



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Reestablishing electricity in North Ethiopia going full steam ahead

BY MENGESHA AMARE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The 230 KV electric power transmission line extending from Gashena to Alamata towns is completed and ready to go operational as per government's commitment to restore the service, the Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) said.

EEU North-East Region Department Maintenance Head Tsehaineh Abebe stated that the government has been vigorously working to restore the war-affected lines mentioning the maintenance of the Gashena to Alamata line is a showcase.

Tsehaineh further highlighted that in the course of repairing fiber optics lines, due attention has been paid to save cities from black out. From Gashena on the way to

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## U.S. appreciates Ethiopia's efforts towards unfettered humanitarian assistance

BY TAMERU REGASA

**ADDIS ABABA**—United States (U.S.) Secretary General Antony Blinken praised Ethiopia's efforts towards unhindered humanitarian assistance and restoration of basic services in the Tigray state as well as in the neighboring Afar and Amhara states

This was noted when the Secretary General

*See U.S. appreciates ... Page 3*

## Signatories reaffirm harmony in CoHA implementation

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The government of Ethiopia and TPLF, signatories of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in Pretoria, announced that the implementation of the truce is being underway in a good manner.

Accordingly, Government Communication Service (GCS), Legesse Tulu stated that the government has been fulfilling its responsibilities for the realization of the peace accord to ensure the equal benefits and unity of the people. Lasting peace comes from inner desire and our commitment to look inward and heal our wounds. If we are able to look at the bigger picture and hope for the future, then lasting peace can be achieved."



Externalizing and echoing problems that are arising from doubt and fear can never be part of the solution. Accordingly, it is important to take concrete steps and the federal government is fully executing its responsibilities based on the CoHA, the minister added.

The government is also facilitating humanitarian aid and medical supplies from

*See Signatories ... Page 3*



## Ethiopian to resume regular flights to Tigray

BY BILAL DERSO

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ethiopian Airlines announced that preparation is underway to resume regular flights to Tigray State, adding that the move will expedite the humanitarian response to the area.

Approached by local media, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew noted that the resumption of flights to and from various destinations in Tigray will help to make humanitarian aid widely available in the state. Following the peace agreement reached in Pretoria, South Africa, the government has expressed commitment to make humanitarian aid widely accessible in Tigray.

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Delivering the much-needed humanitarian aid

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Learning can never stop, always reinvent yourself: Flipper Co-Founder

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## EU donates 31.5 mln. Euros to school reconstruction

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA-** The European Union (EU), through its partnership with UNICEF, has granted 31.5 million Euros to restore and strengthen health services and systems to improve the lives of women and children living in conflict-impacted areas in Ethiopia.

EU Ambassador to Ethiopia Roland Kobi said that now with peace being built, the Union can work better to help all Ethiopians, and notably women and children, who have missed out on essential health services due to the disruption of services and the damage and destruction of health facilities.

Therefore, this funding will help rehabilitate and strengthen health systems to restore health gains in conflict-affected areas. The EU is committed to support women and children's fundamental right to health, Ambassador Kobi added.

In northern Ethiopia, as a result of the conflict, over 3,000 health facilities are non-functional and nearly 700,000 children have missed out on routine vaccination.

"This generous funding from the EU comes at a crucial time," said Dr. Dereje Duguma, Ethiopia's Health State Minister. "This support will ensure equitable delivery of health services and will be strongly linked to the Government's 'Optimizing



the Health Extension Program.' We look forward to working closely with UNICEF so that families can lead healthy lives."

The grant will also include the scaling up of services for survivors of gender-based violence which will enable them to overcome the trauma they have endured and to rebuild their lives.

"UNICEF is extremely grateful to the EU for this contribution," said Gianfranco Rotigliano, UNICEF Representative

in Ethiopia. "Children are the innocent victims in any conflict and their rights are often denied. The restoration of health systems and protection services will go a long way in helping women and children, especially girls, get the health services they deserve so they can prosper and develop."

Overall, this funding will benefit nearly two million women, men, adolescents, and children in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNP states, it was learned.



Dr. Comfort Ero

## International Crisis Group serves as 'bullhorn' for anti-peace

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA-** President and CEO of the International Crisis Group has deliberately chosen to become a bullhorn for the anti-peace and misrepresent the current situation of Ethiopia, according to a local media report.

Accordingly, the report indicated the Group's President and CEO Dr. Comfort Ero presumed in her recent opinion in the New York Times that the Ethiopian government may not respect terms of the Pretoria Agreement. In reality, the Ethiopian government has restored, in conformity with the Agreement, the free flow of food and medicine into Tigray, and is moving full steam ahead in reestablishing electricity, telecommunication, banking, and other services in the area.

Without any evidence whatsoever; she assumed that the government would be the guilty party if the Pretoria Agreement fails. In deliberately ignoring the constructive and decisive role Africans have played in reaching the Pretoria Agreement, the president resuscitates continues is probably the right word the Western conception of Africans, variously expressed by the "War Profiteers," as incapable of being subjects who could choose and determine their destiny through their own thinking and actions, the report elaborated.

Anti-peace are a group of some academics, journalists, analysts, and politicians put the blame for the war squarely on the Ethiopian government.

"What is surprising is that Dr. Comfort seems to believe that Africans cannot manage their own affairs. Though the Pretoria Agreement was reached through the good offices of the African Union (AU), Kenya, and South Africa, she does not address herself to these countries to ensure that the Pretoria Agreement is implemented."

She writes that the AU headquarters being in Addis Ababa is "awkward," and questions its "objectivity," echoing the anti-AU and anti-Obasanjo campaign. The president is one of those who give agential primacy to Westerners and refuses to recognize that Africans are the thinkers and makers of their history.

"What is shocking about Dr. Comfort's refusal to recognize Africans as the active authors and actors of their history and destiny is that she herself is an African, born in England to Nigerian parents," the report emphasized.

## Ministry to host entrepreneurship week

BY TAMERU REGASA

**ADDIS ABABA-** This year's entrepreneurship week is to be celebrated under the theme "Million Challenges Million Opportunities", Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) disclosed.

The week would be observed in the presence of various actors hail from over 200 countries in a bid to encourage entrepreneurship, it was learnt.

MoLS State Minister Nigussu Tilahun told journalists yesterday that the entrepreneurship week would take into consideration training, ecosystem, Policy and inclusiveness.

As to him, various international organizations like UNDP and others would take part in the event aiming to play their role in job creation activities.

He noted on the occasion that the ministry would play different facilitation role in hosting training, discussion, experience sharing, recognition and other events related to entrepreneurship within the week to aware the community towards entrepreneurship.

Scholars would present various research results that enable the country to enhance

entrepreneurship through solving challenges related to entrepreneurship.

The state minister said that the ministry would undertake media campaign concerning job creation to mobilize the masses to reduce unemployment.

As attitude is the main determinant factor

of unemployment, the ministry would continue hosting various awareness creation events to solve challenges related to unemployment.

It was learnt that this year entrepreneurship week would be celebrated for 15th round at international level and 9th at national level.



Photo - Tsehay Nigussie



# Ethiopia calls on AU member states to industrialize, boost intrastate trade

**ADDIS ABABA-** (ENA) The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen, said that AU member states should redouble their efforts to industrialize and boost intra-African trade.

Speaking at the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification held in Niamey, Niger yesterday, Demeke said industrialization determines whether Africa can transform its natural endowments into tradeable products or depend on imported products from outside.

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke who underscored the importance of allocating necessary resources to kick-start industrialization in the continent

and transforms the economy also called on AU member states for determinations and changes the visions into practical actions.

Ethiopia implemented Homegrown Economic Reform program with the sole purpose of creating conducive economic environment for the private sector by removing structural red tapes in a number of industrial policies over the past few years with impressive results, Demeke elaborated.

He also said Ethiopia throws its weight behind the AU's initiative to industrialize the continent.

Participants of the Summit said industrialization is not an event but a process which Africa has all the assets for job creations and industrialization.



## Reestablishing...

Alamata, conductors had been found dilapidated and fell down at some 63 places and many are left tattered and remain intact at poles at some 120 places.

“The maintenance work has helped entirely change some 484 insulators loaded on 20 pillars, and a place where power transmission props meet was seriously damaged with artillery.”

As to him, new conductor installation covering 33 kilometers was done as the lines have been severely damaged by the war. Apart from employees of the North East District, a large number of EEU staff have been participating in maintenance work. EEU employees' commitment that has been manifested by withstanding difficult terrain and the society's cooperation in the maintenance work are worth appreciation.

Meanwhile, EEUWoldia District, Kobo Service Center has announced that it is carrying out maintenance work on the damaged lines in order to ensure that Kobo town can get full electricity service.

Wendwoeson Haile, the manager of the Kobo service center, indicated that due to the war, the electricity service in the area, including the town of Kobo, was cut off until the beginning of October 2021. The damaged lines were repaired and Kobo was able to get electricity service; however, since the service is not being provided completely, the EEU is working day and night to complete the remaining works.

At present, Kobo has got 80 percent of electricity, the manager said, efforts are being made to complete the remaining 20 percent and get full electricity service. “We are deploying a team to make the satellite stations managed under Raya Kobo users of the service. So far, the rural towns of Gedemyu, Addis Kani, Amaya, and Aware have gained electricity.

partners to Tigray through all corridors which are part of the Pretoria Agreement. Groups of professionals in each sector are working together to restore basic services and some public institutions have resumed operation.

Legesse further stressed that this tangible effort and the desire of the government to implement the CoHA should be replicated by the TPLF side; adding that curtailing the destructive activities of some groups which want to ruin the truce, is something worth consideration. Optimism and committed

held phone conversation on Tuesday with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PH.D) regarding efforts for furthering peace in northern Ethiopia.

According to the statement of the U.S. State Department, Secretary Blinken recognized the ongoing efforts by the Ethiopian government to work towards unhindered humanitarian assistance and restoration of basic services in the Tigray state as well as in the neighboring Afar and Amhara states.

Besides, the two leaders discussed the need to increase humanitarian access and restore essential services.

The Secretary also underscored the importance of promptly implementing the cessation of hostilities agreement.

He noted that the U.S. remains committed to supporting the African Union-led process, including the AU monitoring and verification mechanism.

action from every Ethiopian is crucial to establish lasting peace in the country.

For his part, commander of Tigray combatants TadesseWerede said that in some areas, leaders of the TPLF forces and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) are meeting in person and discussing the implementation of the agreement. The disarmament process is progressing well according to the agreement reached in Nairobi, Kenya.

TPLF forces have received orientation in the Disarmament, Demobilization and

Reintegration (DDR) process and various activities have also been carried out to raise the public awareness in this regard. The orientation would be completed soon.

After the disengagement of forces from areas of deployment, they would be transported to rehabilitation and orientation centers and all the necessary preparation has been finalized to this end. “Other activities have also been carried out in accordance with the CoHA in a clear manifestation for our commitment to implement the truce,” Tadesse noted.

## U.S. appreciates...

It is to be recalled that Ethiopian Government has been accelerating the provision of humanitarian supports through participating various local and international donors.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Office also disclosed that the first delivery of humanitarian aid arrived in Tigray last week since the peace agreement was signed.

“UNHCR is distributing relief items to 50,000 people who are severely affected by flood. Items being distributed include sleeping mats, blankets, solar lamps, soaps, mosquito nets and kitchen sets,” it was noted.

By same token, U.N. World Food Program (WFP) announced that more than 12 trucks carrying humanitarian aid headed to Tigray through route of Afar state. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also delivered medicines and medical facilities.

## Ethiopian to...

Ethiopian has carried out various preparations to resume regular flights to Tigray following the peace accord reached between the government and the TPLF. “Earlier there were several daily flights to the area, but after the incident, the service was suspended.”

Noting Tigray is one of the many destinations where the airliner operates domestic flights, Mesfin said that the resumption of flight to the states of great importance. “The truce between the government and TPLF will be of great significance in speeding up the delivery of humanitarian aid in addition to providing regular services to the airline.”

The CEO further highlighted that among the airports in Tigray, Mekelle and Shire airports are in good condition and are convenient for flights. The Aksum Airport; however, was damaged in the conflict and needs to be restored to make it suitable for flights.

Ethiopian Airlines is working to expand the current 207 destinations to 271 by 2035, it was learned.



# Opinion

## The US dollar is getting stronger: African countries are feeling the pain and have few policy options

The US dollar has been advancing rapidly in response to the Federal Reserve's resolve to keep raising policy rates for longer to regain control of stubbornly high inflation. This has far reaching consequences. The US dollar is prominently used around the world as an international medium of exchange and as a global reserve currency.

The dollar is strengthening as Africa is already being hit hard by rising inflation triggered by war in Ukraine. As dollar power increases, it is amplifying inflationary pressures across the continent. That's making it even more difficult for central banks to tame high inflation. Additional pain will be felt as the dollar's strength ripples through Africa, causing a squeeze on trade volumes, tighter trade financing conditions and burgeoning sovereign debts alongside surging debt-servicing costs.

Another concern is the risk of what's been termed the dollar doom loop. As the dollar gains strength, it becomes a drag on global economic activity, pressuring other currencies to weaken and fuelling even higher dollar strength. This outcome further weighs on economic activity, reinforcing currency weakness, setting in motion a self-reinforcing feedback doom loop. One negative outcome triggers another.

Already concerns about a dollar doom loop have been raised for the global economy.

Unfortunately, African countries have few options for responding to the strong dollar. And most are challenging.

They could keep raising interest rates to fend off currency depreciation pressures from the strong dollar. But, in doing so, policy makers face a difficult balancing act as lifting rates must be carefully calibrated to avoid spurring an economic downturn.

An alternative option is to try to contain currency depreciation pressures by intervening in the currency market using foreign exchange reserves. That's also challenging. Many African countries have seen their surplus reserves depleted after large pandemic-spurred public spending support programmes and more expensive payments on their commodity imports.

The impact

The value of the US dollar has risen substantially since March 2022 when the Fed started its aggressive rate hiking campaign in a bid to tackle stubbornly high inflation. The Federal Reserve dollar index, which measures the strength of the greenback against the currencies of a broad group of other major currencies, has risen steeply.

The index has appreciated by about 10% since March, as Fed officials are laser-focused on fighting inflation.

This has weakened African currencies. The extent varies by country. For example,



Ghana's cedi, the Egyptian pound and the Zimbabwean dollar have slumped sharply and are now included among the top ten worst-performing currencies of 2022.

Other currencies including the Kenyan shilling and South Africa's rand have also buckled under the pressure of a strong dollar.

The dollar's strength comes as Africa is being hit hard by surging global food and energy prices incited by Russia's war in Ukraine. Central banks across the region have been tightening interest rates to tackle the war-driven rise in inflation.

The dollar's advance is intensifying inflation woes by weakening African countries' currencies and thereby driving up dollar denominated prices of imports. As the dollar climbs higher in value, it amplifies inflationary pressures. In turn that's making it even more difficult for central banks to curb high inflation.

Although a strong dollar does improve competitiveness of African exports, the gains from weaker currencies may end up not being substantial. That's because exports are often invoiced in US dollars. So, while currency weakening makes goods cheaper in domestic currency terms, this does not always translate into cheaper goods for foreign buyers who pay in US dollars.

US dollar invoicing is also a prominent feature of trade financing in developing countries. Companies engaged in merchandise trade are heavily dependent on bank finance for working capital, due to the difference in timing between incurring costs and receiving payments.

A stronger dollar tightens trade financing conditions, constraining access to financing for firms. This offsets any improvement in export competitiveness, further dampening foreign trade.

In-depth studies on trade finance across Africa have been conducted by the African Development Bank. The International Finance Corporation and World Trade Organization

also conducted a joint study focusing on Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal.

These studies find that banks identify lack of sufficient dollar and euro liquidity as an important constraint for financing trade. By tightening trade financing conditions, a strong dollar further compounds working capital constraints for companies.

Rapidly increasing US interest rates are a major driver of accelerating dollar strength. This has tightened financial conditions considerably for African governments with high levels of dollar-denominated debt.

Higher interest rates increase debt-servicing burdens, and have heightened concerns about debt sustainability, especially for the more than 20 African countries that IMF and World Bank consider to be at high risk of, or already in, debt distress.

Already, African loans to large creditors such as China are facing mounting repayment pressure. Most of these loans are on commercial terms and denominated in US dollars.

Response options

How should African countries respond to the strong dollar?

Options are few – and challenging. In the short term, there are two main options for African countries. Unfortunately, neither is a silver bullet.

The first is to keep raising interest rates to fend off currency depreciation pressures from the strong dollar. However, if policy rates keep going up, they will squeeze output and could cause recession in some African economies.

Lifting rates must be done carefully to avoid an economic downturn.

The second option is to stem currency depreciation pressures by intervening in the currency market.

This requires using foreign exchange reserves to support the currency. This option is not widely available. Many African countries have depleted their surplus reserves after large public spending programmes during the COVID pandemic and more expensive payments on their commodity imports. As a result foreign-currency reserves are already perilously low in a number of countries.

According to the International Monetary Fund, one-quarter of sub-Saharan African countries have reserves below three months of imports and more than three-quarters have reserves below five months.

Given that weaker currencies increase the buying power of travellers from abroad, one option would be to boost tourism to help shore up local currencies in the medium term.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

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

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## Editorial

### From gesture to action

Following the Cessation of Hostilities agreement signed in Pretoria, South Africa, some optimistic signs towards peace are coming, from both the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). In his latest statement to the local media, Commander of Tigray combatants, Major General Taddese Worede disclosed that the army he ordered would hand over arms in a couple of days as per the signed deal.

This is a good and encouraging gesture for peace. Coupled with the unreserved efforts of the government restoring normalcy in Northern Ethiopia, specifically in Tigray State would be an easier task. Therefore, to make the progress complete, the two sides must quickly transition to practical actions from oral gestures.

Such eagerness is necessitated by the strong desire of the entire people of the country to rapidly get rid of the war, the consequences of the war as well as the talks about the war. People are eager more than ever to hear news about peace, and development nationwide celebrations.

The two years of conflict have elapsed leaving a bad memory. Without exaggeration, these couples of years have been imprinted like even more than a decade in the minds of all.

That is why people were thrilled to hear that the peace talks in Pretoria have wound up with an agreement. Some could not even believe their ear while others thought it was misleading news. Considering the many peace talks that took years and repeated back and forth, such feeling could not be amazing or

weird. It is indeed difficult to come to terms with each other in ten days long dialogue after spending two years of bloody conflict.

What one can conclude here is that the participants of the dialogue have indeed understood the utmost desire and feelings of the people and took an audacious decision to soothe the suffering of the people by signing a peace deal. This being worthwhile, signing a peace deal would be ultimately beneficial to the people when it is substantiated with practical measures.

The two sides need to reaffirm their commitment to putting the terms of the agreement into action. From the morrow of the peace deal, the government has been discharging its responsibility to bring peace as per the peace deal.

For instance, it has exerted adequate efforts to maintain facilities like electricity and telecommunication services. It has also facilitated the smooth delivery of food and medical supplies to the region. The latest measures by TPLF to reciprocate government action for peace are also laudable. Preparation for disarmament is an integral element of the agreement tailored to bring about lasting peace.

Nevertheless, the two sides must keep on observing the positive signs of progress so far and work with utmost commitment to realize the remaining terms of the peace deal. The two sides have already seen how the grassroots are thirsty for peace. Therefore, they have to repeat the audacity they showed to sign the peace in putting it into practice.

## Opinion

### There is more to post-war reconstruction than the cost

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Scholars of peace and security argue that a war that takes one year needs ten years of post-war economic and infrastructural reconstruction. This shows us that the material and infrastructural cost of war is immense. Intra-state war makes both the destruction and reconstruction tougher since both parties use one country's resources for the war and the destruction on both sides is within one state.

War devours human life, public facility and infrastructure. War consumes everything, including the precious life of humans. The material and infrastructural costs of war are also massive. Though it is tough to reconstruct the destroyed infrastructure since the post-war economy is also affected by the war, except for human life everything can be reconstructed and replaced with strong commitment and unity of people after peace restores.

There is no good war. So, by its nature war is destructive and destroys infrastructures, economies, natural resources and even plans and economic policies.

For almost two years, there was an active war in Northern Ethiopia. The active war badly affects infrastructure, economy and material destruction and human life, especially in Tigray, Afar and

Amhara states. Now that the parties to the conflict agreed to a permanent cessation of hostilities after they signed an agreement in Pretoria, South Africa. The parties, the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), following the agreement are announcing their readiness and commitment to end the war and to work for peace in Ethiopia.

This development by itself, ending the war, is a relief for the people of Ethiopia, especially the people living around the place where active war was going. First, everyone should work to strengthen this peace initiative to realize it fully. The people as a whole need peace first, the rest is secondary. Silencing the guns is the first action and now guns are silenced following the peace process. Supporting, promoting, and appreciating the peace process and working to realize it is the responsibility of every citizen in Ethiopia, though the highest responsibility is the politicians.

I agree the war was unnecessary. But, it has already happened. It would have been much better for all of us to manage the political situation that leads our country to destructive war. Now that the war is over and peace is well on its way all of us have to capitalize on efforts towards reconstruction than poking fingers and the amount of loss, and the required investment in the future for reconstruction among others.

As I mentioned above, war consumes a lot. But, focusing or propagating too much on the destruction would change nothing than traumatizing the affected people and killing their hopes. Hammering too much on the billions of dollars required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation process would only be reminding the people how much they have lost, then poking fingers at those who should be accountable.

Following the declaration of peace, some people on social media are propagating the devastating damages, the material and life lost, but this does not help to develop the peace process and to facilitate the reconstruction, rehabilitation and rebuilding process. Instead, such kinds of propaganda may affect the peace process and exacerbate hate among the people.

It is time for peace and reconstruction and everyone should join hands to realize peace and accelerate the reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Disturbing the peace process by any means is irresponsibility, standing against the people. Focusing on blaming the past war at this time never helps the people. If anyone is worried about the people affected by the war, it is time to join hands to help with the reconstruction, rehabilitation and rebuilding process instead of blame-shifting.

Intra-state war is the outcome of political failure and the solution is also political. Now,

everyone should act responsibly and give a chance to a peaceful political solution to the conflict that our country has faced. There is no logical and genuine reason to disturb this peace process. All of us should turn our faces to the question of how to reconstruct the nation and contribute our own to realize the peace initiative and the reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

The rehabilitation, reconstruction and rebuilding need huge investment. It needs everyone's contribution practically, not propagating the past. It is obvious that reconstruction, rehabilitation and rebuilding need research and I think the government may establish a team to properly identify the destruction and to know the amount of budget for the reconstruction. Hence, at this time, the responsibility of citizens is to help the process, to support the reconstruction and to stand for peace. Without the strong support and contribution of citizens, realizing peace is impossible and post-war reconstruction may become tough. Hence, everyone should act responsibly to not disturb the peace process and to contribute to the post war reconstruction.

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

# Business & Economy

## Fruits of the economic reform and some shortcomings

ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Despite political ups and downs in the last four years, the economic reform that took place has brought a glimpse of hope to the nation.

The challenge the nation faced is not easy. In the pre-reform era for the last 27 years, the now-defunct regime formulated economic policies to serve the interest of the high-echelon party officials and politically affiliated business firms.

Public enterprises were led by inefficient politically appointed yes-men. Corruption was rampant, and money laundering and illicit trade were given protection by powerful men. The import-export business was led by few individuals favored by the political establishment, says Atlaw Alemu (PhD) an economist.

As to him, the prevalent ethnic politics in the country was a constraining factor for economic growth. In each regional state indigenous people were inculcated to see that all resources there belong to them and to regard other ethnic groups as newcomers rather than citizens. This, in turn, inhibited the inflow of ideas, knowledge, skills and capital towards the regions which made them miss the opportunities.

The public enterprises were mismanaged and most imported items were luxuries irrelevant to support the economic activities. In some regions land was allocated to the so-called local investors only to serve as collateral to secure a loan from local banks which again was the money allotted to the unproductive sectors. Though big money scandals and grand corruption were rampant due to inept legal institutions, till now holding the culprits accountable is insignificant. Moreover, billions of Dollars have flown out illegally by the past establishment and the current inflation is partly attributed to that misdeed.

Hence, to reverse the situation, the current government was forced to introduce a new economic reform program which shows some glimpse of hope.

Shiferaw Adilu, an economist, said that before the emergence of the new government the economy was mismanaged. The claim that the nation was registering two digits economic growth was extremely exaggerated.

Most projects were focused on infrastructure development such as roads, hydroelectric power dams, academic institutions, airports, industrial parks and big agricultural farms. The investment was drawn from a public fund. In this regard, the role of private investment can be said minimal. This again made the government play a dominant role in the economy. Projects were delayed for various reasons which intern, incur additional costs and burdened taxpayers. Not only this, the delay of projects opened the



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ECONOMIC REFORM

door to corruption.

The nation's wealth was uninterruptedly looted for decades and the economy was plummeting downward. During the reform period, the government to some extent enabled the stabilization of the macro-economy. As compared to other African countries' experiences, the inflation witnessed here is not unmanageable said Shiferaw.

Unemployment is a serious problem but there is no clear information on whether the number of unemployed people is correctly registered or not. The political conflicts that flared up here and there in the past could aggravate unemployment, because eviction can make people out of work. But it is not similar to other African countries.

According to the Prime Minister's Office website, the objectives of the economic reform is easing bureaucratic hurdle in doing business, boosting entrepreneurship and news start-up, formalization of business, raising the competitiveness of local firms, investment attraction and retention, creating more job opportunities, working vigorously for the prevalence of transparency and service delivery and promoting efficient tax administration including the utilization of Information.

However, as to Shiferaw, the government's steps to reform the economy is appreciable but its approach was in fragmented manner which again brought its drawback to unleashing the nation's potential. Hence, to bring long-lasting solutions at the macroeconomic level, planning and implementing a new road map is vital.

The privatization of Ethio-Telecom helped the nation to pull new foreign investment, technology and new thinking. The dominant role of the government to some extent is

reduced. The beginning of the Safaricom operation here gave way to new competition between the publicly owned and the privately owned foreign company. Now one can have the option to purchase air time for his mobile phone service other than the Ethio-Telecom. As mentioned, the government's preoccupation with containing insurgencies in various parts of the country forced it to pay less attention to the economic front. As to Shiferaw, the ongoing construction of GERD though it faced a political impasse due to the lower riparian countries' adamant stance towards the tripartite negotiation, the successful accomplishment of the third phase of water filling is encouraging.

Zelalem Teklu (PhD) is an economist who said during the dawn of the change, he expected that things were going smoothly but abruptly began to go in unwanted directions due to the flare-up of ethnic conflicts sponsored by foreign elements in various parts of the country.

However, though the situation was inconvenient, the measures that have been taken to reform the economy brought better results. The reform could attract foreign partners and enable the government to obtain up to 10 billion Dollars in the form of a loan.

The economic reform is important and has valid objectives particularly to address various problems related to the macro-economy and among others to mitigate unemployment, inflation and scarcity of hard currency. It should be understood that exporting agricultural products with value addition enhances the competitiveness of the products. Some efforts are undergoing in this regard but it is still at its pre-mature level hence, scaling up the effort is essential. Regarding privatization, Tekilu says, "currently privatizing Ethiopian Airlines is not a possible option because the organization

showed the world its efficiency. However, the absence of local management capacity in some public enterprises necessitates privatizing public enterprises."

Therefore, bringing foreign companies to do business here paves the way to building capacity and transferring knowledge.

He further said that privatization endeavor enables the nation to attract and obtain more foreign currency which shores up the scarcity. The construction of industrial parks in various parts of the country attracted local and foreign investors.

The announcement of the bid-winning companies also is encouraging during the privatization process to make it transparent. As to Teklu, privatizing party-owned companies must be part of the economic reform.

As it is known, in the past two years the war broke out in the northern part of the country bringing its own economic Havoc. Infrastructures such as roads, universities, hospitals, manufacturing industries and airports are demolished. Still, millions are displaced from their residential houses. Markets have failed and the new rail transport construction stretched from Awash to Mekelle Hara gebeya which was undergone by the Turkish company is dismantled. According to government sources more than five billion Dollars is needed to repair and reconstruct the damaged properties.

So far, to re-invigorate the nation's economy, addressing the macroeconomic ills is essential. Shortage of hard currency, foreign debt, inflation and unemployment are the pressing challenges which hamper the nation's economic growth; therefore, implementing the economic reform introduced three years ago properly is essential.



# Art & Culture

## Ancient Gelta Mariam Church Historical archive with tourism potential

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

The Southern Ethiopia is mostly visited by local and foreign tourists for its cultural and natural assests. It is rare this region to be seen as a place of pligrimage. Its historical heritages aren't also well explored. The north having outstanding places like Axum, Chapel of the Tablet is said to contain the Ark today. Lalibela is referred to Africa's 'New Jerusalem'. Gondar, replete with castles and churches, was a seat of the nation for hundred years. Such jewels on the crown of nation's tourism might have overshadowed the potential of the Southern Ethiopia. The South Ethiopia is now exploring and developing on its potential to be competent tourism destination in the country. The ancient Gelta Mariam Church housing historical archives as well as boasting traditional construction and history is worth visiting for pilgrims and history enthusiast. It is with this spirit and confidence the region's tourism breau is attempting to make the place accessible to tourists. Going back more than a century, 1812 Ethiopian calender, the church attests Ethiopians have time-old interaction between the north and the south even before modern Ethiopia was built.

It is in the middle of a spacious compound you see the hut like small Church Gelta Mariam. The minute you enter you feel an albatross of sin lifted from you shoulder.

I felt myself at peace. It felt the place a serene one you rarely experience in town. Till we went out from the church my worries, regrets, anxieties and uneasiness weren't haunting me. Even the feeling of guiltiness for not attending church had evaporated. Instead the aforementioned feelings ceded place to calmness, happiness and assurance. I can't tell what exactly but maybe the humility of the clergy and simplicity of the church made me believe the presence of God in the place. There was a deep tranquility! I felt in awe looking around. I found the construction of the church - peculiar as modern construction materials like nails had not been used. The then architects rather used leather belts to attach pillars, columns and roofs. Zala District Diocesan administrator Kesis Tadele Seifu about the church's establishment and environs to Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church followers.

"Bronze crosses, gold crosses, traditional painting of Jesus Christ and ancient parchment books adorn the church. The books comprise The Four Gospels, Miracles of Mary, Psalm of David and Passion Week. The church, containing very rare books, boasts vast history. Some books had been



stolen during Italian occupation to be returned by miracles. The church was founded during Zemene Mesafint (era of princes). When it was constructed there wasn't even the idea of cement so they used salt. They attached the pillars and columns using sheep skin and covered it by grass.

Due to lack of infrastructural facilities like road and other reasons this church has been hidden from pligrimage or casual visits by tourists. Diocesan administrator Kesis Tadele Seifu urges government and other stakeholders to develop the area and preserve the heritage before it i too late. The father also urged Ethiopians particularly the faithful to extend support to this ancient church with historical and religious significance.

Happily now the regional tourism body seems to understand the value of such places. True to the annual theme of international tourism day, rethinking tourism, the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples region wants to explore and expand tourism destinations; in addition to natural tourist destination such historical and religious places will hence get deserving attention. Regarding Ancient Gelta Mariam Church, Gofa Zone Tourism and Culture Office head Denberu Derbie expressed its important lesson to posterity, its facts to history lovers and its spiritual significance to faithfuls.

"This is a significant historical place, which local and foreign tourists must visit. Its foundation stretches back more than 200

years. It contains gold crosse and parchment books. The wisdom encapsulated in the construction tools and the techniques used in this church are important to be known by this generation. They showcase that our forefathers were hard-working people. Forefathers were determined to construct the church by using sheepskin instead of nails. They constructed the houses using their bare hands. This knack is the hallmark of Gofa's personality. Gofa is known for being powerful. Robustness is the manifaetion of it."

The site however is in a critical situation as the deacons and other clergy members tell. It demands quick renovation. The clergymen insist nothing but the preservation of this religious and historical site. Denberu affirms the zone's readiness to attract tourism influx doing adequate promotions and building necessary facilities.

"We are now working on the promotion task. We started our activities by inviting the media to come and look the potential and speak about it. We are also trying to make the place and its environs accessible by constructing roads and providing other basic services. So, people especially the youth



will visit it and learn from it. We will make renovation works to preserve the place for longer time."

Hotels and lodges are being constructed taking the tourist sites' developments into account. Upgrading of roads, increasing electricity availability and providing clean water are among things the Zone is undertaking or poised to do inorder to make the attractions accessible to tourists. As a visitor I myself did witness the region's potential but again it needs investment to make guests stay out of stress. It had been an adventure for me to be in the place where the rugged road was long with hairpin turns and rooms were hard to find. Against the odds, I had such a memorable time and envy visitors. I can assure them they will have productive and unforgettable time.

### Hell knows no fury

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

How come  
The heart-wrenching  
And the unexpected  
Widow's grief

Turned-brief?

The lady in black  
Soon defying  
Funeral decorum  
Put on pink clothes  
Decency that lack

Simply to attack  
A deceased  
Cheating husband  
Whose unfaithfulness  
Kept in the dark  
Soon after funeral

Became stark!  
Aghast adultery  
Triggers  
He'll knows no fury.  
Some mourners could learn their  
spouse's affair after they ceased to be



# Giving room for ideological differences

BY HENOK TIBEBU

For a long, Ethiopia has been marred by polarized political views making the road to moderate political practice bumpy. The idea of a gray line in the country's politics has been a tall order pitting not only politicians but also the fan bases into confrontations resulting in naming labeling and even hatred. Over the years, the ill-conceived thought of 'those who are not with me are against me' has been dominant in the country's political landscape. This tendency in turn sparked enmity and produced hardliner politicians and dashed the hope of political tolerance.

Moreover, the country's politics has been manipulated by one-sided political leaders who have no room for ideological differences over the past many years. But this longer stain has far-reaching implications. Not only in politics but also in our daily lives an individual who begs to differ on certain aspects of thoughts is unfairly labeled as a foe.

Since the 2018 reform, there has been a departure from the long-term status quo with the ruling party appointing members of opposition parties to the council of ministers.

In its latest social media post, the ruling Prosperity party indicated that the chance of entertaining or listening to others' different ideologies was very rare.

The country has been going through socioeconomic and political reform over the past three years. It also faced several challenges from international pressures and wars to economic inflation.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia has also won several victories from the effective execution of its mega projects to the recent cessation of hostilities (CoH) agreement signed between the federal government of Ethiopia and TPLF.

Accordingly, the parties agreed on different issues mainly for lasting peace in the country. Recently Minister of Government Communication Service, Legese Tulu said that, the Ethiopian Government is totally fulfilling its responsibilities, and conformed to the Pretoria Peace Agreement.

The Minister said that, positive and lasting peace originates from inner desire. If the inner desire is to look inward and heal our wounds, to ensure equal benefits and unity of the people, if it stems from these goals, looks at the bigger purpose, and hope for the future, then lasting peace can be achieved,



Legese stated.

For this reason, "we tolerate issues that seem to be minor problems for the time being, but are not significant in terms of long-term benefits, for the sake of our main goal. Externalizing things and echoing the problems arising from doubt and fear, for the time being, can never be a part of the solution alone. For this reason, it is important to take concrete steps, he said.

He also stated that, the government is also facilitating humanitarian aid and medical supplies from partners to the Tigray region through all corridors. The Minister said that, the groups of professionals in each sector are working together to restore basic services, confirming that some of the public institutions have started providing services in some areas as well.

Legese further added that, it is necessary to directly confront the forces that create obstacles so that the principles of the peace agreement turn into concrete actions. He emphasized that optimism and committed action from every Ethiopian is crucial to establish lasting peace.

Before the reform which is being led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.), there was an inclination of submitting to an individual's interest instead of having ideological combat between parties themselves.

According to the ruling party, it is mandatory to build a generation that believes in the values of ideological harmony. Giving chance for people's ideas to freely flow would enable the

development of multi ideological culture. It was also stressed that a system that allows people's voices to be heard would lay the cornerstone for building a society that strives for change.

According to the party, polarization is a worthless way for losers and it is no good for nobody. Polarization has been causing damage to the country and it is still affecting people's lives from different corners of the nation.

For instance, the repeated attacks on innocent civilians and property damages done by the armed groups called Shene are nothing but the result of polarized ideology. It was reported by local media recently that the armed groups have captured, robbed, and trucks that were sent to deliver emergency aid to the Guji zone of Oromia region and Kamashi of Benishangul Gumuz regional states.

National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) Commissioner Ambassador Shiferaw Teklemariam on his part said that, delivering emergency aid to the people in need has become difficult because of the security threat caused by the armed forces.

The armed groups causing security threats here and there seem not to understand the value of peace for a developing country like Ethiopia. In this case, it is strongly noted by the Prosperity Party that going forward with brotherly energy and synergy is the best option. It was also stressed that many of the country's problems emerge internally among its people themselves. Thus understanding this fact and looking for a mutual solution is mandatory according to the party.

How one developing country which is still suffering from ethnic-based political trends and polarized ideologies could come up with mutual solutions is the biggest question here.

It is obvious that practicing freedom of speech has been a long-time dream for the citizens of Ethiopia during the past regimes. There was even a time when representatives of the people themselves couldn't speak about the real problems of their own nations in the parliament except by accepting and raising their hands for whatever comes from the ruling party.

Currently, such practices seem to change as it was witnessed representatives of different parties gained seats in the parliament and some of them have started to influence the parliament so their say should be heard.

This is one step towards embracing ideological differences and respecting people's ideologies. This trend is expected to give people who have lost their ways by polarized influences a chance to consider ideological challenges as the order of the day instead of causing security threats to innocent civilians.

The idea is the ruling gear that leads to achieving peace, multifaceted development, and national prosperity.

In this case, it is vital for major actors and parties playing role in Ethiopia's politics to embrace ideological harmony and lead the new generation towards a constructive path of respecting other people's ideas and speaking their own without fear.



# Law & Politics

## Delivering the much-needed humanitarian aid

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

In the wake of the AU-brokered Pretoria peace deal that came to fruition due to the unshaken stance of the Ethiopian government and the genuine gesture of TPLF, humanitarian assistance has been on several fronts entering the Tigray state unrestrictedly more than ever before.

As things stand at present, following the free flow of humanitarian aid satisfyingly, the incumbent has been receiving a pat on the back again and again from a diverse range of humanitarian organizations and the wider international community.

As the global community has realized the undisputable truth on the subject of humanitarian assistance and constructive measures unfolding in the northern part of the country, they jumpstarted singing the praises of the incumbent and making conversant the global community with the self-evident truth and the hidden motives of other actors.

Irrespective of the fact that some agents of war and entrepreneurs of conflict spared no effort to brush aside the positive developments surfacing in the country, the global community has been giving enthusiastic approval to the commendable work of the government with bells on.

Failing to learn from their past mistakes, some entities have continued leaning over backward to turn the lives of guiltless civilians upside down and making desperate attempts to thwart the peace accord. Apart from getting involved in slanderous attacks and negative campaigns against concert measures, they every so often come up with a diverse range of intrigues that can cast a damper on the positive journey of the entire nation and befuddle the global community.

Although a lot of efforts have been made multiple times by some groups to politicize the issue of humanitarian aid and put forth a fabricated narrative of 'siege' and blowing the whistle on the incumbent's door, all their efforts went for nothing as a consequence of the government's firm resolve.

It is interesting to note that over the past two years in the face of conflicts, various actors have been engaged in fabricating and parroting make-believe stories that cast a gloom upon the plain truth.

Notwithstanding the fact that humanitarian assistance from time to time has been entering the region via road and air without problems, some outside entities have been besmirching the positive initiatives in close collaboration with Ethiopia's biggest enemies. In the same fashion, they have been as well playing a part in character assassination against the government's positive moves and constructive steps.

It is worth recalling that in times gone by



despite continuous challenges brought about by certain entities, the government has gone to the ends of the earth to give the green light to unfettered access to humanitarian assistance.

Even though Ethiopia's antagonists know the unvarnished truth in relation to the provision of relief, they have been engaged in tarnishing the fact of the matter under the guise of diversified bogus stories which is far from reality. Other than that some of them have been engaged in ruining the country's image as if the incumbent has denied entry to humanitarian assistance.

Notwithstanding that number of entities has sustained disrupting the whole thing working in close partnership with Ethiopia's irreconcilable enemies and arch-foes to drag the good initiative of the government through the mud with their usual fake stories; food aid is reaching the Tigray people as the incumbent allowed unfettered access to the state.

As old habits die hard some of Ethiopia's arch-foes have maintained giving a bad name to constructive measures taking place on the subject of the flow of humanitarian assistance working in tandem with the discredited international media outlets that have been getting off track by spreading spurious stories.

It must be remembered that since the start of the declaration of a unilateral humanitarian truce, all concerned bodies have been making a supreme effort to smooth the path of humanitarian assistance despite some entities trying as hard as they can to distract its delivery with flying colors.

Over 12 aid trucks carrying humanitarian aid are heading to Tigray via Afar state, U.N. World Food Program (WFP) disclosed.

In its Twitter message, the WFP noted that the humanitarian food aid is passing

through the Afar state route and various donors are supplying food-related items to Tigray at this time without any difficulty. Similarly, two trucks carrying fuel are heading along with food aid-carrying trucks, the organization added.

The Afar state government and people are working cooperatively and facilitating the donor organizations' food aid items to reach Tigray. Moreover, relief food nutrition and medical cargo followed immediately via all routes possible, the WFP stated.

WFP said that, test flight rotated safely into Shire and more flights are planned to transport humanitarian workers' critical nutrition as well as medical supplies. It is to be recalled that recently International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) disclosed that the first convoy of aid supplies arrived in Mekelle.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and various humanitarian organizations have been accelerating the provision of medicine and medical equipment to Tigray state.

MoH announced that it has delivered medicine and medical equipment worth over six million Birr in the first phase of the provision of health-related materials to implement the South African Cessation of Hostilities agreement.

By the same token, it has provided medical services and materials worth over one million Birr to Shire Hospital and nine health centers in the second phase of the provision.

In the third phase, in collaboration with National Disaster Risk Management Commission, MoH has been transporting similar materials valued at 1.7 million Birr to the state.

Likewise, 33.9 metric tons of basic medical equipment, emergency drugs, and surgery

materials that have been obtained from the International Red Cross Committee have arrived in Mekelle.

Explaining the existence of an enabling condition to strengthen the provision of pharmaceutical services, the ministry said that different international humanitarian organizations and the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service (EPSS) would intensify discharging their responsibilities for the accessibility of medical services.

The first United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy carrying life-saving humanitarian aid arrived in Mekelle since August, UNHCR Ethiopia said.

According to the UNHCR's Twitter message, the humanitarian aid includes medicines and shelter kits to treat the sick and repair destroyed homes, and more are en route to North Ethiopia as UNHCR has scaled up delivery of protection and solutions in the war-affected areas in North Ethiopia.

Similarly, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Office disclosed that the first delivery of humanitarian aid arrived in Tigray since the peace agreement was signed. "This lifesaving support is critical for women and children. More supplies will be delivered to all areas impacted by conflict including in Afar and Amhara states"

Three days before, UNHCR representative in Ethiopia, Mamadou\_Dbalde said, "With improved humanitarian access, we are ready to further scale up delivery of protection services and support solutions in Northern Ethiopia."

UNHCR is distributing relief items to 50,000 people who are severely affected by a flood. Items being distributed include sleeping mats, blankets, solar lamps, soaps, mosquito nets, and kitchen sets.



# Women in Focus

## Learning can never stop, always reinvent yourself: Flipper Co-Founder

COMPILED BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Menna Selamu is the co-founder of Flipper International School. She was born and raised in Addis Ababa. Having a francophone mother, Menna went to Lycée Gebremariam French School, in Addis Ababa.

She pursued her education at Addis Ababa University in the field of Electrical Engineering. She later earned her MBA from the University of Liverpool, UK.

The following story of Menna was published in Association of Women in Business (AWiB) page and it is presented in a way that fits this page.

Having lost her mother at the age of 4, Menna was raised by her grandparents till the age of 8. Though she came from a family of three, she was the only one to be raised by her father who was well educated, and a lawyer.

Despite the fact that she was raised as a sole child, she said: “I had a pleasant, nurturing and loving childhood”, she asserts with a big smile.

Living with her father who was also a global thinker in his own right, Menna was challenged to think independently, to stand her ground and argue her desire.

Her first job was at Infotech PLC, a place that gave her an unlimited opportunity to grow and learn. In a short two years, she was promoted to lead the technical support department that helped her have a glimpse of leadership, entrepreneurship and organization; that became the greatest foundation for her professional career. After Infotech, Menna started her own business, an IT organization, Flipper Computer Aided Learning Centre [Flipper], with a former colleague Serkaddis as a co-founder.

Flipper is a computer learning center for young children where students from various schools in Addis enroll to learn how to use computers and get opportunity to practice language skills and subjects such as Maths and Science, using applications.

Since the Centre was the first of its kind, obtaining a license was a bit challenge. While teaching these computer skills, the founders started to realize that the students were having a hard time understanding the key concepts such as logical thinking and problem solving.

Then, Menna and Serkaddis decided to change their organization from



computer learning center to early year’s education; understanding that it would close the gap. That idea became a reality as Flipper International School.

With an engineering background, Menna never saw herself opening a school. She felt that she has nibbled and dabbled into the career that led her to her passion—education—that she now feels has fulfilled her. It brought her a new meaning of success that creating something that many can benefit from and making it sustainable. Seeing Flipper where it is now, she can see that it has attained both.

Flipper International School has 2,100 students, and 465 employees, of which 70percent are female. After 18 years of success as one of the best international schools in Addis, the founders compelled to think and strategize its future.

The best approach they found was to engage strategic partners who can invest and take the school to the next level. This is the first step to institutionalizing a business, as to her.

An institution has a better chance of sustainability than staying under the wings of its founders. Thus, by taking this path, the founders not only ascertained the future of this social institution but also enabled Flipper to be part of an international network of schools.

As proved in the business world, spreading the decision among many stakeholders will only strengthen the institution. That had been their vision all along; and Menna feels privileged that it came to fruition at the end of 2018.

Throughout her journey, simplicity and open-mindedness are the factors that contributed a lot to the success of Flipper. It is within those two elements that you can see things clearly and break barriers, as Menna said it.

When asked what success meant to her she said “to create something that many can benefit from and making it sustainable”. She never shied away from doing new things, but she believed that being surrounded by people who shared her visions and goals is what brought her success to another level.

Menna believes that her family, children and friends are what made her the person who she is now. She feels she is one of the lucky ones in having such a wonderful support system. She enjoys watching scientific-fiction movies during her spare time.

According to her, leadership is creating a shared vision and guiding others to the attainment of the vision through a collaborative effort. Menna believes that developing a culture of learning in an environment where others can improve themselves and grow is the duty of a leader.

She also took the opportunity to advise the youth to be open-minded, curious and to listen to others, critically analyze perspectives instead of shutting down and thrive to acquire new knowledge. “There are abundant opportunities in life, but we need to be open to new ideas and have the willingness to commit”, she underscored.

Menna was nominated as a 2022 Women Of Excellence (WOE) for her commitment to nurturing young minds and cultivating curiosity in youth.

***Throughout her journey, simplicity and open-mindedness are the factors that contributed a lot to the success of Flipper. It is within those two elements that you can see things clearly and break barriers, as Menna said it***



# Joint effort to combat illicit heritage trafficking

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

There is nothing good about war and conflict. War is not all about losing the priceless life of humankind or infrastructure damage that cost huge amount of affluence. It is also about losing the inimitable historical and cultural heritages that cannot be regained with billions of dollars.

Cultural heritages are not only prone to destruction in times of war or conflict; they are also susceptible to illicit trafficking. Due to their financial returns, heritages and historical artifacts always attract the attention of organized criminals, terrorists, individual thieves and heritage collectors.

Lately, an International Day against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property was marked by UNESCO for the 3rd time. The day was also marked here in Ethiopia for the first time at the premises of the Ethiopian Heritage Authority under the theme "Heritage is Identity. Don't Steal it."

Speaking at the event, Authority Deputy Director General, Hiwot Hailu, said that the day was marked by considering the cultural and identity impacts that may be caused by illicit trafficking of heritages. According to her, identifying causes of illicit trafficking and creating awareness among stakeholders with regard to preservation of heritages is one way of addressing the problem.



"Illicit heritage trafficking is one of the man-made causes of losing our heritages. For this reason, preserving, protecting and developing them and transferring them to the next generation is the duty of all stakeholders."

Hiwot stressed that preserving and protecting heritages from all forms of illicit trafficking is the responsibility of every citizen, and this is well-defined in the Federal Constitution. Protecting natural resources and historical heritages is the duty and responsibility of every Ethiopian. "Let us together preserve and protect our remarkable heritages," she urged.

On the event, a research paper entitled

"Prevention of illicit heritage trafficking in Ethiopia" was presented by Cultural Heritage Inventory, Inspection and Grading Director, Desalegn Abebe. On the event, participants have raised several questions concerning heritage inventory, inspection and grading issues. What is more, awareness raising topics were discussed among participants including, measures that should be taken on those who breach the law concerning heritage protection.

The Ethiopian Heritage Authority has also acknowledged institutions and individuals who contributed a lot in the restitution of artifacts that were looted and illegally taken out of the country.

Among others, Meleket Tewahade, who exerted utmost effort in the restitution of the sword that belongs to Emperor Menelik and was used at battle of Adwa from the United States, and Ambassador Teferi Melese for returning artifacts that were looted by British soldiers from Mekdela as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its efforts to reconstitute artifacts from various countries through coordinating embassies, are few.

Meanwhile, various artifacts that were in the hands of individuals were returned to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES).

As indicated by the local media, among the returned artifacts materials that used to be properties of the Ethiopian patriots who were resisting and fighting against the Fascist Italian force are included. The medal of Ras Abebe Aregay, an Ethiopian commander who led a group of fighters, during the five years fascist Italy occupation and a soft copy of his deeds during the war were among the artifacts the institute received.

According to the local media report, a painting that was drawn in the 17th century and an 18th-century manuscript were given to the Institute.

Appreciating the priceless gifts, IES Director, Dr. Takele Merid, said that the artifacts are living witnesses about what had happened at that time and can be used as sources for researches and for future studies.



## Published in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### TRC's disease, drought resilient fruits, vegetables

BY EPHREM ANDARAGCHEW

Haramaya University Tony Research Center (TRC) is carrying out problem-solving researches and activities that are ensuring the benefits of societies across the nation.

Tony Research Center Director Mr. Shibbiru Wakjira said that the center has been serving as a fruit and vegetable research institute since 1972. It has also the vision to become a center of excellence in drought resistance fruits and vegetable research center in Ethiopia.

Hence, the center has prepared and distributed improved oranges seedlings namely Enqulal, Hamlin, Valencia, Sour, Washington, and so on as well as papayas, and various types of vinegar to the communities through agricultural offices, NGOs, institutions, cooperatives, unions, and Universities.

Besides, Eastern Hararge wordas, with the support of the Tony Research Center, have set up nurseries and has prepared more than 21,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings this year, he added.

He recalled that in the past, the center had



prepared up to 5,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings and provided them to the community. Whereas, this year, the center has distributed over 10,000 saplings since the focus of the government on fruit and vegetable in the Green Legacy initiatives has increased the demand for seedlings.

Furthermore, the center has provided more than 15 varieties of improved sweet potatoes to farmers. Hence, the center is working to meet the needs of societies, he stated.

The preservation of 53 varieties of indigenous mangoes, maintains many varieties of sweet and preferred oranges, and the provision of improved seedlings that are disease and drought-resilient makes the center unique and preferable by MSc and PhD students as well as researchers in the sector.

Currently, a researcher who came from abroad is researching more than 260 varieties of wheat to identify and improve wheat that withstands drought and disease and grows them in areas with short rainfall.

Apart from Haramaya University students and researchers, the center has been offering services to students and researchers who came from inside and outside Ethiopia's higher education institutions to conduct their research.

In particular, local higher education institutions and agricultural colleges are being made to take improved varieties of vegetables and fruits for their local communities.

He also announced that the center is working to reduce the cost of living by selling various fruit and vegetable products produced by the Tony research center to the public at low prices.

Tony Research Center is among the research institute that is located in Dire Dawa town, Eastern Ethiopia 43km far away from the main campus.

The center has the vision to become a center of excellence in drought resistance fruits and vegetable research center in Ethiopia. Currently, the center has 105 permanent and 60 temporary employees to facilitate and support the research undertaking in the research center which covers more than 30 hectares of land.