and for most residents is beyond their paying capacity.

In the past various approaches were employed in house construction depending on the land ownership system.

During the imperial era land was privately owned and transacted based on demand and supply. That time the price of land was not as expensive as today and was not monopolized by the government. The house construction materials also were not expensive as such. Though the municipality had master plan most houses were muddy with on average two rooms. In that era, the price of rent house was cheap and affordable to the ordinary citizens.

However, due to the population growth and rural-urban migration the house demand was increasing. In fact poverty was rampant and Shanty places were scattered here and there which intern overshadowed the then attractive features of the city. Approximately, that time the number of population was half a million.

The down fall of the imperial regime by the popular movement in 1974 totally changed the land ownership system and the house construction modality. The

military government nationalized the land and other means of production by the proclamation in which still existing.

Extra residential houses which had been built by the urban resident's meager resources were also confiscated and begun to be administered by the Kebele officials. Unlike the imperial era, land lost its transaction value and it became in accessible to ordinary citizens. The construction of residential houses through free market by individuals also halted and after years, the demand for land and houses is increased.

The private sector engaged in house construction which was flourishing in the imperial era due to the emergence of socialist oriented government was curtailed. Some local private companies also left their country due to coercive environment.

To fill the gap, the regime established the Ministry of House and Urban Development. The government allocated huge amount of budget for house construction. In addition, to some extent it obtained support from the multinational institutions with regard to urban development scheme.

By this scheme many apartments were constructed and mostly supplied to the high government officials in the very lower rent.

Urban utilities such as piped water and electric service and sewerage system were moderately improved and the city status was also upgraded as compared to the previous era. The city administration also tried its level best to modernize the city through planning

In addition it took other steps to meet the house demand and to that end the government announced that citizens can construct their houses through organized themselves by association. Land was availed in the lower price as the government perused socialist economic policy the price was affordable to the ordinary citizens. Bank loan with very fair interest rate was provided to the associations engaged in house construction.

Construction inputs were also availed in affordable price. Most of the members of the house construction associations were civil servants and others work in private companies who can save money permanently. The poor who did not have fixed income were not eligible to be the members of the associations. In the Dergue era as mentioned above residential houses were constructed by the government and by associations and the construction was carried out based on the city master plan

and the scheme was environment friendly.

The dawn fall of the Dergue and the assuming of power by EPRDF totally changing the land tenure system in the urban centers while in the rural part continued as it was. The gap between demand and supply of house market was widening and access to land for house construction was also continued to very intact. Monopoly of land ownership by the government both in rural and urban center was continued. But what the new phenomena occurred in the urban center was that the introducing of new law indicates the provision of land in lease system which was totally practiced in the advanced capitalist countries. The system made the price very expensive and provided by the auction system. Leasing land for hundred years or so was intact to the ordinary citizens. It is only affordable to the reach and foreign companies. The high price of land also brought its own inflation pressure on the price of houses. Because investors before they construct the building for office work of for real estate they will pay huge amount of money for land based on the size of the land offered based on the auction. Real estates developed by investors in fact could help to meet the housing demand but it was very expensive only the haves could afford. It is undeniable fact that the development of real estate formed capital, enhance the city administration revenue income, introduced new construction technology, strengthen the private sector involvement in the economy more over beautify the city as it is metropolitan.

Addis Ababa is the capital of Africa which is the resident of more than 100 embassies from all over the world. Therefore the urban development works carried out in the last 25 upgraded the city value in relation with other African cities and in this regard the credit goes to the government. According to some studies the population is grew fast and the land area also grew by three fold in the last three decades. More infrastructures are developed in the aspect of roads, sewerage system, and electric power and others. But in meeting the house demand particularly the middle and the lower class segment of the society still needs far to go. The government in order the resolve housing problem of the ordinary citizens it introduced the construction of condominium houses since 2005. Most civil servants, private workers and employees registered to obtain the house in this program. They registered by 10/90, 20/80 and later by 40/60 and each registered person save money monthly based on the requirement

in the commercial Bank of Ethiopia. In return the bank provides loan to the City Administration House Construction Agency. Since then hundreds of thousands could obtain residential rooms with studio, one, two and three bed rooms. But as mentioned earlier the house demand in the city has been unmeet due to population growth and the sluggish pace of the house construction projects. The projected job opportunities to thousands and create market for input suppliers but to date more than millions are waiting to get the house.

When the project is delay the cost of construction inputs are growing and left most registered citizens left in desperate. The project was intended to address housing problem of the lower class of the city but the objective is derailed. The heavy handed role of brokers in the housing market disrupted the normal transaction. When some win the lottery to obtain the house fail to pay the down payment which is 20 percent of the total cost forced to sell and the intervention of the brokers makes the transaction very expensive and from time to time both the house rent and the house price is increasing and aggravates inflation in the hole economy.

The housing construction in addition to trying to narrow the gap between demand and supply in the market, it played crucial role in renewing shanty areas which are unfriendly to the environment. Resident in the old areas were displaced and resettled in new areas where condominium houses are built. The construction of new residential and real estates in the renewed areas changed the feature of the city to the better. The other modality implemented by the government to meet the residential houses is constructing through association.

Many house constructing associations are established by residents and the government provides land by lease system for hundred years. In this approach many members of the association could be the owner of the house and still continue to construct. But still the gap between demand and supply in housing market is widening unprecedentedly. Based on the witnessed fact constructing the house by the government ownership is not economically feasible and open the get for corruption. Therefore, the government should pull itself from such venture and should play only as facilitator.

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

Business & Economy

Improving agricultural productivity

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), five major cereals (teff, wheat, maize, and barley) are contributing ensuring food security. There has been substantial growth in cereals in terms of area cultivated, yields, in the last three decades. However, comparing to the international standard yields per hectare is low and overall production is highly vulnerable to extreme climate conditions. Thus, mitigating their vulnerability and improving the production per hectare is essential. It helps ensuring adequate food availability and to increase rural household incomes.

Currently, the Ethiopian government is striving to transform the agricultural sector through undertaking various measures. It is doing its level best through assisting the sector with provision of extension service and mechanized tools. Further to this, it requires generating more from the sector to meet the demand of raw materials along the on-going industrial plants expansion across the country. Following this, the overall performance of the agriculture sector is showing good progress year after year.

The Ministry of Agriculture said that, more than 12.77 million hectares of land has been cultivated by the crop season with a cluster form of cultivation countrywide focused on market-oriented crops such as sesame, wheat, maize and barley.

Sufficient agricultural inputs supply, active engagements of sector professionals, and new agricultural technologies utilization sought to realize the target production.

Accordingly, the introduction of new agricultural technologies and agricultural inputs will raise the production and productivity. Reports are showing that the country's crop production is growing year after year following the application of latest agricultural technologies and the availability untapped suitable land, among others played crucial role.

In addition, the coordinated environmental protection activities undertaking across the country is also a plus to the on-going agricultural productivity through contributing its part to curb soil degradation and flood damage.

On the other hand, inconsistent weather conditions, the COVID-19 pandemic, some sort of conflict in the northern part of the country, pest occurrence on crops and low level of new agricultural technologies expansion and accessibility throughout the country are some of the sector bottlenecks.

More importantly, the ministry prioritizes that harvesting should be done in a way that minimizes agricultural production waste. In most areas, harvest is expected to begin in early November. Leaders and experts at all levels are working hard to mobilize farmers to harvest ready crops.

During this crop season, the supply and utilization of agricultural inputs needed for crop development, as well as the technical support provided to farmers, were better



Wheat farms in the central highland part of the country

done by the ministry and other pertinent stakeholders to compensate the reduction in production in insecure areas. Moreover, the favourable distribution of rainfall created better conditions for improved crop production and productivity.

Accordingly, since the harvesting is highly dependent on human labour, each farmer should coordinate his own and his family's labour as well as coordinate with other farmers to ensure that the harvested crops are kept dry and reduced waste. When crops are harvested in the field, load carefully and use a variety of precautionary measures against pests, animals and unseasonal rains. Agricultural professionals need to pay close attention to the efficient use of time by connecting service providers and consumers and mobilizing the farmer so that harvest mechanization can be widely used in areas where agricultural mechanization can be used.

In case of unseasonal rains, the ministry highlighted that mobilizing the local human resources, including students, government employees, urban residents, etc., helps to harvest the crop timely. Similarly, in areas where there is a security crisis, the contribution of farmers said important to the well-being of the country parallel with harvesting their crop. It is also necessary to strengthen the support and monitoring activities of the farmers, from the federal to the kebele level, to strengthen the support and monitoring activities of the farmers by recognizing the positive effects of reducing the expected harvest during the production season by coordinating the harvesting process.

Experts recommended that controlling post-harvest waste is also fundamental

to ensure sector's competitiveness in the national economy. Post-harvest loss is one of the concerns of ensuring food security and poverty reduction strategies in many developing countries. Thus, the ministry should work hand in hand with pertinent stakeholders and improving farmer's awareness helps enhancing national capacities in post-harvest management, building and strengthening public-private partnership linkages and developing regulatory guidelines for post-harvest practices. Improving pesticide, herbicide and other agricultural inputs supply expected to advance production and productivity in the upcoming crop season.

According to a 2021 study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Ethiopia, post-harvest loss of maize, wheat, haricot bean, and sorghum is 25, 18, 19 and 27 percent respectively. Losses occur between productions at the farm level up to the dining table. As part of the implementation of the Post-Harvest Management Strategy in Grains, the government of Ethiopia approved duty-free tax for post-harvest handling technologies and raw materials such as galvanized sheet metal for fabricating metal silos.

It is obvious that Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and the main stay of the nation economy of the country is agriculture alas more than 80 percent of the population is engaged in this sector. However, due to less utilization of technology, inputs such as fertilizer and pest and herbicides, the yield per hectare is very small even by the sub Saharan African countries standard. Worse to these, in time of severe weather condition induced by

climate change and global warming, the sector faces uncertainty.

In order to change the situation to the better the government tried its level best by providing small scale farmer's extension services, supply inputs and supporting the creation of viable value chain. In addition to these, the government introduced new farming technology through doing the farm work through clustering. In such system, small scale farmers who grow similar crops instead of growing fragmentally, they are fostered to plow and grow by combining their plot to produce in the large scale manner. In such a way farmers coordinate their labor, knowledge, skill and capital for the better outcome. It is proved that, such approach could enable farmers to raise their productivity and amount of production.

In the highland parts of the Oromia, Amhara and Southern Nation Nationalities regions the practice of cluster farming proved that it is feasible in enhancing productivity. The 10 years perspective home grown economic growth plan stipulates clustering farm to be scale upped. The production of wheat and maize through such practice proved to bring better result. If it is continued, it is predicted that at least substituting the importation of wheat by local products could be possible.

As mentioned above Ethiopia is a populous country in Africa but it is not self-sufficient in ensuring food security which is embarrassing. While it has excess arable land with sufficient water resources, it is un-realistic depending on outside aid for food. Therefore, working hard to raise agricultural productivity for self-sufficiency is vital.

Planet Earth

E-Vehicles to promote climate resilient green transportation in Ethiopia

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Ethiopia is investing its maximum efforts in combating climate change and building climate resilient green economy. Considering the devastating impacts of climate change, Ethiopia is maximizing its mitigation and adaptation actions in all sectors and introducing new policies, strategies and actions in building climate friendly green economy. In building climate resilient green economy, Ethiopia gives due emphasis in developing climate friendly renewable energy production and making its economy to use energy sources from the renewable energy sources.

These actions are among the all rounded efforts of Ethiopia in combating climate change. In addition to introducing climate friendly infrastructural and economic investments, Ethiopia is massively planting seedlings to increase the forest coverage of the country. Increase in forest coverage has regional and global benefit. As part of its initiative to combat climate change, Ethiopia is planting over 20 billion seedlings within four rainy seasons which the fourth plantation season is ongoing.

As part of its all rounded efforts, this week Ethiopia launched service delivery of 60 electric vehicles in Addis Ababa with the ambition of building climate resilient green transportation and to minimize the carbon emission from the transport sector. Introduced by Green Tech Africa in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and Logistics, the sixty electric vehicles were started service in Addis Ababa since Wednesday.

During the launching ceremony of the event, Dagmawit Moges, Minister of Transport and Logistics said that Ethiopia is working to decrease the amount of carbon emission from the transport sector by introducing climate resilient green transportation vehicles and building climate friendly transport service. Dagmawit noted that since the transport sector is contributing high carbon emission to the environment, electric vehicles are promoting and becoming solutions to minimize carbon emission from the sector. Buying this global trend, Ethiopia also is introducing electric vehicles to the transport system.

According to Dagmawit the introduction of electric vehicles, in addition to its role in green transportation by reducing carbon emissions, would provide comfortable, efficient, modern, and reliable transportation service in the country and helps to replace fuel consumption which is increasing from



time to time. Hence, considering this in mind, the ministry is working to replace the growing fuel consumption with renewable energy sources and facilitate the transportation services with environmentally friendly vehicles in its 10 years plan.

“We are working to realize the vision of creating a carbon-free transportation and logistics system in the country through integrating our vast renewable energy potentials with competitive electric based vehicle technology by partnering with stakeholders,” Dagmawit said. As to her, the Ministry has been taking various initiatives and collaborations with concerned bodies to eliminate carbon emissions of the transport sector through promoting alternate transportation services like bicycle.

According to Dagmawit Ethiopia’s annual fuel consumption costs the nation over four billion USD and as the amount of vehicles is increasing from year to year, the fuel consumption and the amount of carbon emission from the transport sector is likely to increase. Hence, promoting climate resilient green transportation and modern fuel saving vehicles is taken as a strategy both to minimize the cost for fuel and the carbon emission to the environment. As to her, encouraging electronic vehicles will bring about significant changes in stabilizing the oil-volatile market and reducing the carbon emission from the sector, she noted.

For charging purpose, Dagmawit noted that 40 charging stations are being installed in Addis Ababa and both the E-vehicles and the charging stations

will be increased. She further said that once charged in charging stations paying only 20 Birr the electronic vehicles can travel an average distance from 200-240 kilometers. Compared to fuel consuming vehicles this can save up to 950 Birr per a vehicle.

Dagmawit underlined that the 60 electric vehicles are provided by Green Tech Africa and the Ministry has planned to introduce 4,800 electric based buses and 148,000 electric based automobiles in its ten years strategic plan.

Dagmawit underlined that building sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation sector is the focus of the National Transport Policy of Ethiopia and promoting Electric vehicles is one strategy in the national policy.

Engineer Habtamu Itefa (PhD), Water and Energy Minister, for his part stated that Ethiopia is hugely investing in renewable energy production from hydro, wind, solar and geothermal sources. He added that Ethiopia’s current investments in the energy sector targets to double the country’s current energy production within few years. The country’s current energy production is 4,800 megawatts.

For his part, Director General of Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Getahun Garede (PhD) during the occasion stated that the world especially developing countries are suffering a lot from the continued devastating impacts of climate change. It is time to take necessary actions in all sectors to reduce carbon emission to the environment and the factors

that contribute for worsening climate change, he added.

For Getahun, the transport sector is among the contributing factors for the carbon emission. Hence, reducing the carbon emission from the transport sector would contribute vital role in combating climate change. Considering the devastating impacts of climate change, Ethiopia takes a lot of measures since 2010 in all sectors to reduce the contributing factors in carbon emission to the environment.

“From 2010 to 2020, the actions applied only in the transport sector in Ethiopia contributes to reduce 341, 330 tone carbon die oxide emission” Getahun stated adding introducing and expanding electric vehicles would facilitate the country’s efforts of building climate resilient green transport sector which is vital.

Introducing and implementing environmentally friendly technologies and innovations in the economy sector is vital in protecting the sustainability of healthy environment and combating climate change and its impacts. Hence, for him, the introduction of E-vehicles to the Ethiopian transport sector would increase Ethiopia’s efforts of building climate resilient development.

Green Teach Africa representative Sitra Ali during the launching ceremony stated that Green Tech Africa introduced the 60 E-vehicles as initial phase and within mid time the company plans to introduce more E-vehicles ranging from auto rickshaws to high speed vehicles spare parts by assembling locally.

Art & Culture

Artistic recognition and awards -Better late than never

BY MULUGTA GUDETA

Last week's award ceremony organized by the Ministry of Culture to honor Ethiopian artists is the second such government sponsored event in a matter of a year or two. The first one was awarded by PM Abiy Ahmed last year as recognition to veteran writers who, according to the Premier's words, rendered a lifetime service to their country and society.

However, that particular award ceremony was comparatively narrower in its scope and purpose than last week's event. The first award mainly put the spotlight on veteran writers. Last week's award ceremony was broader in its reach and diversity as it included young and older artists engaged in such rare subjects as dancing, painting, sculpting, circus show, composing music, cinematography, stage drama and so on.

What came to my mind when I was watching on TV the award ceremony sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, was that most honorees were past their primes while youngsters were in the minority and mainly engaged in the art of satire and dancing. There were also people in the middle who belong to both the middle-aged and the older generations of artists. If we go by the records of history, the Haile Sellasie 1st Prize, was the first modern award system in our country that focused mostly on young artists, like Tsegaye G/Medhin who won the prize even before he wrote his most prominent works.

Awarding medals for great achievements in wars, literature, arts and culture in general started under Emperor Haile Selassie back in the 1840s. According to available information, "The Haile Selassie I Medal of War: instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie I as a military decoration to reward gallantry and distinguished service during war "Awarded in a single class (bronze), with further awards signified by a bronze palm leaf worn on the medal ribbon."

The arts and science awards were instituted in the 1960 to encourage excellence in various fields of studies. "The objective of the Haile Selassie Prize Trust, as defined in the original charter of 1963, consisted of the promotion of excellence in such diverse fields as African and Ethiopian studies, Amharic literature, the fine arts, industry, agriculture and humanitarian activities."

The Derg had tried to imitate the Soviet award system by focusing on workers and war heroes rather than on artists although the latter too received quite a remarkable attention by the regime's propaganda department. That led to the emergence of prominent musicians, dancers and dramatists who were teenagers or in their early twenties at that time and matured in the 1980s and 1990s. Socialist ideology that was embraced by the Derg encouraged youth in particular shining and carrying forward the revolutionary ideals. However this was short lived and now completely

abandoned.

The EPRDF regime on the other hand tried to encourage what it called "developmental art" but it did so under another illusion, which was a bad imitation of a caricature of what the Soviets called proletarian art that did not take them to the planned kingdom of plenty and crumbled after eight or nine decades. Yet, developmental art was not embraced by everyone in the art establishment. There was a muted debate between those who advocated the point of view of art for art's sake and those who wanted to use art to bring about economic development. Although it is not crystal clear as to who won the day, it is clear now that state art has not created happiness or material wellbeing for most people.

Why different governments adopt different awarding systems is in itself something that requires objective research or serious investigation. However the fact remains that the governments that came after Haile Sellasie's monarchy have more or less continued the tradition of awarding prizes and granting recognitions to artists who often survived and worked under extremely difficult conditions. They often struggled without reliable income or support from any quarter except the meager pensions some of them received in their old ages. The history of some of the most prominent Ethiopian artists is thus a history of misery and tragedy.

Abe Gubegna, the most fearless and talented writer lived and died under tragic situations. He was exiled several times by the Haile Sellasie government and allegedly killed by the Derg under mysterious circumstances. Bealu Girma, Ethiopia's foremost modern novelist was a civil servant who later on fell out of favor with the Derg regime and lost his life under equally mysterious circumstances. Mengistu Lemma, the classic Ethiopian poet and dramatist lived like a prince as far as his career was concerned but died like a pauper, according to the accounts of his admirers and former students.

The same fate has befallen many musicians, the last example being the extremely talented and hardworking and extremely popular composer Elias Melka who lived and died under horrible conditions, undermined as he was by illness and loneliness. He was hugely popular but never received awards or official recognition. The list can be long. It should be remembered that awards are not only granted to living artists. They are also bestowed upon distinguished writers or musicians after they pass away; that is to say posthumously as they do it in other countries.

This is not however to say that awards could have made their lives better or saved them from early demise. But getting official recognition could have boosted their morale and given them the realization that their lives and struggles had not been in vain and made their survivors proud of

them. In this sense, the awards given to veteran artists last week by the Ministry of Culture should be welcomed as at least a small comfort to the aging artists who were once healthy, vibrant and energetic. Younger artists will certainly benefit most from the award that came at an early phase of their careers. They have all their lives before them and they can work harder to achieve still higher levels of development in their careers. And when they will attain mature old age they can look back at their artistic lives and be proud at leaving their legacies to the next generations. That is the whole purpose of honors and awards: they are about recognition at present and legacy for the future. However, if we go by past records many promising artists have also disappeared in their primes without living up to public expectations.

The problem with the awarding system in Ethiopia for artists of all ages is that the events are not regularly staged. In the past there had been many such events that disappeared after a couple of years. What the domestic artistic community needs is an established system or institution for awarding prizes and giving recognition to deserving personalities on a regular basis. The existing artistic institutions like filmmakers, writers', journalists' and other associations can come together and discuss the modalities and establishment of a national awarding system with its headquarters, permanent workers and the financial, technical and technological trappings that such a national project entails.

The budget for such an institution can come from public donations, government support and a fixed portion of incomes from book publishers, filmmakers and musicians that would cover the running costs of a national award institution. As we observed on many occasions in the past, the awardees or honorees do not, as a rule receive money prizes. They are given what look like small statuettes together with diploma of recognition for their lifelong efforts. A consolidated award institution might even go as far as giving money prizes to the winners every year and the winning artists will greatly benefit from the money to promote their activities or solve personal problems.

As a final word, we can say that winning awards is not the end of the road for artists. In soccer, you may hang your boots but writers don't "hang their pens" quite easily. In sports, there is a point in your career beyond which your body cannot work as it did in the past. This is not so in arts. Artists cannot live a happy life unless they read and write every day. This is the rule in the profession. There are many stories of artists who stopped working a day or two before they passed away or those who died at the easels or tables. There is still life for artists after the awards. We hope that many of them who won this year's awards would not disappear in the obscurity or oblivion they once belong to. Age is an asset and not a liability for the good artist.

The problem with the awarding system in Ethiopia for artists of all ages is that the events are not regularly staged. In the past there had been many such events that disappeared after a couple of years. What the domestic artistic community needs is an established system or institution for awarding prizes and giving recognition to deserving personalities on a regular basis

Society

Invigorating Africa's youth with peace values

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

In every effort exerted to sustain lasting peace promote development; the role the young people can play is immense. Being the backbone of any nation, this segment of the society plays a very crucial role in terms of ensuring peace and security matters, safeguarding the society, accelerating socioeconomic development and transforming the country through increasing the capacity for creativity, inspiring innovation, stimulating problem solving skills.

However, to successfully achieve the aforesaid ends, it is a must for governments to capitalize on the potential of the young people, nurture and upgrade their skills to develop decision-making experience and increase their participation on the whole affairs of their country.

In this regard, countries through devising various approaches, are applying various energies joining hands with the youth community to achieve the aspired goal - to attain peace, stability and development because their countries' future lies in the hands of its young generation.

When we come to Africa, the reality becomes bold and requires great attention because the content is home for young people.

Needless to say, Africa has the youngest population in the world with more than 400 million young people aged between the ages of 15 to 35 years. Such a youthful population calls for an increase of investment in economic and social development factors, in order to improve the development index of African nations.

Aya Chebbi, the African Union Youth Envoy once underscored the role of youth in some of the flagship projects of the African Union; and the need for the continent to harness the demographic dividend of the greatest asset, the youth.

Skilled and educated youth has a great return in building lasting peace. In the African context, the role of the youth is simply to renew, refresh and maintain the values and vision of the Agenda Africa 2063. Through these efforts and agenda protocols the youth people have to take part and play a leading role to renew and refresh the current status of societies including leadership, innovations, skills etc. In return, the youths are expected to advance the current technology, education, politics, and peace of the country.

A well-shaped and built youth can help in fastening social fabric, especially in war and conflict prone areas; they can ensure meaningful and effective participation in peace building from within.

Recently, a conference, the 2022 African Youth for Peace Program Conference that deliberates Africa's youth role in peace building was held here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme "Protecting



The 2022 African Youth For Peace Program Conference

Environment and Promoting Peace."

In her remark, Ethiopia's Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergoge Tesfaye called on African youth to contribute their share to the endeavors of peace-building across the continent.

The Minister said on the occasion that Africa, with 75 percent of the population under the age of 35, is appropriate to exploit the potential for ensuring lasting peace in every corner of the continent.

Despite challenges of unemployment, corruption, entrenched political leadership, and political violence, many African youth has been seeking constructive avenues to promote peace, effective governance, and reform, the Minister added.

Any Peace building initiative will not bear fruit unless it includes the participation of the youth, Ergoge stressed.

According to her, Ethiopia is working to play its own role by mobilizing the people of the continent for common wellbeing.

She also pointed out that a system is being set up for the youth of Ethiopia in order to be part of the peace-building activities; and benefit them from development activities carried out in the country.

State Minister for Defense, Martha Liwiji also said that Ethiopia has played a significant role in maintaining peace in various countries under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union since 1951.

She noted that Ethiopia is currently participating in the African Union's peacekeeping missions in various countries of the continent.

The youth should contribute their share to ensure peace in Africa, Martha underlined.

Brigadier General Kabisa Domitien, Head of Peace Operations Department of East Africa Standby Force on his part said that the role of youth is tremendous to realize the aspiration that inspired



Photo- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs

Participants of the East African Youth Peace building and Environmental Consultative Forum planted seedlings

"Silencing the Guns in Africa" Agenda, a flagship initiative of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, that strives to end all wars, conflict and gender-based violence, and to prevent genocide.

He further called on the African youth to join hands, stand up for peace and get the continent out of the vicious circle of war and conflict.

In addition to peace-building, the forum also deliberated on green development, it was learned.

The 2022 African Youth for Peace Program conference that was jointly organized by Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and the East African Standby Force has brought together youth from over 10 countries, including Ethiopia.

Participants of the East African Youth Peace building and Environmental Consultative Forum planted seedlings at the premises of the Gulele Botanical Garden and marked their fingerprint in Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative.

The tree plantation program was attended by leadership of the East African Standby Force, representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority for

Development (IGAD), civil society, youth, members of scouts and invited guests.

The role of youth in promoting peace and security in Africa is expressed via Article 17 of the AYC. Pursuant to this and other normative frameworks on youth, peace and security (YPS), including the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250, the AU Peace and Security Department launched the Youth for Peace Africa Program in 2018 with the primary objective and responsibility of mainstreaming African youth into peace and security.

The core mandates of the Program derived from consultations with youth and their networks as well as Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) include: to finalize a continental framework on YPS to facilitate the meaningful participation of youth in all spheres of peace and security. It also proposes to change the predominantly negative and false narrative that 'youth' is synonymous with trouble; build youth capacity and optimize their contributions to peace and security; and, publicize the positive roles and contributions of youth to peace and security on the continent.

Law & Politics

Only in unison can we beat terrorists and their hirers: PM

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

During the last session of the House of Peoples Representatives for the current Ethiopian year, the MPs presented various questions to the prime minister focusing on the burning issues of the security of innocent citizens in the wake of the repeated attacks perpetrated by Shene. What added fuel to the emotions were the witnesses' reports that the attacks had mainly targeted women and children.

The terrorist group allegedly committed the attacks against these civilians making a careful plan of selection and the acts were carried out mercilessly. Witnesses who somehow survived the assault said the bandits carried out the massacre stating that these people were not supposed to be there. They looted all the property of these people and then burnt down their houses. As soon as the attacks were carried out, Ethiopian security forces were immediately deployed.

At the parliamentary session Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said more efforts must be exerted to take strong measures on the enemies and their collaborators.

The premier said identifying the enemies is difficult since they have a similar complexion to innocent Ethiopians. They look like the rest of the population and easily mix. They dress like Ethiopians and talk like them and this makes the challenge more arduous. What is worse is the fact that these terrorists are financed and trained by outside forces.

The premier said the terrorists have no existence of their own nor do they worry about the consequences of their acts. They are there to help the enemies of Ethiopia destabilize and break down the country. They have no ambitions of seizing power nor running the country. They do not have the capacity to do so. Their only mission is to destroy the administrative apparatus, incite a civil war between communities and in the process dismantle the country.

The only way we can overcome them is by getting together, identifying them well, and all those who help them from within our administration and take the necessary steps to isolate and eliminate them. The premier said, by attacking innocent and helpless citizens living their poor lives, these terrorists want to catch the headlines and please their employers. So when we talk about OLF Shene being the source of all these acts, we must be aware that they are not an autonomous body capable of managing their affairs. They are simply material executors of



what others prepare for them. In short, they are mercenaries on the payroll of enemies of Ethiopia.

The recent movements around the borders of Ethiopia are part of this huge plot to destabilize the country. It is intended to create a sense of insecurity among the population so that they lose confidence in their system and possibly push it into chaos, the premier said. He urged the members of parliament and others in the country to be better informed about the whole geopolitical situation in the Horn and view things against this background. "The more we get emotional and disturbed, the more we play into the hands of our enemies."

Any terrorist organization is dangerous to the wellbeing of a society and all the more so if it is financed and trained in a foreign country notoriously in dispute with the country. Many people say Shene is a strategic ally of TPLF and there is no secret that it has been benefiting from its assistance in many ways including ammunitions and training. At the same time, the intention of TPLF is well known also because they have openly declared it and published it in their manifesto. They want to destroy the country called Ethiopia and on its debris build the 'mighty republic of Tigray'.

In any acts of Shene, there is definitely the hands of TPLF, and TPLF in turn is reportedly assisted and encouraged

the Northern Command and the subsequent battles.

Reports of purely biased information on the way the conflict was carried out were aired and there was continuous undue pressure on Ethiopia neglecting TPLF's evil acts. Hence the picture of the entire scenario must be considered the premier said in order to better understand the role of Shene and other terrorist groups. When they attack innocent civilians in Ethiopia, a huge publicity is awarded to them as if they were a formidable force challenging the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopians, the premier said must pose for a while and consider the situation from every angle. The objective of terrorists is to dismantle the country and they would do whatever it takes to do so including inciting a civil war among communities in Ethiopia. He said these forces want to incite Amhara against Oromo, Somali against Afar,

Sidama against Welayita etc. They try to create animosities and hostilities among neighbouring communities and this has been of course the venomous political objectives nurtured and advanced for decades by TPLF. But the premier said this has not succeeded to date nor will it have any chance of succeeding in the future if the country unites against them. He said if we properly identify our real enemies, there are no chances of giving in to their propaganda and media war because we can take the necessary counter measures and neutralize the plots.

The premier noted that in the history of this country, there have been repeated attacks to dismember it but all attempts have failed thanks to the united defense of Ethiopians beginning from the various alien invasions across the centuries. There is no force in the world that can defeat Ethiopia, he said, when it is united, and this has been proved repeatedly. The problem becomes dangerous if we put down our vigilance and let ourselves be penetrated by enemy forces and try to attack one another. We should not lose sight of the enemy and the bigger picture, the premier warned.

Ethiopia can defeat its enemies only with a united stance and action staying behind its security forces who are always ready to pay the necessary sacrifice in defense of its integrity and sovereignty.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

The Gangs of...

A fellow who claims to know the ins and outs of political groups in this country was telling us quite interesting things. Once you hear him out you realize most of the things you used to think about these groups is far from the real picture. Now you'd think the brass of such groups get together once in a while and discuss about local current affairs and happenings outside our borders which concern the country one way or another. You'd think policy documents which are far from complete, and it is safe to add where there are any such things, would be updated taking into consideration fresh issues that affect the nation one way or another. You'd think that members of such groups are versed with current affairs leaving nothing to imagination and wishful thinking. We're not to blame that the statements which come out now and then are results of thorough discussions on issues and which reflect the position of all down to every member. Well this guy with real inside knowledge tells us for most, and not all, that wasn't the case.

So armed with fresh info of such groups you'd think any group of people who think they've nothing worthwhile to do could come together and announce the creation of yet another 'political' group. "We're happy to announce a new political party..." Good for you. 'We just home there'd be some sprinkling of real politics in your political party!' So hearing this guy you're pardoned to conclude that if you delete the word 'political' from 'political party' there'd be no confusion; because inserting the word political at the beginning of some group's name is like claiming to be a surgeon and while your finger have never been within a mile of the scalpel.

However the most interesting thing this guy was telling us was the culture of ganging up which seems to be a common occurrence around those

groups. It is not about members of one political group against those of the others. We're talking about ganging up within the groups themselves. Aren't they supposed to be like families! Members of families don't gang up against each other; they discuss issues and come with solutions. But within some of these groups one group practically stops greeting the members of 'the other group' let alone talk to them. Why? That's the million dollar question. Most of the time, so this guy says, things have nothing to do with beliefs or differences about policies or such things which have even the faintest smell of politics. It's about other things with ego taking the front seat spot. I mean when half of the party members think they should be the ones behind the steering wheel it's not healthy. Believe me this ego think is making cardboard cutout of many of us.

Once I was waiting for someone at a downtown spot. A few meters from me a couple of ladies were waiting for a cab or something. A small cab slows down and the young muscular chauffeur asks them where they were going. Before they could answer all of a sudden out of nowhere an equally muscular young man comes practically running and tells the cabbie to get lost. But the cabbie disembarks and was ready for physical confrontation when from across the street six or seven young and middle-aged men come running. You have to give credit to the cabbie for how fast he got back into his car and stepped on the gas. Had he waited the gang would probably have made some history out of him. It so happened that all of them were cabbies who have made themselves the makers and shakers of what happens there; you know, like Gangs of New York or something. They were protecting their turf! But they weren't doing it in what you can say is at least partially civilized manner. "Look fellow, this is our turf, and if you please leave before something bad happens."

No! That's not going to happen. They seem to believe whoever wrongly or absentmindedly interferes should be dealt with fists and not nice words. We occasionally hear such kinds of things happening in certain parts of the city.

About a couple of months back a fiftyish fellow we know was changing residences. He rented a condominium unit ...in a part of the town which was in one of bustling outskirts of the city. When he arrives at the place his household goods loaded on a heavy truck and two friends accompanying him they were surrounding by youth with arms were full of tattoos and scary stares. Well seeing young people offering to help in what you can call menial job satisfying for any well-intentioned citizen. The fellow agrees and they set the price; hold your breath. "You'll pay us ten thousand birr!" Though the guy heard some such stories ten thousand birr items he planned to unload with his two friends! He refuses and quite a scene transpires. A number of people gather and the peacemaking process took a good part of the hour. Finally he agreed to pay two thousand five hundred birr. The gang had its way!

What about the gang culture of schooldays; your high school girlfriend has caught the eyes of one gang member. I mean this was a gang which could muster quite a force and cause much harm as many members took beating up people their life's calling. But, feeble as you might be, you're not going to let your sweetheart snatched from under your very eyes. It took you almost two years to even convince her to replay in kind to your greetings! That takes quite a lot of effort and guts, if you know what I mean.

So not to be outsmarted and taken for a coward who couldn't protect what was his (or believed it was his) you gather as many village boys as possible and there you have your own gang. Mission; beat up the guy who has taken your

sweetheart black and blue and send the message to others who might be harboring funny ideas about your Cleopatra.

Of course, when you guys arrive at the place where the experienced gang was waiting the story would be different. Let me put it this way; if it was about two or three of you could have come up with a hundred excuses when you return to your village. But almost every one of you with bloodied noses, blackened eyes, swollen lips and scores of lacerations across your face it is not easy saying, "I accidentally run into a door. I told you that gang was in the big leagues. So your team of hastily gathered village boys most of them probably not aware of what it was all about is chased all the way back to the village and even beyond. You can't stay in your own village until the dust settles down, because nothing stops the big leagues, from marching on your village and turning it into a battle zone with you on flight and they hot on your heels; and also quite a lot of damage is done. A few decades back such scenarios happened more often than you'd suspect. It was the age of the gangs! Ha!

Just for the sake of some flashbacks there was a time when Addis was virtually ruled by four or five gangs. If they are coming to the part of the town where you are better beat it while you can. Those vicious dudes fought all over town and made life a living hell for many. If one group is said to have been seen around Arat Kilo the shops all just bolt their doors. And you better lock yourselves up in your homes! No one dared to make oneself visible in the area. Because, with gangs it is not about who but about where. So the conflict might be between a few youngsters and yet but the entire population of the other village is targeted. There were times when residents of a certain village couldn't pass through another village because the gangs of the two are out for blood.

The Price of Forgetting...

I'll tell you what I get a little bit annoying. Why is it that many of us think quoting some philosopher, leader or even a Hollywood star makes us appear wiser? Why is that we use what we call 'quotes' are hammered into absolutely unrelated issue. And the icing on the cake here is that we 'member' the quotes but we 'forget' the people who are supposed to have said it. Isn't that some story!

"There is this quote from a philosopher whose name I've forgotten." And the fellow 'quotes' an entire paragraph. Is there some mental issue here? I mean 'remembering' an entire paragraph and failing to recall even the first name of the person who said it must have some neuro-something riddle about it.

Anyways, have you noticed the number of people who remember some quote and forget who the hell said it? I mean, as mentioned around here there are many of us who think a philosopher or a long-gone leader of some country (it must of some country!) makes us stand head and shoulders taller than the rest of the crowd. You hear such things during speeches, interviews and the like. And by some mischief of fate we 'recall' the quote and 'forget' whoever is supposed who said it! Here is the quantum something of the whole thing; The easiest thing you could do to throw whatever though you want at the hapless

masses is 'remember' the quote and forget who said it. No one, and I mean no one, could corner you with an argument like, "No one has ever said such a thing you lying #\$\$%@"! But if you're 'uninformed' enough to pin the quote on some guy who isn't there to stand for himself you'd be entering troubled waters; maybe even shark-infested! "I have read the complete book of his quotations and there is nothing like that!" What're you going to do about it!

I don't know if I ever told you this, but there is this humorous story of a man who said some Amharic quote and gave the copyright to good old Lenin. Someone asked "When did Lenin say that?" and the man answers, "Now, that's better; much better."

I'm not good at remembering names from way back. I can tell you more than a few times I've found in real hot waters. Look the guy calls your name ten times while bringing up what you two have been doing none w of which you remember. This is one of those times when your facial muscles come as your savior! Just look interested in what he's saying. At times when you're sure he has said about a certain incident asks you "don't you remember?"

"Of course I do, how can I ever forget that!" Bingo!

You know it's not your fault. But just to keep

the waters calm you act as if it was your mistake. You even go as far as saying "sorry for messing up" while everything single cell in your system is shouting "Liar!" Maybe you're protecting a dear one. Maybe admittance might have more benefits like people saying "that's one honest guy we can work with."

The only explanation coming to you this guy is to rob me of every last cent I have and provide me some receipt; isn't that some news, you being robbed legally and being issued receipt.

"Last Sunday we had a meeting and you weren't there."

"What meeting?"

"You mean you haven't been told about the schedule of our monthly meeting?"

"You mean you haven't been told the schedule of our monthly meeting?"

"Oh! You mean that meeting! Sorry, I forgot about it."

"You forgot about it! I can't believe I'm hearing this!"

Hey, just as a little reminder; Not that you aren't aware of it; but in such times of a thousand and one concerns it is easy to forget about the most important things in your life (or in someone else's life.) Don't you forget the

birthday of your spouse. And I mean it!

Your workday over, you return home tired and craving for an early retirement to your bed.

"Hey honey; how was your day?" Silence. She must be worried about something or else she would have responded.

"Honey, aren't you alright? Is something wrong?"

"Why don't you tell me if something is wrong?" "What the hell did I do to her? Why is she so mad?"

"Is it about something I've done?"

"Maybe it is something you haven't done."

"Honey, I'm confused. Why don't you tell me what's wrong?"

"What's the day today?" He tells her."

"And you still are confused?" Suddenly it hits him hard. It's her birthday? 'What's wrong with me? How in the world could I forget such an important day?'

Then the fence-mending starts. Don't you forget your better half or your would-be better half!

Believe me, the price of forgetting could be real high!

In Pictures



Senior officials and experts from the Office of Prime Minister and responsible institutions joined the national green legacy planting trees at the Shalla District of West Arsi Zone, Oromia Regional State. Government Communications Service Minister Dr. Legese Tulu, who took part in the event urged the communities to take care of the seedlings planted in the campaign and join the green legacy program.



The National Discussion Commission met President Sahle Work Zewde. During their discussions, Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya has been briefed the president regarding his commission 4 months of performance and its plans. President Sahle Work Zewde said that she understands the importance of the national peace discussion adding that the national discussion should be transparent, clear and truthful as Ethiopia should look for a new path and way out for mutual coexistence.



Ahadu Bank, which has about 10,000 shareholders, officially started its operations today. The Governor of the National Bank, Dr. Yinager Dessie, in his speech at the official launch of the bank, emphasized that the provision of banking services should be based on technology, and praised Ahadu Bank for implementing modern technology services on the opening day. In Ethiopia, he pointed out that there are no more than 6 million citizens who benefit from loans from financial institutions. He said that banks and savings institutions deserve to support the development by providing credit services to the community living in rural areas of the country.



Universities and other HLIs in in different parts of Ethiopia have been graduated their trainees. Among them is the biggest and oldest Addis Ababa University (AAU) which more than 5 thousand students in various fields. President Sahlework Zewde's who attended the Addis Ababa University's graduation ceremony, learning means bringing about a change in behavior. The President urged the graduates to get away from any division based on race and religion and work together for the interests of the country and fight the problems the country is facing. Bule Hora, Enjibara, Wolayta Sodo and Jigjiga Universities have also graduated students in their thousands.



Southern Region Governor Restu Yerdaw and Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide planted trees in Kacha Ber district of Kembata Tembaro Zone as part of the 4th round of Green Legacy Initiative.