

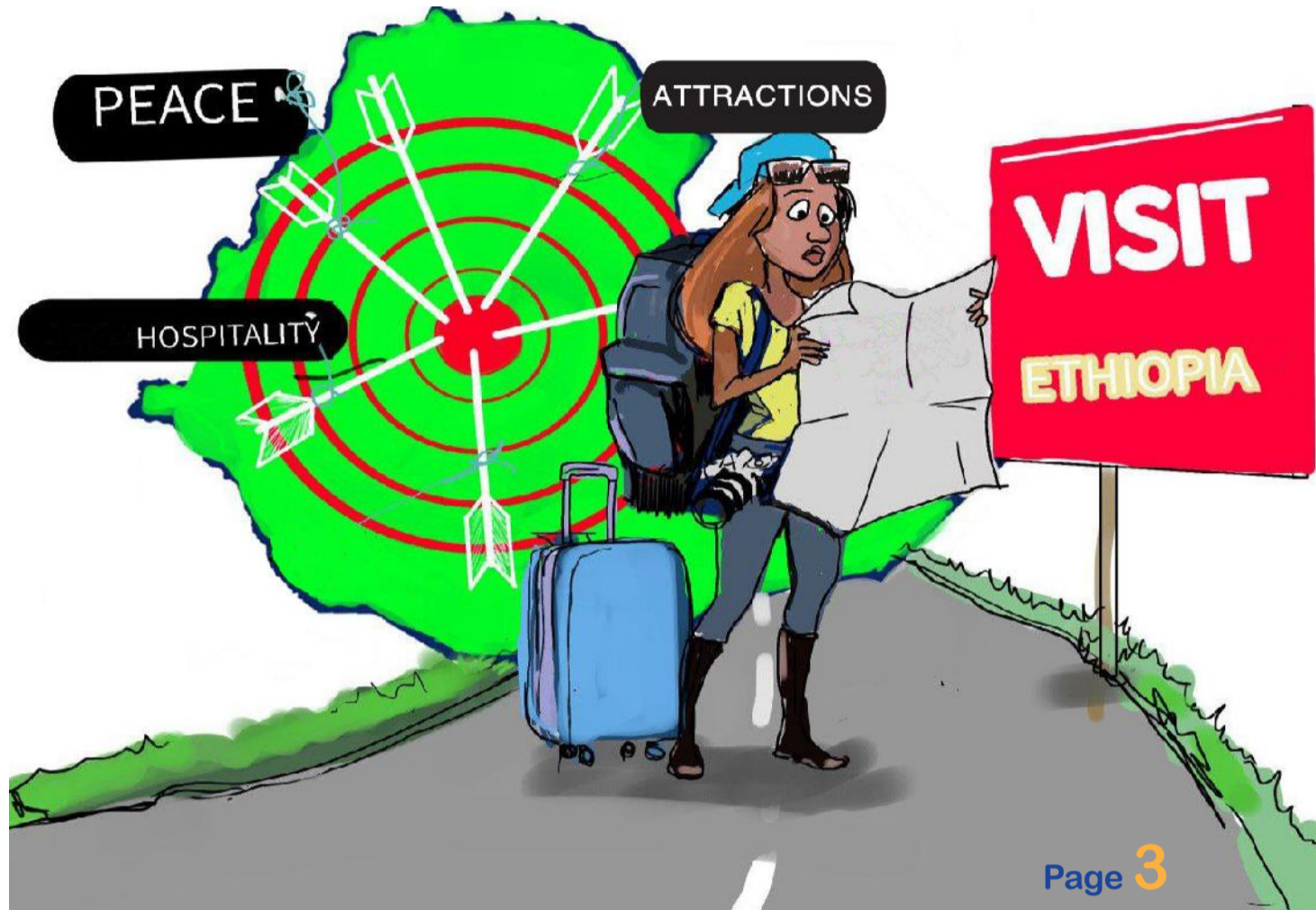


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Expert advice media to debar war-time commentators

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - War commentators who fueled the two-year conflict in north Ethiopia should abstain from the media; an expert in the area said, appealed for the recruitment of peace advocates.

Speaking to The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Addis Ababa University Journalism and Communication Assistant Professor Abdisa Zerai (PhD) stated that, the media should host reliable and true-blue peace advocates while debarring publically known war commentators.

Commentators who were involved in the two-year war directly or indirectly should have remained out of the media. If not, it could hurt the credibility and commitment to effectuating the peace agreement. "The media should care about citizens whose family members have been killed during the war."

An individual who lost a family member due to the war will never have a positive attitude to war commentators. Most war commentators had preached against peace; they urged the people to kill each other and named peace seekers as criminals.

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Tourism industry in metropolis promising: Bureau

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The tourism industry here in the capital has been so promising as the tourist influx on rise, so disclosed Addis Ababa City Culture, Art and Tourism Bureau.

The City Culture, Art and Tourism Sector

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Institute claims to bring tangible changes in justice system

Page 4

News



Debre Markos airport construction reaches 25 percent completion

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) announced that Debre Markos Airport construction reaches 25 percent completion.

Project CEO Eng. Zeyede Abera told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, the construction process of the project is going effectively and will be accomplished timely.

As to him, the main excavation work of the project reaches 60 percent completion while its filling process sees 30 percent completion.

The airport will land on 153 hectares of land and its total estimated cost is about 505

million Birr, he stated.

“The main stage of the construction on excavation work and its construction process is on-going as per the schedule. The remaining construction works are supposed to be carried out before the allocated time”, he said.

Provision of financial compensation, lack of machineries, and other inputs are the main reasons for the delay of the airport construction, he noted.

Moreover, sufficient provision of construction inputs and cement supply, involvements of all stakeholders will expedite the projects accomplishment.

During completion, the airport will

accommodate one large-sized airplane and three medium-sized airplanes at a time.

On his part, Debre Markos Town Deputy Mayor Sileshi Temesgen said that the completion of airport construction will have significant contributions to the community and promote trade and tourism.

Currently, the airport construction creates jobs for over 500 youths in their surroundings.

Accordingly, the construction of the airport is operated by the Ethiopian Airlines Group alongside ECWC, Prominent Engineering Solutions PLC Consultancy.

The project is sought to be accomplished by the end of 2025.



Senior economist underlines putting transparent system in public procurement

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Transparent scheme must be put in place to minimize public procurement’s vulnerability to corruption and maladministration, so stressed Senior Economist.

Speaking to The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Senior Economist and Pan African Chamber of Commerce CEO Kibur Gena, underlined that since 70 percent of nation budget spend on public procurement, due attention must be given to avert its exposure to corruption.

Realizing that ambiguous and unclear system tends to open doors to corruption and maladministration, transparent bid should be held. Moreover, he said system that addresses any queries that may arise regarding the bid must be put on.

“Media should play a significant role in balancing when unveiling wrong doings as well as echoing the voice of disadvantaged people to curb embezzlement of procurement.”

Courts should discharge their responsibility in applying their power freely and neutrally, he added.

As to him, allowing the procurement process to go under a particular agency would serve to examine and control whether the purchase was conducted appropriately or not.

The challenge does not necessarily lie on whether the procurement was conducted by a specific agency, but inefficient service delivery coupled with, time variation before and after opening bid highly impacted the reputation of the Agency. Thus, he stressed the need to perform activities efficiently and clearly.

He also highlighted the importance of drawing a lesson from best experienced countries. Of such countries, he said there are countries that have only two public procurement companies.

The reason behind, as to him, is that not only will it allow having alternative bid agencies but he said it will also enable to have competition between them which likely beings about efficient service.

More importantly, it will help to draw a lesson from one another if there are any mismanagement or maladministration issues in the companies, he stated.

Emphasizing that transparent system must put in to practice to examine the proper implementation of budget allocation, he stressed that verdicts related to corruption must be tough to alert people from engaging in one.

On the other hand, media houses should take the leading role in uncovering maladministration and stand with silenced voices he underlined.

Gov’t providing medical equipment loans in war affected areas: MoH

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - The government of Ethiopia is now providing basic medical equipment loans to health facilities in the conflict- affected areas through credits, Ministry of Health (MoH) said.

During his interview with The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoH Medical Equipment and Input Director Regasa Bayisa highlighted that, health facilities in those war affected areas have been damaged and become nonfunctional due to various reasons.

Owing to this fact, he said that a number of activities are being carried out to replace the medical equipment with new ones. In doing so, the government is providing wheelchair, stethoscopes and other inputs to health facilities on loans.

Though the medical equipment is on loan from Ethiopian Pharmaceuticals Supply Service (EPSS), he said efforts are being exerted to cover the loans by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of EPSS.

Since most of equipment was not operational for too long, maintenance activities are being carried out by professionals, he said.

However, the director further noted that

primary health care service is being delivered to the public in most of the health stations located in war affected areas.

Medical follow up and examination of pregnancy, family planning, emergency surgical treatment and other services, among others are being provided in the health facilities.

Subsequent to the prompt activities undertook to rehabilitate health facilities in war affected areas in Amhara and Afar states, almost all health stations have

currently become operational, as to him.

By the same token, he said following the peace deal, efforts are being exerted to start providing medical service in Shire, Axum and Adwa areas, Thus, around eight hospitals and 26 health stations have gone operational. And, within few days of operation, over 83, 000 people have gained health service.

Likewise, supplementary foods such as plumpy nut are also being provided to various war affected people in the state.



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MINISTRY OF HEALTH-ETHIOPIA

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

The tourism sector has got back in shape

Hospitable Ethiopia sticks out for its tangible and intangible heritages that could galvanize the attention of tourists from where the sun goes around. Take for instance the electrifying vibe the celebration of Christmas has just created in Lalibela town. Foreign as well as local tourists, along with the orthodox faithful, were tuning to the spiritual songs and dances of priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in and around the Lalibela Church, hewn out of a gigantic rock.

What is astonishing about the cross-like-and-three-dimensional Lalibella church is its being unmatched in that its foundation starts from the top unlike the designs architects come up with.

More often, approached by journalists, tourists remark they have found both the rock-hewn church and the pristine-spiritual ceremony, which is unique to Ethiopia, awe-inspiring. In an elevated mood they promise to return up with friends and relatives the following year. Leaning on the snowballing number of tourists, most prove true to their words. What is more, the cordiality of residents of the town that goes to the extent of washing guests' leg takes many by surprise—what a humbleness!

Ethiopia has similar religious and cultural festivals that grab the attention of tourists who yearn to partake in such events. Timket or Ethiopian Epiphany is going to take place soon. As it is held across the country its magnetic pull of tourists is unquestionable.

The consecutiveness of the aforementioned two holidays could be a reason for tourists to prolong their stay here.

Exploiting its time-old serenity, which unfortunately at times marred by to dos, resilient and resources-rich Ethiopia could exploit its touristic potentials to fast track its developmental leap.

After the return of quite in the northern part of the country following the Pretoria agreement things have fast turned back in shape. Unhampered by clashes or unforeseen unfolding humanitarian aids are being doled out to needy Tigrayans who have reached on consensus to iron out differences and streamline their thoughts through a thorough brainstorming. Basic

social infrastructural facilities are once more being put in place. Now the nook and crannies of Tigray have become beneficiaries of electric services. The same is true with telephone and bank services. Surprisingly enough, the Ethiopian airlines have begun shuttling between Addis and Mekelle and the like wide opening the door for tourists to visit the sought-after Axum Obelisks and similar rock Hewn churches there.

The fact that delegates of the federal government have buried the hatchet with TPLF leaders heading there in person demonstrates the breath of fresh air in the northern part of the country.

What Ethiopia should do on the wake of the war is rebuilding its economy. It is here the smokeless economy must bubble up to its mind. In this regard, the country's resource is hardly tapped. As tourist destinations, road and other infrastructures are not yet well developed to be cozy to tourists. As such the country could not garner hard currency to the required level. One of the reasons ascribable to this chasm is the low level attention accorded to the sector.

But, over the past few years, placing focal attention on the sector, the government is busy developing a few touristic sites to make Ethiopia tourists' hub. Here it suffices to mention the Koisha, Gorgora and Addis Ababa tourist destinations. When these spots see completions aside from generating job opportunities, they will certainly help the country to win much-needed hard currencies.

Parallel to this, there is a call for bringing the touristic spots and heritages before the global limelight. Efforts should also be directed towards getting more and more unique heritages inscribed in UNESCO's heritage list.

Seizing the relatively serenity that prevailed now, stakeholders in the sector have to do their share in bolstering tourism and investment in resilient Ethiopia. Single alone as the government could not address the challenge lending a hand is expected from investors.

Come to Ethiopia a cradle of mankind and a wonderland is our message to foreign tourists. We envy you for what awaits you.

Opinion

Scholars' participation is key to unifying the nation

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Arguably nation-building is defined among academics as a process of development within the public, and a feeling of national identity and realistic levels of unity, adaptation, and achievement. It also denotes the domestic process when the political elite's/ state agents or actors strive to construct a national identity by bridging existing cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious rifts.

Besides, nation-building is explained as the construction or structuring of national identity using the power of the country. The main objective of nation-building is unifying the people within the country so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Because nations stay together when citizens share adequate values and preferences and can communicate with each other.

Cognizant of these facts, and concepts into account, the government has taken various reform measures including the implementation of indigenous policies and strategies since mid-2018. The government has also called opposition political parties, Diasporas, and so on to contribute ideas, and wealth to build the nation.

Among others, the government called the scholars to play a critical role to build the nation by narrowing the difference that is exhibited across the country. For this, Universities throughout the county held a national consultative forum under the theme of the "Role of Scholars in Nation Building" this week.

The forum creates a platform to discuss the role of scholars in nation-building to ensure stability, peace, and development across the country. Scholars should take the lead in nation-building endeavors to have a strong, developed, and prosperous nation. Besides, schools through their research can support people to speak the same language, have a similar conception of national history, and has a shared admiration for national heroes and cultural icons. They can also transform ethnically, linguistically, and religiously separated people into a more or less unified nation.

Ethiopian Minister of Tourism Ambassador Nasise Chali said that scholars should use their knowledge and wisdom to solve the challenges of society and perform a task that will be recalled in the history of the country.

Scholars should exploit their knowledge and wisdom to create solutions for the problems that the country faces currently by awakening and changing society. For this, the forum being made is vital to make use of the scholars' capacity to address wide-ranging problems such as the deterioration of morals.

Prime Minister Office Democracy Building Center Coordinator Cluster Head Zadi Abraha said that the intellectuals of the country have to play a vital role in a strong nation-building ambition, diplomacy, and economic prosperity. To put the nation on a strong foundation, scholars should continue the ongoing efforts in terms of development and diplomacy.

Scholars could indeed play a pivotal role in nation-building by constructing and structuring a national identity by providing scientific

thoughts. Hence, similar discussions are imperative to alert scholars to analyze and come up with solutions for the economic, socio-cultural, and political factors that affect the nation-building of the country.

Moreover, consciousness among the public is very important for nation-building, because lack of agreement on major issues may lead to national failure. Nation failure is the circumstances where a given state's nationhood no longer has legitimate public authority. In other words, the public has no agreement on the cultural and traditional practices, symbols, rituals, and historical experiences. More importantly, there is no "usable past" and the cultural projection of a nation is no longer persuasive to the public.

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Industry Minister Melaku Alebel, the government believes that scholars have a decisive role in solving the country's deep-rooted problems by conducting problem-solving research. Currently, political polarization and extreme thoughts have become pressing issues at the national level. Hence, scholars are highly anticipated to figure out the problems and suggest solutions in their rigorous research.

Although the country has designed and implemented many promising development plans, these plans have challenges and threats. So scholars should fulfill their responsibility to avoid the challenges and hand over a better Ethiopia to the next generation, he pointed out. Besides, scholars' view and approach to the existing problems are keys to building the nation and avoiding the threat of state failure.

Since scholars are expected to generate new

ideas and thoughts which can be converted into policy and strategy, the government and the concerned body should organize national consultative forums in the future to generate valuable ideas that will be used as input to build the nation. This in turn supports scholars to play their role in national affairs, especially in politics, peace, development, diplomacy, and other fields.

However, preparing forums is good for discussing current issues, but discussion alone is not enough. The government should create favorable conditions for scholars to contribute to the nation-building endeavor of the country. Because the achievement of nation-building depends on education. In this regard the role of scholars in developing the country in all sectors is high.

Indeed, an effective process of nation-building emanates from the cultural projection of the country that has a certain set of presumptions, values, and beliefs which can serve as the reasoning for the organization of a nation. Hence, increasing the participation of scholars in nation-building is imperative to reach a national consensus, fight against corruption, strengthen the political reform of the country, and ensure peace and security, economic development, and the quality of education. It is also significant to comprehend the historical and cultural heritage of the country for the process of nation-building.

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

News



Ethiopia needs to stimulate private sector driven economy: *Investor*

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA - A successful Indian businessman and industrialist in East Africa, who also Managing Director of the Habesha Steel Mills PLC, Kishen Raval accentuated the need for promoting private sector driven economy considering that it is a major sources of economic growth, job creation and sustainable development.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* the investor said that, it is high time for bureaucracies and facilitation for investment opportunities as the economy need to be shifted from state driven to private sector driven. There is a need to go quicker and the resources need to be made available for the private sector to fairly complete one another.

“I believe there is a lot to be done in Ethiopia and the government is aware of this.”

Indicating that, there is huge resource potential in Ethiopia, Raval said that in order to unleash this potential, the private sector has to do its part as their participation in the economy should further be intensified with less government control.

Citing decisions passed to open up the cement market with reduced government control, the investor said that, this is very

a sound measure as it is geared the private sector to engage in competition.

Pointing that, the previous government had impeded investment in the cement sector for foreigners, he said; “Due to this fact that we observed today’s huge shortage of cement and also one of the highest cost of cement on the continent which inhibits infrastructure growth.”

Certain interventions with a good intent are imperative while others may not bring positive outcomes at the end of the day. All in all, the door of investment should be open for the private sector to compete with one another on a fair basis. If this is so, the business competition will allow the economy to boost as the investor goes to the next trade opportunity.

Established in 2007, Habesha Steel Mills PLC, manufacture of various sizes of ribbed bars which are used in mega projects such as hydro-power dams, large infrastructure projects, airports, railway, road works, bridges, high-rise buildings, heavy industries, universities and many more. The company has elevated the strength and mechanical property standards of the Ethiopian ribbed bars by being the first and only manufacturer to use German patented technology to produce high quality reinforcement bars.



Institute claims to bring tangible changes in justice system

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA -The Federal Justice and Law Institute said that, it has carried out praiseworthy activities to modernize Ethiopia’s judicial system and make the service accessible for the public whilst significantly addressing the latter’s complaints regarding service delivery.

The Institute’s Director General with the Rank of Minister Degefie Bulla told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, the institute has been discharging responsibilities in fighting against corruption and enhancing the public’s trust and satisfaction in judicial organs. Supporting lasting peace, realizing good governance and ensuring the rule of law, as well as encouraging the development of the country are also areas the institute has registered success in.

“Based on the recently conducted research, following reform, there have been close to 7.4 million cases brought to courts each year. Of these cases, some 5.2 million could not obtain appropriate responses due to various reasons.”

Degefie further highlighted that, lack of integration among concerned bodies, limited availability of skilled labor force and technological hindrances as well as low public participation are the main impediments to ensuring proper justice in Ethiopia. “If the country does not have a strong judicial institution, the situation paves the way to anarchy and puts the safety and security of citizens under serious doubt.”

Noteworthy improvements have been made in the justice system including courts, prosecution, police and prisons by updating the services in the past four years. Particularly, the institute has been conducting a lot of research, which helps to identify factors that hinder the establishment of an effective judicial system in Ethiopia and forwarded recommendations including capacity building programs, bridging the skilled labor gap, increasing the satisfaction of the people and the like.

Moreover, through using alternate conflict resolution mechanisms and strengthening the commitment of local elders and community leaders, the institute has done significant tasks to realize an effective judicial system in Ethiopia, the director-general noted.

Expert advice...

Hosting those commentators in the name of peace analysts would also defame the hosting media itself and the outlets need to conceptualize the impact of the war, the academician elaborated.

“The war had been started due to a negative attitude supported by the media. The prospect of some people was perceived as a threat to others. So, the media should avoid the winner and loser narrative. Otherwise, it will create another war once again.”

Abdisa further advised the media to avoid favoring politicians, highlighting the political competition between and among outlets will result in communal war. It

is a must-do assignment to reconcile disputable differences among media organizations that caused ethnic and political violence.

Mentioning the importance of creating a common agenda to convince the community about peace and reconstruction, the expert emphasized the responsibility of the mainstream media to exercise peace journalism and help the warring faction to resolve differences in negotiation.

According to the Pretoria Agreement article 3 sub-article 3, the permanent Cessation of Hostilities shall include the cessation of all forms of hostile propaganda, rhetoric, and hate speech.

Tourism industry in...

Head, Desta Lorenzo told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, city has secured nearly 14 billion Birr from 240,000 tourists over the first quarter of this fiscal year.

He added that, the bureau has been carrying out verification for 170 star rated hotels and has consulted them to provide tourists with standard service convenient for them and coupled with the required quality.

It was also learnt that, the city has been well preparing itself to serve tourists and guests coming to it for celebrating Christmas and Epiphany holidays.

These holidays help restore the tourism sector declined following COVID-19 and the northern conflict over the last two years plus and promote untapped tourism potentials of the city as well, he said.

“For the tourists who come to visit the city, hotels, transport and tour operators are ready to serve them and various packages are under preparation for the same cause. In connection to this, in the city, unity, Entoto, Friendship parks and Science museum are main identified visiting places,” he stated.

As to him, the bureau is doing all its best to elongate the stay of tourists in the city apart from improving facilities for them.

Opinion

Role of elders in conflict management

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Conflict is an unavoidable part of life, from childhood to old age. Conflict begins in childhood and it is a critical component of human development. It allows a child to learn that different people have different characteristics. When children grow and develop, they may have their own preferences and strategies for dealing with the people around them. As conflict is unavoidable, one of these strategies should be to manage it. According to scholars people have a style of conflict of their own preference. These styles develop as a result of personal attributes. Scholars utilized methods to explain and describe conflict styles. These styles include: dominating, integrating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising. According to Nilam Patel, many factors, both interpersonal and intrapersonal are believed to affect how social groups, including racial, ethnic and tribal factions choose to manage conflict.

It has been observed that although people have ways of conflict resolution, they will typically vary their modality. It is not unusual for Ethiopians to use one technique at home with family members, and another with their neighbors. This is the practice among Ethiopian elders in different parts of the country. They use a variety of techniques during a conflict resolution. A person may at first “avoid” a conflict, then switch to domination, and settle the conflict with an accommodative manner using elders. Studies indicate that “avoiding” conflict is a major concern for the elders and for both parties to a conflict. A low level of concern for self-interest coupled with a high level of concern for the interest of others is an “accommodating” one. For example, Ethiopians have been accommodating the interests of others to maintain peace, law and order in the country.

A high level of collaborative intent reflects a concern and respect for others. The Ethiopian elders have played a collaborative role in creating peace within the society at large. They have convinced opposing parties to accept peaceful coexistence. They also have avoided competing interests that are obstacle to peace. They show concern for the interest of others whose concerns are negatively affected. They bring offenders and victims together in an effort to conciliate and create a “compromise” between the two. They avoid conflicts by diverting the two parties from the physical and mental course of clash. As Nilam Patel indicated the method used to remove the parties from conflicts is “avoidance” of discussing their differences and grievances.

An obvious disadvantage of avoidance is that it completely eliminates any benefits of discussing the causes of the conflict. Thus, a person avoiding discussion could be perceived as “not caring” about the issues or relationships.

Studies show that while conflict is often perceived as negative, it can be a force in relationships. It is indicated that if all conflicts are avoided without resolution, they may “damage” relationships. On the other hand, avoiding an issue can help in forgetting the issue for the time being. In Ethiopia, conflicting parties came to peace when they overlooked and disregarded issues that had led to deadly hostilities in the past. Such measures saved lives of innocent people who had no idea of the causes and effects of hostilities.

The conflict management style of Ethiopian elders demonstrates a low level of “personal” interest while focusing on communal peace. They convince parties in a conflict to become moderate and restrained. They entreat and plead them to give value to harmonious life and to place the needs of others above their own petty interests. Ethiopian elders plead conflicting parties to ignore minor personal gains for the sake of peaceful communal relationships. They also encourage the offending party to yield or concede to the aggrieved one. Elders impose an obligation that minimizes the damage done by a conflict. When the issue is of low importance, they encourage the all to be magnanimous. However, if the offending party abused the decisions of the elders, they may use their social authority to subdue the offender in favor of the aggrieved one.

Forced cooperation may lead to feelings of resentment by conflicting parties. No party will achieve the positive benefits from imposed resolution by the elders. The Ethiopian elders use conciliatory methods that are integrative ones. They encourage contending parties to make concessions to one another. Here, the focus of conciliation is to successfully resolve conflicts to the satisfaction of all parties. But, to satisfy all parties, it requires openness, honesty, and willingness to communicate. When this approach is used well, contentious parties can realize the full benefits of reconciliation. In the process, they may learn about one another and themselves. The parties involved grow stronger in the process that is integrative with open communication.

The integrative approach has, however, some disadvantages. When decisions are made quickly, the integrative method to resolve conflict is simply not feasible. Fruitful reconciliation is a process that is “time consuming.” When parties to a conflict demonstrate an elevated concern for their own interests only, Ethiopian elders find it difficult to resolve the conflict quickly. They take time to create peace among parties to a conflict using a “dominating” style of conflict management. Elders rely on their social position, verbal dominance, and perseverance to reconcile parties that are adamant and difficult to submit to their propositions. According to Nilam

Patel, these conflicting parties are often associated with a “win or lose” mindset. Their behaviors are forceful, uncooperative, obstinate and stubborn.

Contending parties engaged in criticism and accusation, asked aggressive questions to avoid personal responsibility. They blamed others and applied threats. They also tried to dominate discussions with low levels of effectiveness and appropriateness. They used this style not caring about the interest of anyone else, and they often ignored to see the needs of other parties. This style of disinterest caused other party to feel marginalized. However, there are times when such parties are forced to stand up for their rights. In Ethiopia, the party that felt marginalized became uncooperative to reconcile with others. In fact, it tended to resort to forceful measures to satisfy its demand. It never “compromised” its interests for the benefit of other parties. Thus, it becomes somewhat “unique” to elderly conciliators.

The problem with the marginalized party is its inability to find an intermediary position that offers a solution. The conciliators or elders find it difficult to narrow the gap between marginalized group and offenders. The offenders take advantage of this situation and continue to hurt and upset the feelings of the aggrieved. This appears to be true in the Ethiopian political groups. They resort to armed struggle against the ruling party instead of settling their disputes through conciliation. The Ethiopian elders find it difficult to conciliate politicians engaged in armed struggle. The only goal of their war of resistance against the ruling party is to achieve political power and authority. Achieving such an authority allows the armed party to control some resources of the country. Warring factions do not want to collaborate in finding a solution that will satisfy all peace loving citizens of the country.

For those Ethiopians who had engaged in armed struggle for decades, compromise was not the best strategy for resolving conflict. In reality, however, it was the leaders of the armed struggle that prefer compromise against the wishes of their followers. They would become beneficiaries of peace. But, their followers would not have allowed them to negotiate solutions that would end the struggle. The coming to an end of armed struggle leads to disarming of fighters. This is considered a risk by the masses of fighters who do not feel comfortable with the “peace option.” They would never reconcile themselves with the absence of war in which they grew up. They feel dejected and lonely if disarmed for the purpose of peace and reconciliation. Peace is a domain they have never experienced in their lifetime. Born in war, they wish to die in it. This is a great challenge to the leaders of armed struggle who are fed up with it and wanted

to reconcile with the government.

The character of conciliators in conflict resolution is very critical. They may be open, agreeable and conscientious. Openness refers to a person’s willingness to consider new ideas or try new methods. Some characteristics of openness include imagination, willingness, open-mindedness and curiosity. Agreeable person tends to be straightforward and trusting. Other characteristics are compliance and modesty. Conciliators have to be conscientious, disciplined, and competent. Ethiopians have the culture of choosing conciliators or elders for conflict resolution. These conciliators are known by the community for their ethical qualities and for utilizing specific conflict resolution skills. Such skills are not obtained through training but through experience and age. Elders solve problems in a manner that is satisfactory to all parties involved in a conflict. They find it easier to deal with those who are quiet and tend to prefer harmony. They may also have a tendency for finding the middle ground in resolving conflicts.

Conciliators find it difficult to deal with persons who showed a high level of concern only for their own personal interests. These persons have low concern for the interests of others. Thus, they are more likely to be aggressive, close-minded and unpredictable. For conciliators, such persons are difficult to deal with. However, conciliators who are flexible may find ways and means of managing aggressive persons. Ethiopian elderly conciliators are known to use a strategy of dominating such persons to subdue them to their advice. The conciliators share their own experiences and advice the person to reconsider his or her adamant position. In so doing, they create a middle ground for both parties. However, such a position may be an advantage to one at the expense of the other.

A person who is agreeable to conciliation is believed to be open to positive relationship with anyone. He or she is non-confrontational and ready to compromise. Compromise would be positively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Persons with such characteristics are interested in creating peace, friendship and compromise in the family, neighborhood, community and society at large. They are “not” power mongers as this leads to heated discussion, argument and divergence. They avoid deviation, discrepancy, difference and disagreement that lead to conflict. At country level, Ethiopians are known to be peace loving people who want political, economic and social development that would help reduce poverty. This requires elder persons who have the role of managing conflicts that are inimical to all rounded development in the country.

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

Business & Economy

Africa's young population, resources crucial to unlocking growth in the continent

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Africa is one of the richest continents in the world when it comes to natural resources. The continent has vast resources of valuable metals such as cobalt, gold, platinum, and Colton. However, at the same time, it is also one of the least developed regions in the world, as years of colonialism, strife, political uncertainty, and conflicts have hampered the continent with the world's youngest population from growing.

However, Africa's young population and the continent's mineral resources are crucial to unlocking growth in the continent. This is due to the fact that there is strong potential for several industries in Africa to grow in order to the continent to wean off from exports and produce its own food. For instance, research from the Brookings' institutions highlights that Africa has one of the strongest consumer goods industries in the world. This growth, as of 2018, had ended up outpacing the overall African Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, as consumer expenditure grew by a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.9 percent between 2010 and 2015 as it touched USD 1.4 trillion.

This growth won't stop there, as by 2025 and 2030; the expenditure is slated to grow to USD 2.1 trillion and USD 2.5 trillion, respectively. Most of Africa's consumer goods companies are located in South Africa with some present in Nigeria as well. Notable examples are Tiger Brands Limited, RCL Foods Limited and Flour Mills Nigeria.

Another key African growth industry is agriculture. According to Oxford Business Group, the majority of the African population is employed in agriculture, and the sector's massive potential is simply evident in the fact that 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land is in Africa. To capitalize on this growth, agriculture technology companies are also growing in Africa, with estimates suggesting that for the first half of this year, African Agro-tech startups received 95 million Dollars in funding - which marked a 58 percent annual growth. These startups are using a host of different technologies to stimulate the African agricultural sector, to enable farmers to easily access finance, conduct data analysis, secure their inputs at the right time and the right price, access the right markets, and use global best practices in their plantations.

Some great African agricultural startups Agro-Pretoria which transforms organic waste into animal feed; Relief, which connects farmers with large companies; Cow tribe, which delivers livestock vaccines to farmers using last mile delivery; and Hello Tractor, which uses the Internet of Things digital monitors on trucks that allows tractor owners to provide their equipment to farmers.

Finally, the growth in the African population will naturally lead to more users requiring access to communications services. For instance, a research report from Mordor Intelligence estimates that the African telecommunications market will grow at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 11.2 percent between 2021 and 2026. It estimates that close to 300 million Africans use a mobile phone, with the market generating USD 90 billion in annual revenue.



Sub-Saharan Africa is witnessing aggressive infrastructure rollout as well, as 3G coverage stood at 70 percent in 2018. The use of telecommunications is not only for entertainment purposes, but it also allows farmers to pick out the right markets for their produce and for people in general to access better healthcare. Some of the largest Africa-based telecommunications companies are MTN Group Limited, Safari-com PLC, and Ethio-telecom.

The Global Innovation Index (GII) ranks world economies according to their innovation capabilities. Consisting of roughly 80 indicators, grouped into innovation inputs and outputs, the GII aims to capture the multi-dimensional facets of innovation

The Global Innovation Index captures elements of the national economy that enable innovative activities: (1) Institutions, (2) Human capital and research, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Market sophistication, and (5) Business sophistication. Two output pillars capture actual evidence of innovation outputs: (6) Knowledge and technology outputs and (7) Creative outputs.

According to the global innovation index 2022 ranking, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire is a West African country with a USD 173 billion GDP in terms of purchasing power parity. The economy relies primarily on agriculture, and the country exports different products such as cocoa beans, gold, and petroleum products. It is ranked 109 on the Global Innovation Index, making it relatively better off than some other countries such as Solomon Island which still primarily rely on tribal systems. Additionally, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire also ranks in the second percentile of countries when it comes to infrastructure, business sophistication, and institutions.

The Republic of Zimbabwe is a landlocked South African country with a USD 38 billion GDP ranked 107 on the global innovation index. Its economy is primarily fueled by the services sector, due to low levels of industrialization. Additionally, Zimbabwe also has the world's second largest informal economy according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These are economies that remain undocumented as their transactions are generally conducted outside the formal banking system, which keeps them off of the authorities' radar. Zimbabwe is also rich in natural resources

such as gold, coal, and iron ore.

The United Republic of Tanzania is an East African nation with a considerably large economy that is worth USD 207 billion ranked 103 on global innovation index. In nominal terms, Tanzania is the seventh largest GDP on its continent. Mining is an important part of the country's economy, with a strong gold mining sector and several different mines. Tanzania's 103rd ranking on the Global Innovation Index comes primarily through its creative outputs, market sophistication, and institutions - all of which are in the second percentile of global scores.

The Republic of Senegal is a West African country with a USD 72 billion GDP ranked 99 on the global innovation index. Agriculture is a major part of the economy, with fish forming a large part of its exports. This is however, overshadowed by mining which is Senegal's largest source of foreign exchange, with gold being the dominant export production. Senegal also exports petroleum products, and the country has flipped flopped on the Global Innovation Index. Its highest rank in the past three years was 96 in 2019, which dropped to 105 in 2020 and now it's back at 99. Senegal's institutional strength contributes heavily to its ranking, as it is the only sector that is in the third quartile of global rankings - outpacing several other African nations.

The Republic of Namibia is a relatively younger country that gained independence in 1990 from South Africa. It has a USD 26 billion economy ranked 96 on the global innovation index, which due to a small population, lends it a high GDP per capita of USD 10,448 by African standards. Manufacturing is a strong contributor to the Namibian economy, with the government offering subsidies to small and medium enterprises (SME) and opening export processing zones. The country also has an automotive parts supplier for big ticket car companies such as BMW, Audi, and Opel. It also has diamond cutting and polishing factories. Cumulatively, these make it one of the most advanced African countries. Namibia also relies on tourism to generate revenue, with sport hunting being an important constituent. Namibians are among some of the wealthiest people in Africa, with the country having more than 3,000 U.S dollar millionaires in 2017.

The Republic of Ghana is a West African country with a USD 226 billion GDP ranked 95th on the global innovation index. Its major exports are gold, cocoa beans, and crude oil. The country's manufacturing sector is quite developed, with Ghana making its own phones, electronics, and even electric cars. In fact, the country has made electric cars for close to a decade now. It is also one of the few countries in the region with some involvement in the space sector. The country launched an Earth observation military satellite in 2015, and large chunks of its electricity are generated through wind and solar power. Space exploration and renewable energy require significant scientific know-how. Therefore, Ghana is perhaps one of the most advanced African nations because of them.

The 15th edition of the Global Innovation Index, which was released recently, also saw Ethiopia jump nine spots from 2021, with a score of 16.3 out of 100. Globally, Ethiopia ranked 117th among the 132 countries evaluated in the report.

Ethiopia's highest performance was in the infrastructure category and Institution category, which includes business, political, and regulatory environments, while the country's lowest performance was in the human capital, research, and creative output categories.

2022 is the year Safaricom Ethiopia, the nation's first private telecom operator, launches its network and services. Meanwhile, its competitor, the incumbent Ethio Telecom, also diversified into providing digital financial services.

The Global Innovation Index, issued by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), aims to help policymakers around the world improve their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their national innovation systems.

The report identifies Mauritius as the most innovative country in Africa, followed by South Africa and Morocco, whose growth is pushing them closer to developed economies in the index.

On the other hand, Guinea is the least innovative country this year in an index that surveyed 31 African countries.

Planet Earth

Reviving environmental protection for economic progress

BY SEMIRA BERHE

It is well recognized that agriculture has been the mainstay of Ethiopian economy as close to 85 percent of the population fundamentally depends on agricultural undertakings a predominantly relying on rain fed traffic.

Depending on rainfall production solely using the three months, June, July and August, could hardly help the nation secure sustainable agricultural production, indeed! In a country which is regarded as a source of thirteenth months of sunshine, a gifted scenario, it is unfair to harvest crops once a year. To improve such a sluggish pace, protecting the environment and fighting global warming is decisive.

Nowadays there are improvements in the agriculture sector as farmers in some parts of the nation have started employing irrigation for crop production and benefiting much out of the scheme. As one of the fastest growing developing countries, Ethiopia needs to well capitalize on mechanized agriculture, feasible technological advancement and focus on coming up with industry-led agriculture. This bold step would potentially help the nation ensure food security within the shortest time possible.

It is also well comprehended that the world is currently facing climate change, which is manifested by heavy rain, wild fire, extremely high temperature and/or coldness and has caused loss of human life and indescribable property destruction.

Ethiopia is in fact contributing its own share to the effort geared towards combating climate change fueling green legacy initiatives and boosting environmental protection as well as planted 25 billion seedlings within four years. This step has helped Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) receive reward for his outstanding green legacy initiative. The green legacy initiative has also created job opportunity for too many youths in return.

Manufacturing industries like garments, leather and leather products, metal and engineering, chemicals pharmaceutical sector, the industrial development strategy coupled with labor intensive and wide market opportunity are resulted from industrial development strategy or agricultural led industrialization.

These manufacturing industries use energies, raw materials chemicals, and this has its own impact on the environment. These institutions regulate the development and operation of industrial parks via contributing towards the development of the country's technological and industrial infrastructures, creating job opportunities and achieve sustainable development, and then enhancing the competitiveness of the



country's economic development.

Having a stay with Ethiopian Press Agency, Environmental law compliance development Directorate Director with the Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority, Abate Getinet said that before giving legal personality to the industrial park developers, it is important to well discuss the plan singling out the good and bad impacts on the environmental issues.

As learnt from the federal environmental protection authority, monitoring is exercised after production is over. Besides, air pollution arising from smoke coming out of industrial chemicals or spoiled liquids needs to be neutralized using different technologies or mechanisms to filter emissions.

The director further explained that the authority has undertaken a range of activities to control the level of emission released from various industries over the past three years. Furthermore, it has used secondary liquid filter technology in a bid to avoid unnecessary elements drawn from manufacturers especially from leather and leather products industries as they have utilized high amount of chemicals and salt.

In addition to this, in the industrial parks like the Adama and Hawassa, close to 75 percent of their liquid wastage has been re-used or recycled. The director further said that discussing various issues with the industry manufacturers would help make a difference. Promoting economic advancement and developing many natural resources is part of the national effort to bring about economic development. To this end, developing various sectors including

the environmental protection and industries requires the combined effort of all and firm coordination.

Protecting natural resources, nurturing nature and taking care of other source of wealth are significantly useful in improving the economy of the country.

Besides, environmental protection has to be given due emphasis to contribute to the effort exerted towards minifying all sorts of effects of climate change. The country needs to work hard aiming at creating environment free from pollution and make the idea of green economy real.

Ethiopia has been aggressively working to boost green economy and started to be a role model to other countries counties of the continent in particular beyond African in general. The industrial parks corporation and concerned ministry are duty bound to make utmost efforts to contain climate change effects and foster environmental protection.

Ethiopia is in fact contributing its own share to the effort geared towards combating climate change fueling green legacy initiatives and boosting environmental protection as well as planted 25 billion seedlings within four years

Art & Culture

Who should write Africa's history from colonialism to the present?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The distinguished British historian E.H Carr E. H. Carr has written an interesting book called "What is History?". He subsequently said that, "History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past." Carr further argues that the past is knowable via the evidence and remains so even as it is constituted into the historical narrative. This is because the good historian is midwife to the facts and may remain sovereign."

Unfortunately, many colonial-era historians wrote books on African history by sitting in the British Library in London and their remote controlled history books often fail to satisfy the African audience because they are not based on first hand research of the facts and figures. Or as Carr said they wrote about Africa without trying to being good historians who could be "midwives to the facts."

We Africans have been programmed by centuries of colonialism into thinking that we are unable to think for ourselves or write our history the way it is and the way we make it. Well, programming as we know it now was not known during the colonial era. However, historians of European colonialism programmed Africans by writing books that brainwashed generations into thinking that they can neither write their history nor become the masters of their own fate.

At a time when computers were not known, colonialism could brainwash Africans by using the written word. So, there were in many stereotypes created by colonial writers in order to keep Africans in mental slavery by thinking that they could not understand or write their history.

Now that direct colonialism is gone for good, its ideas, practices and stereotypes have changed form but continue to exist in our minds. That is why the struggle nowadays consists of denying not only what the old colonialists were telling us

about ourselves but also understanding our realities and writing about them.

There are still colonial-minded people who find it hard to believe the motto "Africa rising" or "African Renaissance" make sense at all and that it is mere sloganeering, devoid of substance. Such views are now and then expressed in the by some sections of the global media often drum in their relentless efforts to discredit the continent's peace and development efforts, recent events seem to be disproving

In the past, the political or diplomatic scripts that should be enacted by Africans were written by outsiders and handed over to the regional actors for execution. The results were most often than not political disasters from which Africa continues to suffer from down to this day. The first successful step to break out of the historical cocoon that forced Africans to play the role of mere spectators of historical dramas was the end of Apartheid in South Africa or the total assumption of independence by former African colonies back in the 1960s.

The fall of the Apartheid system in South Africa which was a historic moment in its own right, resulted from the decision by Africans to own their destiny and become their own scriptwriters and actors on the stage of history. In principle, there may be nothing bad for external forces to help Africa achieve peace and stability in its own backyards. The problem is that failure on the part of Africa to act on its own, had in the past, led foreign forces to control its destiny.

External interests quite often looked at Africa's problems through the narrow prism of their own national interests that did not converge but diverged from Africa's interests. In this age of struggle for global hegemony, various powers are out on the prowl presumably to help Africa deal with its myriad problems but in fact push their agendas and portray themselves as 'friends of Africans'.

The present role of the African Union in

the ongoing peace process in Ethiopia and the so far successful efforts or promising steps made to break the impasse gives much food for thought. The involvement of former African heads of States Uhuru Kenyatta and Olussegun Obasanjo with a view to "Solving African problems by Africans themselves" if successful at all, might represent a radical departure from the old stereotype of external meddling by outside forces in the continents internal affairs.

This will certainly mark or represent Africa's true ownership of its destiny. There is no reason that the current experience of conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms would not be further replicated to address similar problems in the Horn at large and wherever there is a pressing need to restore peace in places such as the DRC or the Greater Horn region. This is in a certain of the idea of "Africa rising" in a nutshell or its realization by Africans.

During the colonial era, African history was written largely by European scholars who mostly justified the colonial conquest by European powers. They were then followed by new historians who continued the works of their predecessors with a new twist that, in the final analysis consolidated the colonial narratives in the neocolonial context.

In fiction there is what critics call creative freedom or the freedom to see things the way the author likes or interprets reality on the basis of primary or secondary experience. Fiction is of course different from non-fiction. In fiction, authors are not required to base their stories on reality because they have a wide range of freedom to invent things.

This is not so in non-fiction writings or in academic writings in particular that requires hard work, research, analysis distillation and sifting of facts. History and politics are subjects that require more analytical skills and the ability to research in depth rather than imagination because you cannot imagine historical facts or political processes. History or politics are fact-

based disciplines that should be true, persuasive and authentic although some degree of imagination is required on the part of the writers in the process. The historian's imagination is at work albeit in a different way or for a different purpose.

There were a few exceptions however. The first book on Africa philosophy was written by Father Placid Temples, a Belgian priest, and is entitled "Bantu Philosophy" (1945). Father Temples, despite his missionary objectives, has established the fact that Africans too have their own philosophy. He did this in the face of European intellectual denial about Africans being able to think philosophically.

Among them were Hegel, the German philosopher and the father of what they call "dialectical thinking" who said that Africans were living in a state of nature, a euphemism for "uncivilized life" and had no capacity to think rationally. Even Carl Marx who was hailed by many African leftist politicians as the "friend of the oppressed and the poor" said that colonialism was doing a good job in Africa by ridding the peoples of barbarism and backwardness and taking them to the golden age of capitalism.

The emergence of African writers who write from the African perspectives is a very recent phenomena. This was not because there was lack of talent on the part of African authors and academics but the post-colonial elites in Africa were trained in the West and absorbed Western education and scholarship quite uncritically. They were so much in the grips of European or American intellectual traditions and adopted the point of views, methodologies and approaches of the Western scholars to look at the history and politics of their own continent. Some of them might adopt the Western analytical methods voluntarily but most of them were directly or indirectly educated in accordance with Western academic traditions and curriculums.

Whether we like it or not Africa is now rising and proving itself capable of not only writing its history but also acting according from its own script.

Outsider

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

Feeling like an outsider
For every little matter

Is a sign for creativity

Don't mistake it as sensitivity

People who think outside the box

Are the ones who should be valued the

most

People who don't subscribe to
commonality

Are the ones who use their specialty

They aren't the ones who follow the
herd

They are the ones who stand alone
when needed.

Society

Salvaging social cohesion for rational generation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is crystal clear that Ethiopians have been well known for their hospitality, respecting one another, sharing culture, sense of fraternity, among others. However, these core social values have been dwindled for known or unknown reasons of late.

Needless to state, values are core to one's social, economic, political, and even moral outlook. True, Ethiopians have had entrenched essential moral values and societal standards. Starting with own homes, then the schooling system, the streets, work places, daily interactions as well as formal and informal ways provide Ethiopians with a series of choices to which they respond based on their value system. Obviously, values are built and continuously serve as a beacon for both internal and external personality.

Too often, Ethiopians need to find systems investing a lot in awareness of values with a careful planning and discipline in percolation to ensure that values flow down to all generations to come. The most important question to be asked here is how does a generation gap return and is bridged in alignment of values? And what role can the current generation play in maintaining the dilapidated norms and social values?

Taking these pivotal queries into consideration, this writer approached Tenna Teshome, a psychologist graduated from Addis Ababa University and working as a social worker, to have some sort of clarification.

He said, "As to me, we have to focus on scenarios, when using them in learning, values can be interwoven to make sure the young generation understand their purpose and how they are instrumental in achieving the objective of maintaining societal values and norms built in history."

As to Tenna, using the power of stories based on entrenched cultural values, essences and norms with an overarching value theme, to not only touch upon the fundamental cultural essences but also on how alignment to the values has helped bridge differences amid societal cohesion. For example, exhibiting our core value of respecting and helping one another comes at the forefront.

Frequent engagement and steady societal integration is the fundamental step to roll out values and to embed them in generational production, a mechanism to continuously engage the youth, who can take over this country with its future and bring them back to the value focus is critical for coming up with civic minded, thanking, competitive and cooperative posterity.

Walking the talk has to be applied among the generation. Leadership-based gaps can be the largest failure of a value system



that the country is trying to build. Yes, walking the talk is something leaders have to do. This could be by volunteering time and contributing in the creation of telling mechanisms such as using media about civic virtue, virtue ethics and moral aspects that help align the values, leadership thoughts, and generational understanding, Tenna stated.

"Values are our guidelines for living and each of us has a set of deeply held beliefs about how the world should be. For some community sects, beliefs are largely dictated through a religion, a culture, a peer group, or the society at large. For others, it has been developed through careful thought and reflection on experience, and this is unique. For most of us, it is probably a combination of the two. Values often concern the core issues of our lives: personal relationships, morality, gender and social roles, race, social class, and the organization of society, to mention just a few."

"We have to underline social values since they are usually the basis for the work we do in the future; and our values are the reflections of the way each of us sees and addresses the world," he opined.

Strong religious ethos, the will of young population for taking part in the dialogue, the prevalence of traditional institutions like Geda System, *yehager shimagliewoch*, *cimeeyye* (in Sidama) and other crucial communal essences are opportunities that will enable the nation to achieve successful dialogue thereby coming up with virtuous generation.

He further said that many organizations have to gather information from different social classes to know the spirit of citizens on what to do to help the country successfully transit to a nation with civic-

minded generation respecting one another.

He underscored that the Ministry of Culture and Sport and other concerned ones have to identify the youth, contending political parties, civic organizations and representatives of the government who have shown interest to participate in discussions of how to create righteous generation, which believes in respect, fraternity and close talks—strongly believed to bring about national consensus.

Currently, he stated, there is also enabling legal framework that helps the nation achieve successful dialogues exemplifying the current proclamation of civic organizations that boost the participation of civic organization in multilateral spheres. This would bring the rundown social interconnection back.

"Without a shadow of doubt, among the hallmarks of a civilized society is the possession of strong moral values and ethics. Such a society shows honor, compassion, solidarity, loyalty and love for all of human kind let alone fellow citizens; a society shaped in such a way differentiates virtues from vice, right from wrong and acts accordingly," he underlined.

He said, "Strong moral values cherish justice and equity, and abhors ethnic, racial, religious, gender and cultural discriminations. It has also been said quite often that preceding generations of Ethiopians had high moral and ethical codes as well as many have now deplored the erosion of these admirable values over the course of the country's recent history. Surprisingly, citizens committed to give up everything for their beloved nation are vexed by this disconcerting development.

According to Tenna, the abysmal failings besetting the political, economic and social

spheres threaten to leave behind a terrible legacy. The lack of appetite on the part of religious and educational institutions, the government and civil society, which bear the solemn duty of shaping the present generation, has exacerbated the problem. The burgeoning of challenges that are gravely imperiling the fate of the country needs to be tackled soon.

He further underscored that the principle of ethical business whereby each person gets the fruit of their labor has been abandoned by most in favor of amassing wealth through shortcuts. Such moral decay is a cause for alarm given it potentially jeopardizes the very survival of Ethiopia as a cohesive polity.

"Restoring moral and ethical values requires a concerted as well as combined effort of all. Moral decay destroys a nation and cripples its people. Frankly speaking, unless the political elite forsakes power mongering and adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards, it is pointless to talk about civic minded generation with rational thinking and real national change," he underlined.

He said, "Anyone who has a responsibility towards the youth needs to give the utmost attention to identifying the underlying causes behind the deterioration of moral and ethical values and finding lasting solutions to them."

He wrapped up his idea saying that shared values are deemed necessary as a solid foundation for social cohesion by pundits and witnesses in many societies. However, when examining what kind of values have to be restored, as Ethiopians, our forefathers and foremothers offer some clarification through both a notional explication and a pragmatic exploration concerning the general role of values for social cohesion.

Law & Politics

A New Year with a renewed hope

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Holy moly, the first quarter of the 21st century is almost over. It almost seems like yesterday when we remember the extravagant celebrations of the beginning of the new millennium 23 years ago. Of course, that is according to the Gregorian calendar. But Ethiopians have a consolation of 7/8 years, thanks to their official *Geez* calendar. A travel writer whose name I could not remember jokingly said, "You'd be 8 years younger if you came to Ethiopia."

Whatever calendar one may refer to, a year is a specific period of time, and a new year is a time to reflect on the journey travelled and to think about the road ahead. In the context of Ethiopia, few years in recent decades have been as challenging and nerve-wracking full of twists and turns as the last year, 2022.

Having successfully overcome the challenges of 2022, Ethiopia has now entered the new Gregorian year with renewed hope and confidence. Through all challenges, Ethiopia has maintained its sovereignty and territorial integrity with the sacrifice of its brave sons and daughters. The two-year war which posed an existential threat to the Ethiopian state is now finally coming to an end with a peaceful settlement.

In the first few days of 2023, Ethiopians will join hands to formally celebrate the end of the northern Ethiopia conflict and herald the return of the time of peace and development. Ethiopians are preparing to celebrate the orthodox Christmas on 7 January without being under the shadow of an ongoing devastating war for the first time after two years. For Ethiopia, 2023 would certainly be a year of peace, reconciliation, and stability as well as a transition that would bring a fundamental reconfiguration of the political landscape.

The eagerly awaited national dialogue commission is expected to be ready to launch its dialogue forum bringing all Ethiopian from every corner across the political spectrum to discuss the past and the future of their nation, and reach a consensus on major issues that highly matters to the nation-state.

The dialogue would hopefully come up with recommendations that would provide common grounds for divergent opinions among Ethiopian citizens to lay foundations for political consensus to defuse the existing political tensions, some of which are translated into social unrest and clashes in various spots across the country.

The success of the National Dialogue Commission would be pivotal to implement one of the primary strategic policy objectives the Ethiopian government currently bent on.- peace



building. The government appears to have realized that more than anything else, what the Ethiopian people ask for is to put an irreversible end to conflicts and ensure stability and respect for the rule of law throughout the country.

Equally important to the yearning for a conflict-free nation, Ethiopians are also thirsty for good governance that deliver justice without delay and effectively fight corruption. The government both at the federal and regional levels has already been engaged in a well-coordinated campaign to fight corruption at a grass root level. It is hoped that these efforts would bring tangible results in the New Year. So far we have observed corrective and preventive measures being taken at various levels and the tempo would continue through the New Year.

Ethiopia expects 2023 to be a year of a re-emergence of the country's good image in the global arena. Instead of being a nation known for conflicts, disputes, humanitarian crises, and sanctions, Ethiopia would begin to revitalize its foreign relations strategies to reset itself to be a preferred destination of foreign direct investments and tourist destination. The New Year would surely be the time for the nation to amend its strained bilateral relations and create a new one with based on mutual benefit. It would also be a year Ethiopia assert and consolidate its leading role in the sub-region by facilitating and nurturing the political alliance and economic integration among nations in the Horn.

The past two years of conflict were also involving diplomatic warfare. The government seems to have drawn an important lesson from the bitter diplomatic

struggle the country has been through in recent years. "handling foreign affairs is not something that we can take lightly. It is a very serious matter for our nation." said the Premier recently. The Ethiopian government is expected to revitalize its foreign relations policies and strategies in a more rigorous and principled approach.

As the first year of peace following a devastating war, 2023 would be a time of huge undertakings of rehabilitation and construction of infrastructures and institutions providing for various purposes including basic services. This would create a huge opportunity for the reactivation of the economy and the creation of several thousand jobs. That, in turn, would provide an opportunity to alleviate unemployment, one of the major psychosocial problems in the war-affected regions, and further stimulate the economic upswing.

In 2023, several industries in various parts of the country that has been partially or fully closed due to direct and indirect results of northern Ethiopia conflicts [being war target, looting, economic sanction, and shortage of inputs], are expected to go fully operational. Some closed factories in the war-affected regions have already started opening their doors to their workers and beginning production.

Now that the government is now relieved from the tensions and distraction of the war, and there are no economic hemorrhages because of the warfare costs, it can return its focus on expediting the execution of mega projects like the GERD and Koisha. The GERD, set to be completed by 2024, would reach a completion stage of 90% and above. In 2023, the dam would add more heights;

hold several more billion cubic meters of water, and start turning new turbines in addition to the existing two, making Ethiopia the leading hydropower house in Africa.

In the New Year, Ethiopia also hopes to put to rest the long-running GERD dispute it had with the upper riparian states by reaching a win-win negotiated settlement. So far, the tripartite negotiation is only a few sticking points away from reaching an agreement. With the GERD finalization fast approaching this year, the likelihood of the signing of a deal in 2023 that satisfies the national interest of all parties looks much more realistic. This is because the real reason why the Egyptians ignited the GERD dispute was to freeze the dam project, which is now a lost cause. GERD is now a reality that cannot be erased.

One thing that sets 2023 as the most exciting year for Ethiopia is that the nation for the first time would be on the list of wheat-exporting countries of the world. Although Ethiopia has long been one of the leading, [the second largest] wheat-producing countries in Africa, it has never been self-sufficient in wheat. Given the country's vast untapped potential for wheat production, coupled with the government's commitment to realize this potential, it will not be long before Ethiopia is declared the largest wheat-producing African nation.

As the Premier indicated in the briefing he made on the New Year's Eve, the impressive well-coordinated accomplishments in boosting wheat production would happen in other sectors of agricultural development, particularly in poultry, dairy, and beef production.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

“How I hate...!”

How many times have you said, “How I hate this place!” Oh, you never say such things? Of course that is not news for many of us. Because we don’t feel comfortable admitting such things because of the backlash that may come from sides you never knew even existed.

“What! Did you hear what that fellow said?”

“What did he say?”

“He says there are places which he hates.”

“OMG! You mean he used the word ‘hate?’”

“In fact his main emphasis was on that word.”

In the times when those of us claiming to be holier than the pope seem to be hijacking the spotlight putting things in their true context could be a daunting task. I’ll tell you there are a number of places I really hate. Not because of their architectural design; not because of who the owners are; not because of who the people working in it are; but because of their services or the non-services. At first you might stick to that worn out excuse “Well people can’t always be right. It’s only human to err!” then as things are repeated over and over again you know it’s not about people sometimes making mistakes; it is about what should have been mistakes being included in the unpublished rule books.

Yes, everyone would tell you ‘hate’ is toxic. It indeed is. It is the one curse that is messing up this world in almost every corner. Someone might say to you; “You don’t have to hate anyone or anything. The poison will be working on you!”

Cheers for the nice words at a time when

nice words are in short supply. Many of us feel the world has stopped working we’d have liked it to. Many of us are still holding those Shangri la types of images we wish this world to be; that place next door to heaven where all the bad things of earth don’t appear and everybody is happy! Write a screenplay for Hollywood with that theme in mind and they will not only throw away the script as far as they can; they’ll probably run you out of town and anywhere within a two hundred mile radius. It simply doesn’t work that way. Action! Action! Action! That is what matters when it comes to box office returns. I mean the billionaires over there aren’t the ‘chosen’ people, though they make it appear as they are. They are not out there to change the world for the better. In fact anyone who thinks that way in the film industry would be in for quite a shock.

But then nothing spread hate throughout the globe and over multiple ages like the film industry did. Hate comes in subtle ways. You hate the guy? Then what are you waiting for! Do something about it.

In ‘action’ scripts, there is one factor which is a ‘must-be-included’ thing’, Hate! That is it! Rambo would have been in the Asian wilderness if they hadn’t hated those people. The characters Wesley Snipes plays wouldn’t have broken all those jaws had they not ‘hated’ the enemy which, for them is everywhere. The ‘elite force’ of so and so country wouldn’t bomb an entire city of people who aren’t the aggressors or pounded their villages with heavy weaponry had it not been for hate! The sad part is mostly the innocents, the blameless and the defenseless are on the receiving end of hate.

Trying to dissect the why’s and how’s of the Ukraine-Russia war is not only tricky but also dangerous ground. For most of us it’s so complicated that no wonder there’s is so much fake news and hate-filled commentary. Maybe no modern armed conflict generated as much commentaries most of them not even trying to hide their hatred for one side or the other. Yes ‘the experts’ and ‘the commentators’ are all over the place. The world is witnessing the global media which should have been in the forefront of the campaign against ‘hate’ itself working on ‘hate platforms.’ Some top-of-the-trade TV station or newspaper carries the analysis of a certain ‘expert’ on the Russo-Ukraine war and you wonder who is in his right mind changed the definition of ‘expert.’ Never has hate been used with such fervor at trying to lift up the side they ‘support, and bury the one they don’t. You watch and hear one expert or that talking about Putin or Zelensky and you know they are talking about their hate filled prejudices and not the facts on the ground.

In fact especially the reporting and commentaries of that conflict has blown apart the cover of would be heavyweight media organizations which try to tutor you in decency 101.

Hate whether we like it or not is here to stay. When they paint someone as a two-legged monster while they don’t have any supportive evidence, that is hate of the crudest type. Hate is in their actions, in their words, in their overall demeanor. It’s sad to hear even so-called spiritual leaders with quite large followings calling for one country to bomb another one! Yes recently I heard some spiritual guru saying

that for a certain county to live in peace a neighboring country with tens of millions of people should be bombed! In fact he was even prophesizing it’d happen in the next few months. That’s how bad things have become; Someone supposed to be the vanguard of peace and brotherhood calling for blood to be spilled! He even tried to quote from the scriptures to justify his call for what could be nothing but mass murder. And the global media seems not to care about such issues where the call for war comes from the very people whose most important goals in life should have been opposing war and conflicts of any kind.

By the way, we know that storyline only too well. When Mussolini’s marauders were dispatched to roll into Ethiopia with their death machines they had all the ‘spiritual’ blessings in Rome, the tanks, heavy artillery and, yes, the poisonous gasses included. And our country never received the apologies it deserved.

“hey I’d like to invite you to dinner tomorrow night. What do You say?”

“I’d be glad to.”

“We’ll go to so and so restaurant.”

“Oh!”

“What’s that ‘Oh!’ about?”

“Look I’m glad that you invited me. But, sorry, I hate that place.”

“Why do you hate them? What did they do to you?”

“I don’t hate anybody. I hate their service and the way they handle things.”

Confession; there are places I never want to go again. Never, ever again! Clean up your acts and we can take it from there.

Who are calling the shots!

When any holiday comes I’m what you can call the fellow who likes to stick to all the conventional rituals that have been in place all through. Some of you might wonder when you hear that pole feel the holiday spirit when they hear the sounds the sheep and kitchen make. Well, you can laugh at your own peril (Peril!), but I’m one of those guys. It is not because people are craving for the meat as many have been fasting for about a month. No, it’s not that. It is about the feeling of uniqueness, the feeling of life after all is worth living despite the doomsday ‘prophesies’ and all the pessimism. Believe me, side by side with the realities on the ground which could sometime drag you up to the final frontier of hopelessness of passim with absolutely no evidence is stopping us in our tracks in many instances.

I’ve previously confessed as being a guy who could be the worst shopper since the guy who tried to sell off the entire Jan Meda for less than one thousand birr. By the way I don’t have the details as for how they nabbed this guy. Maybe no one told him about ‘the back door’ but the sell would have been given the green light. Any ways being the worst shopper there are a couple of

friends who accompany me whenever I go out to buy something, even a pair of socks! I think you got the picture.

On the eve of the Ethiopian Christmas I went out shopping with a friend who can bargain until you get all the aches modern medicine knows. He rests his eye on a fierce-looking sheep. Now the merchants were familiar as it has been years since I’ve been buying from them. Their greetings were boisterous as they always were.

“So, how is the sheep market?” my friend asks. They didn’t respond promptly like they always did. All wasn’t well on the ‘sheep front,’ so we concluded. Yes, they took their time probably to mellow the blow that was to come.

“It’s expensive;” it is expensive could mean that you’re in danger of passing a meatless holiday. And what is any holiday in our country without the meat? I mean the veggies are good for all the right things and for a thousand and one things but not for the holiday dish; especially when breaking a fast is involved. Treat a guest who comes to your house on a holiday with veggies and you can see the smile vanishing just like that. “Would you believe it! Those (expletives!)

serve me veggies.”

“What do you mean serve! Maybe they were pranking you!”

“Yes they were! Those (remaining expletives!) indeed pranked me! That’s what I’m trying to tell you fools! Could there be any prank more shocking than being served veggies on a holiday!”

Anyway my friend picks out a sheep which, from where I was, looked like it has its entire belly on its back! (You could take that as my idea of taking ‘revenge!’ I could have started some share company with the hard earned money I spent on it! No numbers!)

Did I say I’m taking revenge at the sheep whose belly on the back I didn’t like? It was the best collection from among the flock. Well if the merchants say it’s the gold medal winner and my friend agrees so be it.

“How much is the price?” here too the merchants took their time to respond. And when one finally told us the price the world stopped moving! (Just kidding!)

“Thirteen,” he said. I’ll tell you what his thirteen was all about. He meant thirteen thousand birr! You should give me the ‘honorable mention prize’ for having lived

through it.

“What?” It was my friend as I’ve finished all my ‘what’s’ silently. “What do you mean thirteen thousand?” Was my friend combative!

Then the merchants took their time explaining to us that the market was all a mess and that they indeed have given us the lowest price as we were regular customers. They said they don’t know the shots behind the scenes, because what is obvious is that sudden and blood chilling price increases don’t drop out of the blue. There must be some ill-intentioned creatures that must be calling the shots for reasons which largely are pure evil. In a country where merchants and business people who don’t feel they’ve made any profit unless they hit the three hundred and four hundred percent mark there must be powerful forces calling the shots behind the scenes! A friend that evening calls and tells me he was asked fifteen thousand birr for sheep which had far more fur than meat.

Anyway when it comes to sudden, unexplained and unwarranted price increases who are the ones calling the shots behind the scenes!

Wish you all a Happy Christmas!

In Pictures

Visit the UNESCO registered Holy city, Lalibella during *Genna*, Ethiopian Christmas!

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Ethiopia celebrated Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ yesterday, January 07/2023. It was celebrated 12 days after the celebration of Christmas in Gregorian calendar. If any foreigner wants to feast his eyes on the colorful and Joe-dropping Ethiopian Christmas celebration, s/he can attend her/his respective country's Christmas and then the colorful Ethiopian Genna, Christmas.

Christmas celebration in Lalibella is unique. It is among the most eye-catching and soul-uplifting holidays in Ethiopia. The place, Lalibella town, is a historic and the most tourist destination city with it's over 11 rock-hewn churches. The city is among the world heritages registered by United Nations Economic, Science and Cultural organization (UNESCO). In this holy, historic and ancient town Christmas is marked in a unique and special -manner. Hundreds of thousands from home and abroad, if not millions, gather to attend the celebration.

Visiting this holy town during the fascinating celebration of Genna leaves unforgettable memory for life.



Priests chanting, singing during Beza Kulu ceremony

The above shot is taken during Genna celebration in Lalibella. In the picture, priests of Ethiopian Orthodox Church are seen wearing costumes common among priests of the same church. They are singing, dancing and chanting during the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The picture was taken at the Bete Girogis Church (St. George Church), one of the 11 magnificent rock-hewn churches. The 11 Rock-hewn churches of Lalibella were built 800 years ago. Since then, Ethiopian Christmas has celebrated annually and colorfully. Hundreds of thousands of Religious pilgrims attend the annual celebration.

The above picture was taken during the Beza Kulu ceremonial celebration of the day, which usually takes place in the morning of January 07, Tehsas 29. If you attend this ceremony, as it lends wings to your soul, you will find it hard to believe you are on earth. You feel as if you were in heaven. The priests have woven white taverns on their heads as it is true of priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Similarly, they are seen wearing traditional clothes that are commonly used by the Church. In their hands, they grab crosier Mekuamica, a stick that is helpful to magnify the spiritual dance. In addition, they use Sistrum Tsenatsil, an instrument used for religious songs and chants by the Orthodox Church.

As in the picture, the priests atop the rock are bending-down as they perform the chants and the songs together with the other priests at the bottom of the Church. Demonstrating unwavering devotion to God they sing taking turns allowing one's soul shuttle between heaven and earth. This makes the celebration very colorful, magnificent and something special.



The above picture is, Bete Giorgis Church, among the 11 rock-hewn churches of Lalibella. The church is craved out of a rock by hewing it by hand almost 900 years ago. Specially seen in a bird's eye view, the hand-made and rock-hewn church's design portrays a 3-dimensional cross. The faithful and priests are seen wearing snow-white white costumes as depicted in the picture below. During Genna, not only around the church, but also the whole city of Lalibella is inundated by a flood of pilgrims and visitors.

During Christmas, especially during the Beza Kulu ceremony, an iconic special religious ceremony, unique in Lalibella, is held. Priests stage a mesmerizing ceremony. Half of them stand a top on the edge of the rock out of which the rock is hewn while others at the bottom of the rock near the footwork of the church. The two sing melodious religious songs by turns punctuating their songs with spiritual dances. Angels on the sky mankind on earth praise the almighty is what they want to show. Beza Kulu is a geez word which literally means "redemption of all"; it is a religious ceremony to glorify the Almighty God.

Hospitality in Lalibella



The people of Lalibella are the most humble, friendly and hospitable Ethiopians. They welcome all with sunny, happy and friendly face. During Genna holiday, with outstretched hands they welcome every guest that drops at Lalibella. The Lalibella youths are busy during such days to welcome, help and provide services for guests whether they come from abroad or from other parts of Ethiopia. They help to render one's stay in Lalibella cozy.

As depicted the picture, during Genna week the youth are seen welcoming their guests by washing their legs emulating Christ's example. Standing by the gates of the city and by providing water and food by waiting in the main gets of the town. The youth are shown washing the legs of their guests for both local and foreign visitors.



The congregants above are the Orthodox faithful gathered round the church .They sing in tune with the priest.

What a miss it not occasion that comes days before the Epiphany (Timeket) holiday.