



The Ethiopian Herald

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France, Germany pledge support to Ethiopia's post-conflict recovery

BY BILAL DERSO

ADDIS ABABA - France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Collonna and Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock reiterated their respective countries' commitment to support Ethiopia's post-conflict rehabilitation and restoration activities.

The two foreign ministers held discussions yesterday with President Sahlework Zewde and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) on the current situation in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, President Sahlework exchanged views with the foreign ministers on ways to further advance Ethiopia's long-standing relations with the respective countries in new frontiers.

The President also pointed out that women should be considered in post-conflict rehabilitation and support activities.

Meanwhile, the ministers expressed their countries' readiness to back the reconstruction and rehabilitation activities that followed the peace agreement between the government and the TPLF.

After receiving the foreign ministers at his office, Premier Abiy tweeted that the in-depth and fruitful discussions he held with the former are reflective of the strong relations Ethiopia enjoys with both France



and Germany.

He shared the multifaceted reforms, key results, and related problems that Ethiopia has been carrying out in the past four years with the foreign ministers.

Noting Ethiopia's relationship with France and Germany has been going on for decades, the Prime Minister expressed gratitude for the continuous support from both countries in the last four years.

Ethio telecom amasses 8.18 bln Birr profit in half year

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The state-owned Ethio telecom announced that it has secured some 8.18 billion Birr net profit in the first six months of the 2022/2023 fiscal year, adding the total revenue hits the 33.8 billion Birr mark.

Presenting her company's six months performance report here yesterday, ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tameru stated that the total revenue in the reported period exceeds that of last year same period by 20 percent. The operator also achieved 96 percent of the target set in this regard.

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Photo: Eyob Teferi

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Ready for Tomorrow!

CoHA revitalizes Ethiopia's exemplary role in African agenda

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) has revitalized Ethiopia's commendable role in seeking African solution for African problems, experts in the area said, expressing Africans proud in Ethiopia's success in this regard.

History Assistant Professor Ayele Beker told local media that Ethiopia has proved Africans' capability to managing their problems by own capacity and without the need to third parties interference. Ethiopia has pursued its own technique to resolve the northern conflict peacefully thereby attesting Africans' ability to solve their problems by themselves.

The sole agenda of Ethiopians is defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

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Truce intensifies bridges reconstruction in conflict-impacted states

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Capitalized on the Ethiopian government and TPLF's peace accord, the restoration of highway bridges and roads in conflict-affected states has been intensified, the Ethiopian Road Administration announced.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Bridge and Structures Management Director with the Administration, Getnet Zeleke said that two highway bridges have been restored since the truce. A total of six highway bridges, which were damaged during the conflict have been reconstructed.

The government has allotted 175 million Birr for the reconstruction conflict-affected highway bridges following the peace deal.

"The 54.86 meter-long Alwuha Bridge, located at Woldia -Kobo highway, was damaged more than twice at the time of war.

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News

University stresses harnessing Awash, Wabe-Shebelle river basins for sustainable dev't

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Despite abundance Ethiopia's natural resources, there is huge gap in utilizing these resources for ensuring sustainable development, so remarked Haramaya University.

Speaking at the 2nd national forum of universities for Awash and Wabe-Shebelle river basins under the theme: 'Collaboration for Sustainable Development and Reasonable Utilization of Natural Resources in Awash and Wabe-Shebelle River Basins', the university President Jemal Yusuf (PhD) yesterday said Ethiopia has 12 major basins, but still dependent on rain-fed agriculture. The basins could transform the livelihoods of millions of people dwelling in the basins.

It was learnt that the forum strives to make contribution towards transforming the targeted river basins into vibrant corridors of integrated and sustainable development by 2050.

At the event, Jemal called on scholars to solve problems in the agriculture sector in order to produce productive citizens and provide policy options to the government.

Ethiopia is one of the leading countries in natural resources from East Africa but has a



huge gap in utilizing its resources properly, he reiterated.

Irrigation and Lowlands State Minister Birhanu Megerssa (PhD) on his part said rainfed subsistence agriculture has been employed by three quarters of the population, contributed to close to half of the total GDP and brings over 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings.

However, erratic rainfall and drought



has always been the key challenges for agricultural production. The adaptations techniques remain mandatory and country's focus on irrigation is a good step for food self-sufficiency.

As to him, the country reaffirmed its commitment to irrigation development as a key policy to ensure food self-sufficiency. Over the coming 10 years, the country has planned to develop up to two million hectares and construct irrigation schemes.

Investors witness investment opportunities at BIAIP

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA-The availability of various investment incentives,

Conducive working environment and other investment opportunities at the Bulbule Integrated Agro Industrial Park (BIAIP) enables investors to join investment and commence operation, investors said.

Officials from the federal and Oromia state, Ministry of Industry, state investment bureau, Oromia Industrial Parks Development Corporation, Board members, investors, media professional, other stakeholders paid a visit to BIAIP on Wednesday.

Participant of the visit and Honey Processing investor at BIAIP Biniam Tolcha said that the availability of all the necessary investment inputs in the area make BIAIP to become preferable among investors who want to invest in the agricultural sector.

The area is among the surplus producing in the country and investor could utilize this opportunity to engage in their demand, he said.

As to him, the park includes all the requirements of a standardized agro industrial park.

Sustainable electricity access, sufficient water supply, proximity to the market, close support and supervision from the state, availability of raw materials, availability of residential homes, availability of enough space in the park, among other makes the park to attract more investors.

Currently, his company is processing over 5,000 kilo grams of honey daily and exporting its products to different European countries.

The other investor Tofik Kedir said that investing at BIAIP is preferable due to its capacity of hosting numerous investors without limitation to industrial inputs.

"I'm on the way to invest in processing edible oil and utilize the area's sufficient oil seeds production and meet the country's growing edible oil consumption and demand", he said.

Currently, he is undertaking 1.2 billion Birr worth investment inside the park.

Availability of important infrastructural facilities, due attention from the government, encouraging investment policies and strategies, among others are fundamental to promote the country's investment sector, according to him.

Moreover, Oromia Industrial Parks Development Corporation Board Chairperson Ahmed Tusa said that BIAIP embraces the potentials to become a model agro-processing park in the country.

The corporation is actively working in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders to stimulate investment flow to the area, he said.

Accordingly, the corporation avails all the necessary preconditions and investment inputs to welcome investors and commence their investment inside the park.

Over 10 investors have already joined investment at BIAIP, it was learnt.

EPSS launches nationwide pharmaceutical supply system

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service (EPSS) launched a committed demand system to ensure clear and fair pharmaceutical supply in the nation with special emphasis to hospitals and health institutions.

EPSS also revitalized Fill Items of Low Stocks Lifesavings in Full Supply (FILL-IFS) initiatives to create accountable and provide health institutions with better services.

The initiative was launched by Health Minister LiaTadesse (MD) in the presence of various states of health and hospital heads.

In her opening remark, Lia stated that the committed demand supply initiative would create clear, fair, fast and accountability between the medicine suppliers and the demanders or buyers in the nation thereby ensuring better medicines supply to society within the shortest time possible.

She added that this initiative ensures accessibility of the medicines all round nation and improves health of society as



well as reduce the shortage of medicine and fair distribution of medicine as well.

EPSS Director General Abdulkedir Gelgelo (MD) noted that 33 hospitals are selected for the implementation of FILL-IFS as pilot project.

"As pharmaceutical supply is low at national level, we are expected to solve the shortage of medicines availability in hospitals and health sectors including private ones via implementing aforementioned launched."

Through FILL-IFS will refill the drug gap created in the nation will be bridged by



implementing committed finance supply and enter to full operation, and new pharmaceutical branches will go operational soon.

EPSS aims at enhancing the supply chain planning, would help reduce wastage and shorten product delivery period.

It was learnt that EPSS is committed to meet the plan under the theme: "committed financing for improved supply" and the office celebrated its 75 years anniversary in the presence of senior government officials as well.

Photo: Tsehay Neguse

News

Ethiopian to restore China flight frequencies to pre-pandemic levels

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopian Airlines to boost capacity on its China flights and restore frequencies to pre-pandemic levels from the start of March, as Air Cargo News reported.

Following the recent easing of COVID travel restrictions in China, Ethiopian Airlines has planned to increase belly hold capacity to the China market and restore frequencies to pre-pandemic levels from the start of March, it was learnt.

The Air Cargo News reported that the frequency of flights will increase starting on February 6 and return to pre-COVID levels on March 1, 2023.

Starting on February 6, 2023, Ethiopian Airlines will operate daily flights to Guangzhou and increase its weekly flights to Beijing and Shanghai to four times per week each.

It will also maintain a three-times-per-week operation to Chengdu.

Then from March 1, 2023 the airline will add daily flights to Beijing and Shanghai



as well as 10 weekly flights to Guangzhou and four weekly flights to Chengdu.

According to the Air Cargo News report, in total, Ethiopian will operate 28 weekly passenger flights to China when the services are fully restored.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said: "China is one of the largest markets for Ethiopian Airlines outside

Africa, and the increase in flight frequencies will help revive the trade, investment, cultural and bilateral cooperation between Africa and China in the post-COVID era."

The CEO said: "We are glad that we are ramping up the frequencies of our flights to Chinese cities thanks to the easing of flight restrictions by the Government of China."

"Thanks to our large network across Africa,

the increase in the number of flights to Chinese cities will bring Africa and China closer. We are keen to further expand our service to China going forward", he further added.

Ethiopian also operates freighter flights to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Zhengzhou, Changsha and Wuhan, as Air Cargo News Awards reported.

Ethio telecom...

The CEO further highlighted that mobile voice accounts for 47 percent of the total revenue while data and internet contribute 28 percent. The share of international business is 8.4 percent and Value Added Service accounts for 6.5 percent meanwhile infrastructure share 2.2 percent and the remaining 7.5 percent comes from other sources.

In the reported period, 64.8 million USD was generated from international business and scored 90 percent of the target.

In terms of subscribers, the operator enabled to reach its total customers to 70 million achieving 98.6 percent of the subscriber base target and an increase of 15.1 percent which means an addition of 9.2 Million customers from previous budget year similar period.

Similarly, mobile voice subscribers has reached 67.7 million, data and internet users 31.3 million, fixed services 862,200 and fixed broadband subscribers reached 566,200. In the stated period, telecom density has reached 65.7 percent.

As to her, the achievement was made possible due to network expansion and optimization works targeting to enhance customer experience and satisfaction, offering a total of 91 local and international products and services. Of which, 50 are new while the rest are revamped. "Furthermore, a total of 228 project works that would help expand and strengthen ethio telecom's infrastructure, increase network coverage and capacity are carried out enhancing the capacity to serve five million additional customers."

The operator also launched its pre-commercial 5G mobile service in the city of Adama, which is said to be an enabler for mission critical services and realize technologies including internet of things.

"Through the implementation of a cost-saving strategy which aimed at making the company more efficient and productive by avoiding unnecessary costs, we able to save 3.5 billion Birr, and achieving 134 percent of the plan."

It was also stated on the report that the digital payment system, telebirr, has secured more than 27.2 million customers and transacted a total of 166.1 billion Birr in the economy in six months. The system is also generating an income of 82.5 million Birr in the period.

By launching the telebirr remittance service

and linking it to international money transfer institutions, citizens in 44 countries have the option to easily transfer money to their home country. As a result, it was possible to receive 719.600 USD in the last 6 months.

Explaining the challenges the operator has encountered in the report period, Frehiwot indicated that service outages due to security instability, fiber and copper cable vandalism and commercial power interruption have significantly interrupted operation. Delay in land acquisition for new sites deployment also has created hindrance in ethio telecom expansion activities.

"Given the challenges posed to provide and expand telecom services and the fact that it is obtained amid competitive market; the achievement is considered remarkable."

Truce intensifies...

Following the truce, we have fixed the bridge and opened it to traffic" the director added.

By the same token, the restoration of the 109.72 meter-long Chereti Bridge, which located in Woldia-Chifra road, and the 48.86 meter Gobu Bridge, which connects Kobo town with rural areas have been accomplished.

While the reconstruction of two bridges on Tekeze River and Tsilarie Bridge located between Korem and Sekota towns have been accomplished, the restoration of a bridge on Sekota-Maychew highway is in pipeline.

Due to the restoration activities, the 27.43

meter-long Tekeze River Bridges which connect Humera with Shire and the 48.86 meter-long Amdework and Ebinat Bridge are now open to traffic.

"The administration is always alert to reconstruct war-damaged bridges and our district offices are working on reports coming from Central Tigray, North Gondar, North Wollo and Afar State," Getnet remarked.

After the Pretoria Agreement, the government of Ethiopia has pledged to intensify infrastructure reconstruction in war-hit states and has pleaded Ethiopians and international donors for financial and technical support.

their country the people is well known by the world for the noble sacrifice paid to fend off aggressors putting minor differences aside.

It was evident that Africans stand in unison and opposed the unwarranted interference and pressure some interest groups expert during the north Ethiopia conflict and expressed strong support the success of the CoHA, the historian added.

Social Sciences Expert Zelalem Gizachew said for his part that patriotism and resisting foreign interference are among Ethiopians' all time strengths that have been passed from one generation to the other. "Africans are proud of the conclusion of CoHA, which is a historic event for Ethiopia as well as the

whole continent."

Ethiopia has been hugely engaged in encouraging fellow African brothers and sisters to solve their problems by own capacity and employ African institutions. The country's trust on African negotiators conflict-resolving mechanisms is also an exemplary act.

Ethiopia has been struggling for independence of African countries as well to prevent unnecessary pressures. There is a lesson for African brothers and sisters to apply the same thing to seek own solutions for their problems. The heroic activities of citizens are one of the truths that Ethiopians have developed time to time, the academician emphasized.

CoHA revitalizes...

Opinion

Some effects of financial risks, easing the danger

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Risk is a factor that hinders the fulfillment of goals of enterprises. It could be internal or external to these enterprises. Risk management may be a difficult task that keeps managers alert until they identify its causes and impacts. Risk breeds risks if it is not spotted in time and kept at bay. Risk avoidance leads to rewarding an enterprise that is managed by a competent person. If an enterprise is productive and profitable, it contributes to the economic development of a country such as Ethiopia. In particular, a financial enterprise that facilitates investment in the country has a significant role in its economic development. Of course, finance is not the sole agent of development. The productive use of other resources of the country is crucial for its growth and development.

Banks are key financial instruments in the developing countries, including Ethiopia. They are crucial for financial stability and for mobilizing resources. They channel savings to productive investors. Banks are sources of confidence and guarantee for all stakeholders. These include shareholders, investors, depositors, employees, government and the other economic operators. To boost the confidence of these stakeholders, efforts have been made by the Ethiopian government to strengthen and control financial institutions. These measures reduce the negative effects of risks on the financial institutions. To reduce risks, it is necessary to identify factors that expose financial institutions to unexpected economic crises.

There are several techniques available for enterprises to manage risks. These include: risk avoidance and loss prevention and control. Managing risks is an important means with which enterprises achieve financial success. Enterprises could guide clients on how to minimize and prevent losses. However, some clients fail to apply these techniques appropriately. Experts point out that risk could be inbuilt in enterprises that are mismanaged. They need to use risk management tools that ensure success of enterprise goals through planning and programming. In the past, financial institutions and investors in developing countries, including Ethiopia, had experienced increased volatility in the financial and commodity markets.

The technological revolution resulted in changes in the operation of markets. It increased access of information to investors on major changes in the production and distribution of financial services. It is an essential part of corporate responsibility to enhance the ability of managers to reduce risks. For financial experts, risk encompasses cash insolvency, which includes the inability to meet prior claims with the cash generated by the enterprise. It is reported that in Ethiopia this risk is determined by the obligations and liquidity of enterprises. Financial risk is an umbrella term for multiple categories of

risk associated with financial transactions. Financial risk can further be explained as the possibility where the investors lose money. This occurs if they are investing in banks whose cash flows are inadequate to meet obligations.

Any financial system that provides inputs for the production of goods and services will influence the standard of living of people. Workers engaged in the production process earn wages with which they demand for consumer goods. This determines their standard of living. Studies show that Ethiopian workers have to provide goods and services for their dependents and unemployed relatives. The financial system is, therefore, a complex system that affects the livelihood of these workers. Its main role, however, is to facilitate economic performance. The banking system has an important role to play in transferring funds from savings to investment. An effective financial system, therefore, enhances investment and enterprise profitability that results from productivity.

Financial intermediation of the banking sector contributes to productive investment in Ethiopia using savings of its clients. It delivers banking and other financial services to its customers such as accepting deposits and providing credits. There are also non-bank institutions that provide certain banking services without fulfilling the lawful definition of a bank. All banks safeguard money and valuables and provide credit and payment services, such as checking accounts and money orders. Banks also offer investment and insurance services. They play a major role in the Ethiopian economy through savings and investment activities. Obviously, the banking sector becomes a dynamic force to advance domestic and external trade.

Studies show that the survival of the banking system depends on the good performance of the sector that is based on scientific research. It is useful to periodically engage financial experts and researchers who are capable of identifying the major determinants of effective performance of the banking system. Though researches had been conducted in this area in different countries in the past, the determinants of financial performance have been debatable for years. Studies revealed that there are no universally accepted agreements on the determinants and effects of the financial risk on the banking sector. Studies also show that financial performance and effects of risks vary among countries due to their differences in economic, financial and political systems and operational environments.

It is noted that financial performance is strongly influenced by manipulation of interest and exchange rates. Also, credit risks have significant and negative influence on the financial performance of the Ethiopian banks. These banks have interest in identifying factors of success and failure and take appropriate actions to

improve their performance.

Government is also interested in identifying which banks are successful or not to take appropriate action. To avoid bankruptcy crisis in banks which have failed to meet their objectives, the government takes action to revitalize the banking system. Investors are major stakeholders in the performance of banks and look after the recommendations of studies to guide their investment towards financial success. Similarly, clients would like to be informed of the performance of banks to meet their obligations.

Research findings will be useful to Ethiopian financial institutions, particularly the banking sector. These findings provide scenarios for policymakers, who will be able to develop new guidelines for financial risk management practices. New and relevant risk management styles will influence and guide the financial performance of Ethiopian banks. The findings will be of great benefit to the bank managers, especially when framing risk management strategies. He or she may be informed by the findings that are of great value to the banks and the clients. They may be able to learn of the severity of financial risks in Ethiopia. This helps stakeholders to become familiar with financial risks and look for remedial action.

Research findings will play an important role in shedding light on financial variables that impact the performance of Ethiopian banks. They will also provide managers and experts with realistic approach to financial management.

Moreover, the research findings will provide indication on issues “not” covered by earlier studies. They will provide empirical proof and conceptual framework for further studies. These studies have to use relevant methodology, including research design, approach, and sampling method. This may also include sample size, sources of data, analysis technique, model specification, description and implementation of the study. Of course, the study should give conclusion and recommendation that ensure practical implementation in the sector. The studies do not ensure removal of the “effects of financial risks” unless the government controls actual implementation of the measures recommended by gurus of the sector.

As indicated earlier, studies have been conducted on liquidity risk, credit risk, interest rate risk, solvency risk, and exchange rate risk. Credit risk and liquidity risk were significant, while solvency risk, interest rate risk, and exchange rate risk had insignificant effect on the performance of the banks. Any increase or decrease in liquidity risk, and solvency risk lead to an increase or decrease in financial performance of the banks.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that banks should evaluate the history of

borrowers and projected cash flows and adequate collateral margins in order to improve financial performance. It is also strongly recommended that the banks should maintain substantial amount of capital reserve to absorb credit risk in the event of failure. The banks should enhance lending criteria, portfolio grading and credit mitigation techniques to reduce chance of default.

The Ethiopian banks should conduct rigorous loan appraisal process and adhere to all the lending requirements that enhance financial performance. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that the banks have to stick to credit policies and strategies that limit the exposure of banks to credit risk. They should also conduct sound credit evaluation before granting loans to customers. The banks have to closely monitor credit advances and adopt appropriate measures to control or mitigate risks. The management of Ethiopian banks should enhance the capacity of employees in business skills that ensure effective risk identification and assessment. Enhanced employee capacity improves the banks’ financial performance. Bank employees should be very efficient in the practice of credit risk administration. They should be able to certify and ensure collaterals, creditworthiness, lending limitations, clients or borrowers. Expertise in loan diversification, loan securitization and lending facilities ensure the survival of banks.

Studies revealed that the regulatory framework of Ethiopian banks needed the management of credit risks. They have to strengthen supervisory capacity to identify and monitor credit. Based on the findings of studies, NBE should be able to control foreign exchange rates and improve transactions and financial performance of the Ethiopian banks. In this respect, adequate measures and policies, strategies and measures should be formulated to control the foreign exchange of the country.

The NBE could deflate, inflate, or adopt fixed exchange rate regimes. Simultaneously, it may adopt appropriate risk management strategies like hedging to manage fluctuation in exchange rates. It may reinforce its monetary policies to normalize the level of lending rate of interest in the economy. The government has to periodically revise its fiscal and monetary policies in managing its revenue, expenditure, money supplies and interest rate to manage the level of general inflation. Currently, Ethiopians are suffering from domestic and imported inflation, for which there seems to be no solution. In addition to the unlimited costs of war to lives and properties, the effect of financial risks is very damaging to the livelihood of poor Ethiopians.

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Editorial

The clamp down against corruption should intensify!

Despite the incumbent's crackdowns on institutional and state-led thefts following the 2018 reform, corruption regardless of its scale still rife in the country. Even worse, it morphed to be national problems posing an imminent and existential threat to the country. Embezzlement of public property and organized corruptions has been one of main sources of grave public resentments that led to popular protests.

Prior to the reform, thievery was wide that it disrupted and delayed the execution of mega projects forcing the country to incur extra resource to make sure the project stay alive. From the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam to other mega projects, corruption was metastasizing throughout public and private sectors. But, the clamp down against corruption institutions on the heels of the reform helped the nation to give a second life to the much-need development projects. Lots of individuals were apprehended and accounts were frozen on charges of organized and non-organized thefts

Yet, again due to the clandestine and complex nature of the misconducts, absence of strong justice system and anti-corruption organs, theft has remained to be one of the major setbacks standing in the way of the country's socioeconomic endeavors. Lately, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed admitted that corruption has become a danger to national security as he revealed a formation of ministerial committee.

In his last address to the lawmakers last year, Abiy described corruption as being principal weapon of oppression and robbery in the country.

"A certain group of people is emerging to make an opportunity out of our national predicaments and national challenges. They have converted the uncross able red line of corruption into a red carpet of thievery and are freely swaggering on it," Abiy told parliamentarians. "Now a day's corruption has become a threat to our national security. We have been fighting corruption in a concerted manner to prevent it from derailing our journey to prosperity through implementation of

reforms and technologies."

Since then, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has announced the establishment National Anti-corruption Committee comprising seven members and has established hotline and dedicated telephone for whistleblowers. The committee tasked to coordinate the campaign against corruption, identify corrupt entities and bring them to justice includes the Attorney General and the head of the Ethiopian National Intelligence and Security Service.

And, very recently the Anti-Corruption Committee announced the arrest of corrupt individuals including senior government officials. Among is Tewodros Bekele, Director General of Financial Intelligence Service and other suspects engaged in financial plundering and land grabbing have been detained, according to a local media report.

The committee has also expanded its probe against individuals suspected of committing thefts, crimes, especially in Addis Ababa. Unless the country continues to race against time to combat the cancer, the security of the nation will face unprecedented level of threat. In fact, over the years, we have seen nations including developed ones getting into precarious situations, quagmire of chaos and even state captures resulting in the dysfunction of governments due to organized thefts. But, the impact of the malpractice appears to be more serious in developing countries that have limited resource and more demand for development. For Ethiopia, prevention should be the best policy.

Moreover, the fight against thievery is not only a one time campaign and should not be left to the government only. The government needs to double down its efforts in taking stiff and swift serious measures and put in place comprehensive mechanisms to root out corruption. And, the society should be very much involved in curtailing the culture of corruption because in the end, theft is it pity or grand devours the resource of the country and affect the entire public.

Opinion

'Unity in diversity is not being one , the same'

BY MENGESHA AMARE

As a unicolor material fails to grab people's attention, individual difference remains the same of course, and a mosaic of colors wins the majority confidence, citizens in a certain nation can take this pretty analogy and entertain a homogenous composition, indeed!

What makes people different and unique with varied languages, cultures, religions and other social strata, is the foundation of diversity, equity and inclusion. If people recognize diversity in all aspects, no loop hole is created to develop hostility, rivalry and sense of cruelty.

Some are heard of saying that those who have preached about unity are proponents of unitary administration. Besides, some people believe that a heterogeneous society faces a lot of development obstacles and bottlenecks of social cohesion.

Basically, Ethiopians have been well known for their hospitality, peaceful coexistence and gut to entertain unity in diversity.

As far as my understanding is concerned, the concept implies unity that the harmonious way of living among people with different, religions, languages,

cultures and other useful parameters, and attracts diversity. This amicable fashion helps enjoy unifying.

Unity or unity in diversity is also a concept of "harmony without uniformity and diversity without shattering" that shifts the emphasis from unity based on a mere tolerance of physical, cultural, linguistic, social, religious, political, or psychological differences to a more nuanced unity based on an awareness that human experiences are enriched by distinction. The most obvious example that gives the term credence is that of a democratic country though it is at an infant stage in Ethiopia.

Basically, people with distinct religions, cultures, ideologies, sects, languages, and other demarcations live in peace and harmony following a uniform law as such a guiding principle has been present since time immemorial.

As a country, Ethiopia, with a special emphasis on the capital Addis Ababa has been the best example of "Unity in Diversity" as it has housed individuals of different faiths, languages, cultures, norms and ways of livelihood have been living together according to the parameters stipulated in the constitution and in tune with the rule of the land. However, those who have benefited out of conflict rectify

or single out terms to make chaos and hostility as they reap fruits there.

Yes, no matter how different they are in terms of faith and race, citizens in Ethiopia especially in the capital are harmoniously living. Unity in diversity has offered to ascend to the incredible public coordination emblem to the nation which has become the establishment of solid and prosperous Ethiopia even after heaps of desecration, militancy, and psychosomatic oppression. Individuals living in different regional states are by and large varying in their communication in language, culture, customs, outlook, and so on.

Unity in diversity is also of significantly useful in improving the esprit smooth relationships, and cooperation between individuals, communities that make up a population of the country thereby improving efficiency, work quality, productivity, and lifestyle among all citizens of the nation. It has also been proved that unity in diversity makes communication effective even in a bad situation.

Undoubtedly, unity in diversity is not being one and the same as it improves healthy human relations instead and protects equal human rights for all, and provides the country with the root of

all virtuous. More visitors and tourists from all over the world draw people from diverse cultures, customs, cuisines, beliefs, among others. Besides, unity in diversity gives importance to the country's rich heritage and enhances and enriches Ethiopia's cultural heritage.

In a nutshell, as people from various cultural backgrounds seem to know and value each other, solidarity is rooted and is instrumental in solving social problems. This undoubtedly is the outcome of unity in diversity.

Since it is an important part of ethics and morality, people must show trust and harmony. While ethnic and religious differences can prove to be detrimental in the short term, they tend to make society more tolerant as unity matters the most.

Truly, individuals, regardless of class and religion, ultimately work together towards building the common eternal asset—the country, Ethiopia in this context. From a long-term perspective, it is positive and will allow society to flourish not only economically, but also socially and politically. Hence, unity [in diversity] counts since it doesn't refer to be one and the same.

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

Business & Economy

Mining: A way to build sustainable economic development

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The continent of Africa is endowed with numerous natural resources that the world can rely on. Most of the raw materials that the world has been using are from Africa. In this regard, it is proven that the continent has not been using its maximum potential to explore its natural resources to the fullest and make the best out of them.

In the present climate, the government of Ethiopia has identified sectors that believed to have great impact on the overall economic progress of the nation. Agriculture, tourism, industry, science and technology, and mining are the selected sectors that the government plans to seek out better achievements. It is the fact that those sectors are the focal points and part of the ten year development plan that the nation designs to implement using its homegrown economic reform agenda.

Regarding the usage of natural resources, especially the mining sector, the way how Ethiopia has been handling its resources has shown tangible progress. The government has given due attention to exploit more benefits from the untapped natural resources that the country is inundated with. It is true that exploiting natural resources and minerals costs much.

Metallic minerals like gold, raw materials for fertilizers, ceramics, glass and cement, gemstones such as sapphires, energy minerals, and natural gas are some of the minerals and energy sources that the nation is blessed with. With those natural resources, both local and international investors have shown strong desire to invest in the country.

It is important to remember that the nation contains excessive amount of natural resources throughout its width and breadth. While discussing about abundance of the country's surface and underground resources, Melaku Alebel, Minister of Industry, once said, "... it is hard for the nation to be poor than to be rich." He also stressed that to get the best out of the resources that exist in different sectors; it needs better leadership and hard work in collaboration with every stakeholder.

Months ago, Ethiopia has received the first certificate for having natural gas and oil reserves. Seven trillion cubic feet of natural gas has been discovered in Ogaden area of Somali Regional State. It is one of the highest natural gas reserves in the world. On the occasion, Minister of Mines, Eng. Takele Uma stated that from now on, the country has officially received a certificate for gas reserves.

Even recently, it is stated that nation's immense gold reserves in various parts of the country has been explored that open doors for investors to invest on country's gold mines. In this regard, in the coming five years, Ministry of Mines has planned to extract and produce thousands of



Ethiopia is rich in varieties of minerals

kilograms of gold and other minerals.

Having stayed with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), State Minister of Mines, Million Mathewos disclosed some of the projects that the Ministry has planned to carry out in the coming few years. The State Minister further said that there are a number of companies that are interested in investing on the mining sectors, and they are about to start operating in the coming few periods of time.

To illustrate, a company called Ethio Mines is going to be operational within three months in Gmabella. Not only that, Kurmuk Gold Company that is expected to be the largest gold producer in the country has identified 140 thousand kilograms of gold to be produced in Benishangul Gumuz and the production will be started within the next five years.

By the same token, after paying a visit to Benishangul Gumuz Regional State, Minister of Mines, Eng. Takele Uma, stated on his social media account, "One of the indications that our dream of increasing gold production at the level of large scale companies will come true is the construction of the Kurmuk Gold Company, in the region. We get the opportunity today to visit the factory, which is being built with the investment capital of 14 billion Birr."

The State Minister, on his part, said that a number of high-profile companies that are working on gold mining around the world have been showing their growing desire to invest their asset in gold production here in Ethiopia.

In a similar vein, the State Minister has mentioned about the nation's gas resource. He affirmed that the country is certified for discovering seven trillion cubic feet of natural gas in Ogaden. "When gas is developed, petrochemicals are also developed and the country's progress owing to gas and related resources is promising," he added.

In addition, it is the fact that having natural resources could bring further advantages to the nation if they are explored and produced adequately. In this regard, as to the State Minister, the gas production

having natural resources could bring further advantages to the nation if they are explored and produced adequately

is more than 600 million tons of iron ore found in Sekota, and over 250 million and 80 million tons of steel is discovered in Shire Indasilassie and in Mekanesselam respectively, the State Minister added.

Million also mentioned, "There is a large stock in Wollega, Jimma, Guji, and Borena zones of Oromia region and in the next 10 years of the strategic plan, appropriate utilization of these resources will move Ethiopia to another phase of development."

Regarding steel production in the country, the State Minister stated that at this time, there are 30 to 40 steel factories that are operating in the country, and these companies, all of them, import basic steel raw materials and sell it again by molding in different shapes.

In a shorter period, according to the plan, it is decided that the government will make those steel companies operational, but in the long run, as to the State Minister; the Ministry aspires to use Ethiopia's iron ore to the maximum level. As a result, it will profoundly help the nation on building sustainable development.

According to Million, it is confirmed that the country has a reserve of one billion tons of iron ore and certified for discovering seven trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Unfortunately, the Ministry and other stakeholders have effectively studied only 30% of the total mineral resources that the nation is blessed with.

To conclude what has been said above, most practices of gold mining in Ethiopia have been implemented in the traditional ways. This way of doing business traditionally has pulled the nation down from getting what is expected from the sector so that the government has been taking various actions to change the way of doing business to more advanced and modern ways.

Currently, the government and the Ministry of Mines have given due attention to the sector and bringing investors to invest in the mining sector. Consequently, the government, nowadays, is earning better income from the sector and opens more rooms for investors via creating investor-friendly environment throughout the nation.

and development will bring extra benefits to the nation's economic development. Nation's soil fertilizer production will be affected positively by the gas development. Accordingly, such benefit will bring a fundamental transformation in the agricultural system of the country.

He further elaborated that Ethiopia has a reserve of more than one billion tons of iron ore. The Ministry identified that there

Art & Culture



This is Ethiopia!

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The source of the universe,
As cradle of human kind,
Emblem of liberty, source of pride,
All weather confident bright guide,
East African icon, water tower,
Change engine and continental power,
A mother of close to 90 nations and nationalities,
Home to over 115 population,
Leading Horn to growth, prosperity,
Center of good work as well as charity,
Shaped with civility and fraternity,
Working to overcome inequality and corruption phobia,
Come on the world! And visit the nation,
Introduce to it—this is Ethiopia!
Endowed with invaluable natural resources,
Tangible and intangible assets,
With charming landscape and catchy ecosystem,
Devoid of flaws no need of corrigendum,
Mesmerizing living styles, marriage ceremony even funeral rites,
Dancing, singing and lyrical festive,
To modern chirography from primitive,
Exemplary community coexistence,
Unity in diversity exercise,
Entrenched guild and amicable fashion,
As the deed speaks louder no need of promotion,
Foreigners, visitors coming from abroad,
All the time witness Ethiopia being great and broad,
In terms of hospitality, respect and virtuous society,
Ethiopia first taking the lead,
To make it a basket of bread working down the ground
This piece doesn't suffice,
To put what Ethiopia possesses,
With which it is endowed, indeed!
This is merely an attempt,
Simply to cite as fetching from an ocean with a spoon,
Ethiopia's gracious gift and eternal boon,
Bordering Djibouti, Kenya, Eritrea,
And with Sudan and Somalia,

The firm Horn bond this is Ethiopia!
Apiculture, aquaculture,
Horticulture and others,
Animal husbandry up to the intensive agriculture,
The country is waking up to make history,
To record victory over poverty,
And fighting corruption be it grand or petty,
Committed to combat evil nostalgia,
Know it very well this is Ethiopia!
Well equipped to fight arch enemy,
Via reinvigorating homegrown economy,
Exploiting coordinated efforts of citizens,
At home and abroad to bake yummy bread,
For how long Ethiopia is regarded as poor,
In the presence of untapped power,
Sufficient second, minute, week, month and hour,
Chapter of hostility, conflict and infidelity,
Has now on been closed,
For good,
Thanks to civility, thanks to optimism,
Ethiopia has seen off neocolonialism,
It will declare independence,
In terms of economy, politics,
Entertaining win-win ties,
With color blind diplomacy and style,
With a common interest file,
No east, no west bloc for diplomacy,
And club of frat,
So long as it keeps national interest,
Yes! Yes!
Go on Ethiopia, go far!
On a rosy boulevard here after,
A place of thirteen months of sunshine,
With cultural values of course and fine,
The land of origins,
Pride of all Ethiopians!
Invest, work with, live and grow together,
This is Ethiopia,
Wide open eyes a local investor or a foreigner.

The power of now (mindfulness)

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

I read a book by Eckhart Tolle called the power of now. It says our mind creates all kinds of discomforts or suffrages.

When we are in the moment or not focusing on the past or future we really can enjoy life in a greater sense.

This reminded me of the enlightened day I had. I wished my mind had stayed that way. Eckhart says he became like that with one realization which is hard to come by for most people but it can come through the practice of observation or witnessing, I read.

As I did more of the meditation I was aware that the mind operated through ego and made me miserable by its insanity. I also realized this was the case for most people. Eckhart says just observe, don't get involved with the mind; although it seemed simple it takes a great deal of patience.

I started to meditate or be conscious of my thoughts even though my thoughts seemed scary. I then had a huge "Aha!" moment.

It all made sense; why my life was hell... It wasn't because of outside factors It was the thinking patterns my mind unknowingly created that was wrecking me.

These negative thoughts that were replayed in my brain were making me miserable. I instantly knew that I had to love myself. I knew why I felt other people judged me; it was because I judged myself critically. I knew I was the one who needed to change and no one else.

I started to listen to positive affirmations on an audio twice a day. It says things like "I am beautiful just the way I am, I don't need to be perfect/ my imperfection is my beauty, I can do anything I put my mind to, I am confident, I am loved, I use my anger in a constructive way, I am bigger than what happens to me, I welcome changes in my life positively, I accept things I can't change, my perceived limitations are now in the past"...

Beginning with these affirmations wasn't easy; my body and mind almost rejected it by fear of change but I continued for a while.

One day I was going in my car and my usual pessimism about life started to show making me feel unworthy and unloved. I then started to listen to the positive affirmation audio on my phone. I let the positive connotations sink in and felt the negative thoughts disappear like clouds. The feeling was exhilarating and I felt like all closed doors opened for me. I understood that there was a profound way to love myself and feel good about myself.

Observation of my thoughts/ meditation and practicing positive affirmation are what made me hopeful in life.

Science & Technology

Ethiopia's technological foundations in 2022

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Following the nation-wide and all-rounded reform in 2018, technological transformation and innovations have become among the top priority sectors of Ethiopia. Science, technology and local innovation emerge as new developments following the reform that aims to build prosperous country.

Especially, on the wake of the launch of a three years Home-grown Economic

Development program by the government; technology sector has turned to a key sector as the government plans to transform the service sector using modern technologies. Consequent to these efforts, in December 2019 Ethiopia has launched its first remote sensing satellite to the space, which has still continued providing services. In addition, in 2020, Ethiopia has launched 'Digital Ethiopia 2025' which focuses on e-commerce and the ability to digitize services in traditionally

non-digital industries, like agriculture and manufacturing. It was in mid-2021 that Ethio Telecom launched Tele Birr.

Ethiopia is also developing its own local social media platforms, which are waiting for infrastructural developments. Since 2021 The Information Network Security Administration has started developing software for domestic use of social media platforms in Ethiopia.

These efforts of transforming the science, technology and innovation sectors in Ethiopia have been further strengthened since 2022. Ethiopia has launched a ten year perspective plan and the technology and innovation sector is the top priority both as a sector and its significance for the development of other sectors. Considering the sector's role in accelerating development journey and accelerate prosperity, Ethiopia laid down foundations in 2022.



(Ethiopia Science Museum)

Inauguration of science museum

The inauguration of the first ever state-of-the-art science museum is among the top foundational works in the science and innovation sector in 2022. As part of its digital transformation endeavor, the government of Ethiopia has inaugurated a new science museum in the capital city. The museum is built on a seven-hectare space hosting two major building complexes and several interactive exhibits that displayed local solutions in healthcare, finance, cyber security, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), service industries, data analytics, manufacturing, and robotics among others.

During the inauguration ceremony, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, described the museum as a 'demonstration of Ethiopia's attention to science and

technology'. He cited Ethiopia's Digital Economy Strategy, which started implementation two years back, as a testimony to Ethiopia's commitment to the sector and assured to continue efforts to transform the sector.

The science museum has a potential to shape the future of Ethiopia and would play to transform the sector. Science Museum has two huge buildings and is laid on over 1400 sq. km of land. Moreover, the museum has permanent and temporary exhibition centers. The newly inaugurated Science Museum is expected to further curate Ethiopia's rich indigenous knowledge, science, and art alongside modern technological advancements.



(Innovation, Technology Talent Development Institute)

Ethiopia inaugurates Innovation, Technology Talent Development Institute

Ethiopia Ministry of Innovation and Technology has built and inaugurated innovation and technology talent development center in Burayu city administration set to play significant role in Ethiopia's human resource capacity building.

The Ethiopia Innovation and Technology Talent Development Institute have the capacity of enrolling 500 students in its initial year and when completed, it will have

the capacity to enroll 1000 students.

The talent center has classrooms, laboratories, libraries, dormitories, and lecture halls, as well as apartments for the teaching staff. The talent development school is a place where selected Ethiopian students with special faculty can nurture their knack without quitting their regular education. The center aims to produce professionals with advanced knowledge in the technology field.



(First cyber-talent summer camp youth graduation ceremony)

First batch of cyber-security summer camp trained youth graduated

Ethiopia's Information Network Security Administration (INSA) has established Ethio-Cyber Talent Center to train gifted and talented youths in the cyber sector. Ethio-Cyber Talent Center was established to hunt and train cyber-talented youths with the vision of developing capable skilled human resource in the cyber sector.

The center envisioned inspiring, motivating, hunting and training talented youths in the cyber sector. Through mentorship and capacity building training, it aims to create

capable and skilled youths in the cyber industry with the goal of developing the industry in Ethiopia by investing on the youth.

The center had trained the first batch of Summer Camp Talented Youths during the past summer. The first summer camp cyber-security talented youths was composed of 60 trainees. They graduated after they came up with over 35 different innovations, including programs and applications.

Ethiopia successfully hosted 17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The 17th annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was organized in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa in late November and early December 2022. Over 2,500 participants from across the world did attend the IGF which Ethiopia successfully organized the five days forum.

The IGF 2022 discussed on current and emerging risks related to possible future developments in artificial intelligence and other critical issues, including the advancement of technologies like artificial intelligence. The forum discussed on

building resilient infrastructure for the shared future and on ways of supporting the infrastructure of developing countries in the sector.

During the 17th UN Internet Governance Forum, the Father of Internet, Vint Cerf, had come to Addis Ababa to attend the session. In addition, he discussed with Ethiopia's government officials and praised Ethiopia's achievement in successfully organizing the forum. The IGF 2022 was held under the theme 'Resilient Internet for a Shared Sustainable and Common Future'.

Ethiopia intensifies online service in government sectors

As part of its Digital 2025, Ethiopia is accelerating digital and online services in government sectors. According to Ministry of Innovation and Technology, in 2022, over 326 government services were available through online and efforts have continued to expand online service to other services. Recently, additional services are also included to the online service.

The Ethiopian Government Electronic Services Portal has been developed to provide electronic public services to citizens, non-citizens, businesses, and governmental & non-governmental organizations. The portal was launched in 2020 and currently services including issuing business licenses,

processing business registrations and giving information to entrepreneurs through an online one-window service, trade and investment license, passport and other basic services are given through online services.

In addition, by strengthening the E-payment system including the Tele birr payment, Ethiopia is modernizing and digitalizing payment systems. Efforts are also underway to connect the online services that need payment with Tele birr and other E-payment services to make the services easy for customers. Other online platforms are also introduced in the tourism, education, trade and other sectors.

Society

Celebrating Ethiopia's grandest occasion: *Timket* festival

BY LEULSEGED WORKU &
MENGISTEAB TESHOME

As Timket (Ethiopian Epiphany) is approaching, Gondar-the historic town, famous to its castle and churches, and a place where the Ethiopian Epiphany is celebrated colorfully in a way keeping traditional and religious values- is preparing itself to welcome its guests that will arrive to the town from different parts of the world.

Zerfu Araya is the owner of Checheho Cultural Restaurant where several local and international tourists frequented his hotel in Gondar Town. Like most of residents of the Town. Zerfu gives special value for social cohesion and has an open heart in welcoming guests cordially, serving his visitors at his own cost and letting them feel at home.

As he stated, last year, Zerfu hosted not less than 40 visitors in the tent he purposely prepared it for the event. For this year, he has also finalized all the preparation to welcome those tourists who would come to Gondar for the Ethiopian Epiphany warmly; and to show them greater hospitality. "The people of Gondar will do whatever they can and show their deep-rooted culture of cordiality," he added.

In similar manner, as indicated by Gondar Town Culture and Tourism Bureau, a project dubbed "One guest for one family" will be implemented so as to welcome guests and visitors with a sense of respect manner and to make them feel at home.

Speaking to local media, Chalachew Dagnachew, said that the project has a goal of further deepening the culture of hospitality among the society and will enable not less than 80,000 visitors to spend their time with their host families without going to hotels. He said the project is designed by local elders, religious leaders and the society.

According to Chalachew during their stay at Gondar, visitors will share and be served by whatever there is in the house; and will spend a memorable time. By doing so, they will have firsthand information about the cultural values and history of Gondar people. So far, several volunteer families and committees are working committedly for the success of the project.

A pilot project, which was implemented last year, has witnessed a positive result and those visitors who spent their time with host families have now developed a positive friendship.

Meanwhile, Gondar Town Peace and Security Department indicated that all preparations are finalized for the successful accomplishment of the Timket festival. The Department indicated that a task force which is organized for this particular purpose has already started its function.

Department Head, Fasil Sendeku, said that the Peace and Security Department is working aggressively to ensure a peaceful Timket festival. He said, the Department together with stakeholders is working hand



and glove and the task force conducted discussion with concerned government institutions and high officials, religious fathers, elders and the youth regarding to the successful completion of the festival.

Fasil said, all hotels, recreation centers and historical places will seriously be protected for the sake of visitors' safety; this includes the gates that lead to Gondar town and areas where religious programs are carried out.

Hand in hand with security and safety issues, another task force is organized to monitor the proper functioning of telecommunication, water, electric power services and emergency and fire safety preparedness task force is organized. As part of ensuring peace and security matters, it is illegal to carry weapons during the event.

Sources indicate that not less than one million visitors are expected to attend Timket festival in Gondar Town.

Likewise, in Addis Ababa the preparation to celebrate Timket festival is ongoing well. The Ethiopian Herald approached Addis Ababa City Administration Government Culture Art and Tourism Bureau tourism Sector Head Desta Lorenzo (PhD candidate) to learn about the preparation.

"We have finalized preparations to welcome tourists in more comfortable fashion than ever before. As we are at the eve of Epiphany, the Bureau along with tour operators and hotel owners as well as logistic service providers have exchanged views on how to manage the influx of tourists.

There are plenty of places for accommodation and Addis Ababa also has over 170 star ranked hotels and restaurants, many museums and galleries among others.

The capital, with its vibrant vibe and historical significance, functions today as a gateway into the African continent. It is also the perfect place to begin exploration of the country's landscape, archeology, and

the mobility of tourists is also improving throughout the nation.

The holiday gives additional opportunities to introduce the tourist destinations and various landmarks the city has such as Entoto, Friendship, Unity parks and Science Museum, among others.

He also called on all actors to provide standard services and promote tourist destinations in the city to ensure the sustainability of the flow of tourists.

In the first quarter of the year, over 240 thousand tourists visited the city and was able to generate 13.8 billion worth of birr, it was learnt.

Timket (The Amharic word for immersion or Epiphany) is one of the grand outdoor religious festivals celebrated among the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians on the 19 of January (or the 20 of January once in every four years). The festivity commemorates the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. It is celebrated 12 days after the festivity of Genna or Ethiopian Christmas.

Members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church highly revere the festival as a period of religious revival and rejuvenation and also as a thanksgiving occasion to God for his protection and support in nurturing their spirit.

Timket sets in after the end of the harvest season in Ethiopia and the farmers in restive parts of the country will have some time for pastime activities like paying visits to friends or performing various personal duties.

The festival is marked with great pomp and paraphernalia right from the eve of January 19 which is known among the Ethiopian Orthodox as Ketera. On this day the tabots of each church are carried out in procession to a place near a river in rural areas or on a special baptism spot prepared for the occasion.

The festivity commemorates the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan by John the Baptist

culture.

"I want to say to everyone that Addis Ababa is a safe and comfortable city to everyone. In my view, tourists who chose to be here will witness the lively celebrations of Ethiopians during their holidays and can have an extraordinary experience which they cannot have it in other places," he underlined.

He further noted that Addis Ababa and other major urban areas are comparatively safe to tourists compared to many African cities. The holidays Genna (Christmas) and Timket (Epiphany) are also one of the great assets that tourists should visit.

The Bureau holds that the celebration could reinstate the tourism sector that was hit hard because of the conflict and the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

The peace accord signed in South Africa is also a great opportunity because the booking of international tourists is increasing and



Ethiopia:

Best tourist destinations in January

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ensuring peace, controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, development of new tourist destinations across the country among others enable Ethiopia to become one of the top five tourist destinations in the month of January, 2023. The prominent Gena (Birth of Jesus Christ) and Timket (Baptism of Jesus Christ) festivals said contributed a lot in attracting numerous international tourists year after year. The Ethiopian government is also undertaking various measures towards promoting tourists' inflow and increasing the tourism sector's contribution to the national economy.

Recently, the National Geography UK names Ethiopia among the five best destinations in January. In its Travel and Adventure category of the New Year publication, the well-known online platform, National Geographic UK, names the Northern Ethiopia's desolate Danakil Depression as the first place recommended for Tourists.

Ethiopia's desolate Danakil Depression, according to National Geography UK, is one of the driest, hottest and lowest places on the planet, made up of salt lakes, neon yellow acidic springs, lava lakes and an outside proportion of Africa's active volcanoes.

In its selection for the month of January, National Geography UK recommends Ethiopia's unique landscapes; previously mud-caked roads south to the remote Omo Valley to visit vast wetlands, which is a home to many ethnic tribes. The online platform also added two of Ethiopia's most important religious festivals on this month's calendar to be visited by tourists: Ethiopian Christmas and Timket, Orthodox Christian celebrations that take place on January 7, 18 and 19 each year.

The Timket holiday marks the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, and locals across the land submerge themselves in sacred pools.

National Geography UK added that feasts, street parties and processions of pilgrims together with holy events can be witnessed in Gondar, home to a grand 17th-century palace, and spiritual Lalibela, where nearly a dozen mediaeval churches are carved out of volcanic rock.

On the other hand, the Ethiopian Government gives due priority to the tourism sector development. What is more, the restoration of peace in the northern part of the country will have significant contributions to resume the largest number of tourists' inflow to mark the prominent festivals in January. Thus, the signing of peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and TPLF has contributed more



to build tourist's confidence to come and visit Ethiopia.

Availing standardized infrastructural facilities is also the other precondition to maintain a sustainable local and international tourist's inflow to the well-known religious and cultural destinations not only in the northern part, but also across the country.

Tourism State Minister Selamawit Dawit told local media that the tourism sector, which suffered due to COVID-19 pandemic and the war, is now recovering and going back to its former state.

According to her, the tourist flow is currently growing rapidly as the government has been working hard by formulating policy and strategy that develop the sector. The resumption of services in the northern part of the country is a big opportunity for the flow of tourists in the areas during the holiday season.

January is a month when Ethiopians wear their colorful cultural clothes and are spiritually uplifted. It is the month when not only citizens but also foreigners are inspired and become ecstatic. The month of January is also an ideal time for vacation and entertainment for tourists who do not have enjoyable environment in their countries.

Recalling that more than a quarter million foreign tourists have visited Ethiopia during the first Ethiopian quarter year, she said there are indications that the tourist flow would likely increase two fold after October. The tourist flow in this season would be at a peak for particularly northern Ethiopia, the

State Minister stated.

For tourist destinations in Amhara, Afar and Tigray states where world heritages are found, there is an additional opportunity.

Selamawit further stated that efforts are being made to make the stay of tourists in the country longer, in addition to promoting natural, cultural and historical tourist destinations and developing new sites.

Recalling the highest number of flights in the tourism history of Gondar and the surrounding areas last Ethiopian year, the State Minister said more tourist flow and foreign exchange earnings are expected this year.

Since the end of this Ethiopian month, in addition to public celebrations and events that are attractive to tourists, special package has been arranged to extend tourist stay for Christmas in Lalibela and Ethiopian Epiphany in Gondar.

This allows the visitors not only to participate in public celebrations but also to visit natural and historical attractions in the area and to buy traditional products.

Moreover, the Ethiopian ambassadors based in different countries call upon the Diaspora community to come home, visit Ethiopia and enjoy the spectacular occasions of the dominant religious festivals with the beautiful weather in their country.

Ethiopia's Ambassador to the U.S Ambassador Seleshi Bekele said that the Ethiopian Diaspora would have a lot of fun

here and the climate is wonderful unlike in the countries they live in this season.

Visits obviously require some level of planning, the Ambassador noted, adding that "if you have the opportunity and could easily travel, however, please come and enjoy at least the Ethiopian Epiphany, which is a highly celebrated event in the country."

Ambassador Seleshi urged not only the Ethiopian Diaspora to come with their families and celebrate the events, but also foreigners.

On his part, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Canada, Fitsum Arega said that the Timket festival and the other upcoming events in Ethiopia during this season are distinct.

"I, therefore, encourage the Ethiopian Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia and anybody who wishes to visit Ethiopia to come to the country and see the colorful celebrations in this beautiful weather."

In Ethiopia, you don't need a heater or cooler any time. With natural condition and the welcoming Ethiopian people, celebrating both Ethiopian Christmas and the special Epiphany program within two weeks is thrilling, he stated.

Ambassador Fitsum noted that there are also new tourist destinations built over the past two years in the country. "Therefore, we specifically encourage the Diaspora to come to Ethiopia, enjoy the weather and the hospitality of the people."

International News



DR Congo accuses Rwanda of 'political' blackmail over refugees

Kinshasa accused Rwanda of using refugees for political purposes on Wednesday, after its neighbour said it would no longer take in people fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame said Monday that his country "cannot keep hosting refugees" -- stoking already high tensions between the two countries

The DRC government responded angrily on Wednesday, and said the comments were "proof that human rights have no value for the Rwandan president".

Kagame has been "blackmailing the international community on human lives", said Patrick Muyaya, spokesman for the DRC government.

The refugees were being "used for political purposes", Muyaya said, accusing Kigali of trying to divert international attention "from

the responsibility of Rwanda".

Persistent fighting in the east of the mineral-rich DRC pits federal troops against rebels from the M23 group, which has captured swathes of territory.

The DRC -- along with the United States and several European countries -- has repeatedly accused Rwanda of backing the Tutsi-led rebels, although Kigali denies the charge. Tensions have soared and thousands have fled the battles into neighbouring states, including Rwanda.

Kagame told the upper house of parliament Monday that the refugees are "not Rwanda's problem. And we are going to ensure that everybody realises that it is not Rwanda's problem" "I am refusing that Rwanda should carry this burden," he said. In November, the UN said around 72,000 Congolese had crossed into Rwanda.

Source: AFP



Fourteen Malian soldiers killed in two armed group attacks: Army

Fourteen Malian soldiers were killed and 11 wounded in two separate attacks in central Mali after their vehicles struck explosive devices, the army has said.

The incidents took place on Tuesday in central regions where attackers with ties to al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS) regularly attack civilians, Malian soldiers, United Nations peacekeepers and other international forces.

The reinforcements in response to the latest attacks led to the killing of 31 rebels, the army said in a statement on Wednesday.

Reuter's news agency could not independently confirm the report and no group have yet claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Mali has been racked by violence since 2012 when armed groups hijacked an uprising by Tuareg separatists in the north. The conflict

has since spread to other countries in West Africa's Sahel region despite a costly international military response.

In 2022, French troops completed a withdrawal from Mali as relations soured between both countries due to two coups and the perceived ineffectiveness of the foreign military in tackling rebel activity.

There have also been growing tensions between the UN mission and Mali's military rulers following the alleged arrival of Wagner Group operatives from Russia to bolster government forces.

Germany, which has been in Mali since 2013, with a presence of up to 1,400 soldiers as part of the MINUSMA mission in the north, has said it will withdraw its troops in May 2024.

Source: ALJAZEERA

ADVERTISEMENT

INVITATION FOR BID

Drilling and construction of Shallow Wells

To: All contractors of category WC. Class six and above with renewed license valid for the 2023G.C/2015 E.C.

- The Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Water & Energy Resources Development Bureau invites eligible bidders with renewed license for 2015E.C/2023, registration card issued from the Ministry of Water and Energy, VAT registration certificate and Tax Identification Number (TIN).
- The source of the fund for works are from COWASH PROJECT
- The location of the wells sites are described in the table below.

Lot No.	Zones	Woredas	No. Shallow Wells	Sub Total	Source of Finance
Lot	Assosa	Bambassi	4-with head work	18	COWASH PROJECT
			4-without head work		
		Buldiglu	4-with head work		
			6-without head work		
Total No. of shallow Wells			18	18	COWASH PROJECT

- An interested bidder can purchase a complete set of bidding documents in English from the day that the advertisement appears in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper at (1). Room No.B-04 Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Addis Ababa or (2) Room No. B-06 in Benishangul Gumuz Region Water, and Energy Resources Development Bureau, Assosa during normal working hours upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ethiopian Birr 500.00 (FIVE Hundred Birr Only). The Method of payment will be in cash.
- The eligible bidders are expected to go through the bidding document and submit original and copies of their technical and financial proposals as well as bid security in separate wax sealed envelopes addressed to Water, irrigation and energy Minister ,Addis Ababa

Room No B- 04 on or before 3:00 PM on or before 21 calendar days from the last advertisement date notice on The Ethiopian Herald and bids shall be opened at 3:30 PM at the Water, and Energy Minister compound , Addis Ababa ,only technical part of the proposal open at Addis Ababa but after technical document evaluation the financial document open at Benishangul Gumuz region water & energy resource development Bureau .

- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the opening tender procedures contained in the Public Procurement Proclamation of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and is open to all eligible bidders. Bids shall be valid for a period of Ninety (90) days and **Bid Security shall be Valid for 120 Days** after Bid opening. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security, in an acceptable (CPO or bank guarantee) form amount of **200,000 Birr (TWO Hundred Thousand birr only)** and shall be delivered to **"The Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Water, and Energy Resources Development Bureau through Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (Room No.B- 04) (Addis Ababa) "**on 3:00 PM on or before 21 calendar days from the last advertisement date of this notice on The Ethiopian Herald and the technical Bids shall be opened at 3:30 PM at the same date & address in the presence of bidders who wish to attend. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. If the 21st Calendar day is holyday, it will be on the next working day.
- The award will be decided on a lot by lot basis. **Bidders can bid only in one lot.**
- Bidders should provide qualification requirements which include: (i) ownership (or existing lease) of a suitable drilling rig, (ii) completion of drilling and construction of at least one contracts of similar work in each of the last One year, (iii) annual turnover of 1.5 times the bid value in each of the last two years, (iv) liquid assets of at least 1/3 the contract value and (v) experienced drilling team. Additional details are provided in the Bidding Documents.
- The Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Water and Energy Resources Development Bureau reserves the right to reject all or part of the bid.
Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Water and Energy Resources Development Bureau COWASH Project **P.O.Box 51,**
Tel: 0912802689-Abera Erena or Adane Melese 0917-85-64-85
Assosa

Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Water and Energy Resources Development Bureau