

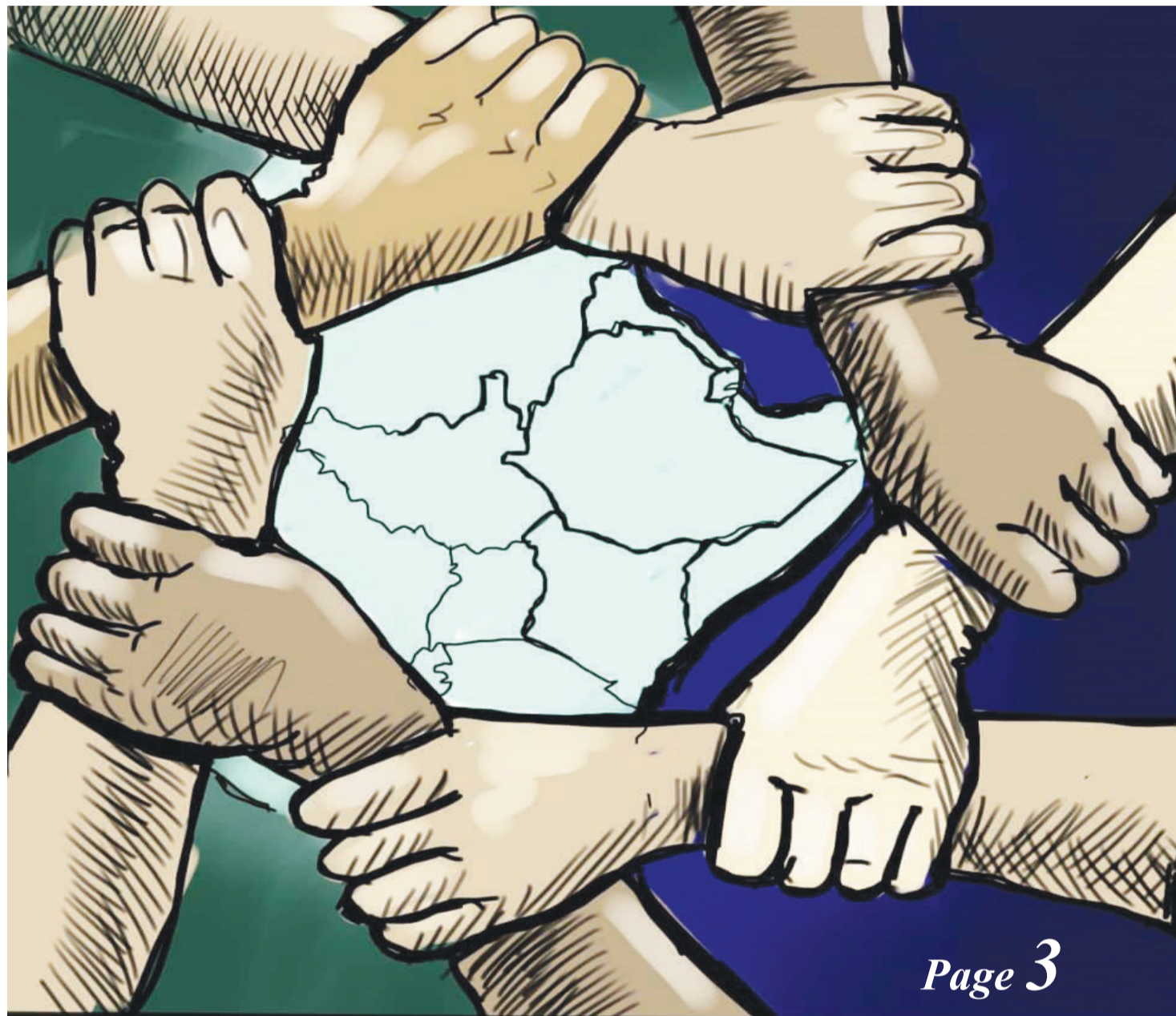


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Per Premier's directives, NBE sends five bln Birr to Mekelle

• Ethiopian Airlines increases daily flights to 5

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- As per the decision passed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), the National Bank has begun sending five billion Birr to Mekelle to be dispensed starting Monday, the Premier's Security Advisor tweeted, adding it is a multifold increment from hitherto 20 million.

In his latest Twitter post, the Prime
See Per Premier's ... page 4



Minister Habtamu Itefa (PhD. Eng.)

Ministry attempts to restore water supply in conflict-affected areas

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Water and Energy said it has been working tirelessly to reinstate the water supply in the war-ridden areas of Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states by identifying the critical level of damages there.

Minister Habtamu Itefa (PhD. Eng.) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that it has carried out a lot of activities to increase the

See Ministry attempts ... page 4



Ambassador Teferra Shiawel

Effective diplomacy hinges on utilization of digital platforms

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The uses of digital diplomacy are multifold and Ethiopian envoys are expected to utilize Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, and other social media

platforms to protect their country's national interest in this digital era, a veteran diplomat said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Teferra Shiawel stated

See Effective diplomacy ... page 4

News



Bureau says working on promoting tourist sites

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—Gedeo Zone Culture and Sport Bureau stated that it is working hard to promote tourism destinations including the Gedeo New Year festival.

Gedeo Zone Culture and Sport Bureau Head Yossef Maru (PhD) told local media recently that the Bureau is working on introducing the existing tourist destinations in Gedeo zone. The Zone is naturally blessed with tourism sites and is the best model of tourist site preservation. “That is why it is working to raise the income generated from tourism sector.”

Furthermore, Gedeo is well known for its abundant archaeological sites which are attracting tourists as it houses archeological sites, rock art sites, caves with animal painting. There are also stele-stones that having various shapes.

As to him, as Gedeo is all weather green, tourists can enjoy with clean and fresh air following forest coverage, which in turn would be used as traditional medicinal plants and indigenous floral diversity.

The Gedeo’s landscape is an example of rich evolving culture, resilience and sustainability, Yossef added.

The Department Head also stated that Gedeo has suitable environment for ecotourism and other friendly tourist sites.

He further explained that since peace has a vital value to get the expected income and development out of tourism, and it is important for tourism sector next to hospitality, the zone is working on ensuring sustainable peace in collaboration with other neighboring zones.

Many tourist sites in Ethiopia are the result of endogenous knowledge. “Since tourism sites are not only generating income but also they are our identity, we all have to preserve and protect them by developing belongingness; in so doing too, we can create better Ethiopia having better economic and social basis,” he stressed.



Association eyeing AU sessions to lure global tourists

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- Apart from reviving the hospitality industry, the Ethiopia Tourism and Hotel Market Association expressed readiness to capitalize on the upcoming AU sessions to promote the country’s tourist attraction sites for potential visitors.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Association President Getahun Alemu said meticulous jobs have been taking place to revive the hospitality sector by providing international services for participants of the AU sessions. Furthermore, hotels in Addis Ababa are in full swing to promote tourist attraction sites in the metropolis and the country at large.

“Due attention has been given to serving African meals and African leaders and other

dignitaries will be encouraged to witness Ethiopia’s notable coffee ceremony and to sit together around the coffee table to drink, discuss, and enjoy Ethiopian air.”

Getahun further noted that the association has been identifying standard hotels in Addis Ababa and preparing protocols to accord international services to AU guests. The forthcoming AU sessions will have paramount importance for Addis Ababa hotel owners in maximizing revenues and the latter are expected to avail services that will keep the national image.

“This year’s AU sessions are unique as it is going to be held in the aftermath of the AU-brokered Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CoHA) and this move has firmly testified to the world that the continent can solve its problem by own keeping the principle of “African Solution to African Problems.”

As to him, the participation of government agencies and other relevant stakeholders in helping the association’s efforts to render international hospitality service to AU guests is so immense.

During their stay, the association will prepare a tour for African leaders and other dignitaries to see Addis Ababa’s iconic projects including Entoto Park, Meskel Square, and Friendship squares. In addition to approaching Bishoftu Culture and Tourism Office to prepare a short visit to the town, the association has also prepared virtual reality (VR) for African leaders to witness Ethiopia’s world-famous tourist attraction sites, the president elaborated.

It is to be recalled that the association announced its partnership with East African hotels to operate under the same brand soon.

EWTI strides to water industry sector of excellence

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Water and Energy Institute (EWTI) said it is working to nurture skilled labor force and implement the research findings to achieve its vision of becoming a center of excellence in water industry.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Tamene Hailu (PhD), EWTI’s Director-General indicated that as a responsible sector for technical training in the water sector, EWTI emphasizes creating skilled professionals through improved water sector training and delivering quality service.

“The institute is revitalized with an aspired vision to become a center of excellence in capacity building and technology transfer in the water sector in East Africa by 2030.”

The director general further stated that the institute is also working to realize nationwide rapid development in the water sector through capacity building, research, and study for technology transfer. The institute is also equipped with a specialized laboratory and competence services that

improve the sector’s overall implementation capacity.

EWTI and Japan international cooperation agency (JICA’s) technical support programs are aligned and designed to reduce regional and social disparities in access to safe drinking water by capacitating trainers found in EWTI and supporting drilling rigs and machinery.

As the only institution that provides practical training on drilling technology nationally, EWTI is devoted to strengthening its performance in offering water drilling training. Also, training has been offered to state and federal professionals and water engineers on drilling, maintenance, and other areas, Tamene added.

As to him, due to the possible extension of the project that EWTI carried out with JICA and the acquisition of a drilling rig worth over 100- million- Birr, now attention turns to capacity development for the maintenance and operation of the rig.

Since JICA’s support mainly relied on the human development aspect, the EWTI’s overall performance is not at the desired

level. On one hand, the Institute, besides the capacity building, is determined to provide research and study that could bring about significant improvement in solving challenges in the water sector at the national level.

Similarly, the institute is working with 46 TVET institutions and several higher education institutions through its technology and knowledge transfer programs. “This would not only enhance technology transfer, but it would play a vital role in creating more skilled manpower in the sector.”

Similarly, special focus has been given to save the foreign currency that the nation had to pay to carry out laboratories abroad through conducting it locally.

Moreover, by setting a vision of becoming an autonomous institution, EWTI is undertaking several measures to apply income-generating activities. Thus, it is trying to come up with ways to find another source of income. In this regard, JICA plays a pivotal role in making the Institute’s business plan, the director-general remarked.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Ensuring regional peace, cooperation for better Africa

The paramount role ensuring regional peace plays in fostering the clicking of the countries in the domain when it comes to the socioeconomic and political spheres could hardly be gainsaid.

Tranquility's significance in spearheading member people of the domain towards the attainment of economic prosperity and the fructification of their exertion is lofty. Its contribution in lending lusters to the tomorrow they envision is unmatched.

Especially, people dwelling in regions that attract the attention of many and as such their situation exposes them to undue foreign intervention have, no doubt, to cooperate to parry negative influences and interventions. Serenity is a salient factor in turning round the lives of people via fostering development.

Countries situated in regions characterized by tranquility could exploit the favorable situation to jointly harness the untapped potential they are endowed with for the benefit of their people. They could map out and execute common action plans that serve them a compass down the road.

At this juncture, it proves appropriate to mention the recent similar development in the Horn of Africa. Leaders of countries in the specified region are doing their level best in ensuring a sustainable peace towards bolstering the countries' socioeconomic and political chemistry thereby to make their people better beneficiaries of the fruits that accrue from such joint ventures. Results achieved testify this fact.

The strategic significance of the aforementioned region, catching coveting eyes, is high. In light of this, the role of the leaders in ensuring sustainable peace in the region is potent enough in minimizing foreign intervention. When it comes to political issues in the region it helps them commanding heeding ears.

Seen via the prism of the global power blocks' alignment and the benefit to be derived thereof, the situation boosts the bargaining power of the countries in point. Furthermore, it blesses the new

political trend they started to chalk out their fate by themselves in a bid to actualize the benefit of their people.

Regarding regional peace and security, what the countries are doing running the gamut from rooting out international terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab to forestalling possible strife and destruction deserves a high five and recognition.

Aside from ensuring serenity in the region, the cooperation helps attract global investment into the region in a bid to materializing the region's dream of development and upturn the shameful narrative attached with the countries' growth history.

Soon after undergoing a reform, Ethiopia's push towards taking the socioeconomic and political scenario of the region to higher heights and to make the relationship between leaders based on common trust and cooperation holds testimony to the aforementioned task. The effort towards ensuring Somalia's peace in the form of fighting out Al-Shabaab holds testimony to this fact.

The fact that Leaders of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti have just held a meeting in Mogadishu to consolidate the fight against Al-Shabaab also corroborates the case in point. The leaders have pledged to strengthen the security force of Somalia in a show of regional peace that creates a fertile ground for a regional development.

Apart from warranting current and regional peace, the cooperation and joint effort is a harbinger to a sustainable peace.

In the presence of peace, the region could turn to a hallmark of trade, business, investment and tourism effectuating IGAD's mission.

The region, often rocked by strife, as well attains status to better click with sister economic blocks and thereby play's its due role in attaining AU's 2060 development goals.

Here, it is not hard to surmise how much Africa benefits if it manages to divert the finance lay waste to arrest destruction and loss towards irrigating its development ventures.

Opinion

Food self-sufficiency for national dignity

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ethiopia is gifted with abundant natural resources of adequate landmass, fertile soil, favorable climate, water, wildlife, and others. Many of its resources are not properly identified, well managed, and fully exploited. Had it been properly harnessed, the country could have fed itself fully and even beyond.

The absence of peace and stability, high political influence of some western countries, and the climate change impact are some of the impeding factors to the country not being focused on its development programmes that are assumed to ensure food security.

As a result, the country has been mentioned as one of the poor countries that do not ensure their food self-sufficiency. In Ethiopia, the average person eats just 42 kg of fruit and vegetables per year. This is far below the WHO recommendation of 146 kg per year.

However, the challenge has not discouraged the Ethiopian government from the move to ensure food security. Here it is imperative to recall the Food Security Program that was launched in 2003 and the PSNP (a project providing cash and/or food transfers to chronically food insecure households in food insecure woredas in rural Ethiopia) was formally launched in 2005.

Rural households (HHs) in Ethiopia have been using food insecurity coping strategies such as selling of live animals to purchasing food grain, borrowing, participating in off-farm activities, seeking relatives and friends support, change in feeding habits, food for work and reducing the amount to be consumed.

After the reform, the government has continued to devise projects that ensure food self sufficiency. Here it is good to mention Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030) that identifies sustained and quality agriculture programs to accelerate economic progress and ensure national food security as its national strategy.

Ethiopia's economic development program was redesigned based on agricultural modernization which would promote livestock and food production, effectively protecting and reestablishing the forest resource of the country, developing renewable energy resources to produce electric power for expansion of industries.

The development of small and large-scale irrigation infrastructure in the Ethiopian lowlands has recently been given increasing due attention by the government - among other contributing factors like improved seed, fertilizer supply, and use of mechanization on the clustered wheat farms.

As part of a ten years development plan, the government has been successfully

implementing a wheat self-sufficiency project that winds up by 2025. Even though Ethiopia is already the leading sub-Saharan African country in wheat production, the government has been implementing the project considering that there is still room for growth.

The government has also encouraged vertical home gardens to bolster urban agriculture for enhanced food security and nutrition. Regardless of the size of backyards or lack of one, home gardens are essential to bolstering urban agriculture for enhanced food security and nutrition as our cities continue to grow.

Apart from successfully accomplishing the green legacy programme which is quite important for the overall agricultural productivity, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched a national poultry, dairy, and honey production development program, themed "YeLemat Trufat" last November 2022. This program among other things included vegetable gardening and horticulture development.

The campaign's goals are to increase export earnings, ensure food and nutrition security, and import substitution. This national development program will be implemented for the next 4 years across Ethiopia. YeLemat Tirufat" development campaign focuses on nutritional opulence. The traditional food container, *Lemat*, represents a link between

farmers, pastoralists, and consumers.

Food self-sufficiency is directly linked to national sovereignty and dignity, and the YeLemat *Tirufat* campaign accelerates efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency at the family and national levels. The success of this national project requires a high level of commitment and great effort of government authorities down the ladder and the society at large.

Accordingly, regional state governments should devise new working systems and apply advanced agricultural technologies that enable them to exploit the untapped resources of the country and ensure food self-sufficiency.

Considering the stride that Ethiopia has been making to ensure food self-sufficiency, various financial institutions and non-government organizations have given due support. The financial and knowledge support should further be intensified so as to see the fruit of projects together.

Horn countries should also strengthen their cooperation so as to create a region where no one dies due to food shortage and malnutrition related problems.

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

News



Dire Dawa dry port, terminal vis-à-vis AfCFTA

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Industry Park Development Corporation (IPDC) stated that the newly inaugurated Dire Dawa Dry Port and Terminal would help better facilitate the implementation of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement.

Talking to local media, IPDC CEO Aklilu Tadesse said that the newly inaugurated Dire Dawa Dry Port and Terminal, which is built with an outlay of 3.3 billion Birr, is of paramount significance in better facilitating the implementation of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement.

He said Ethiopia's ever increasing and improving logistic and trading market is being a good model for different countries to expand trading and logistic movements.

He said that Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone, which is the first of its kind in the country, would enable AfCFTA to enhance nation's trading and logistic movement thereby allowing it to attract more foreign direct investment.

"Considering the fact that applying Free Trade Zone would accelerate nation's trading and logistic movement, the Dire Dawa Industrial Park was transformed to Free Trade Zone."

Noting that IPDC has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on service agreement with the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics, he stated that vital institutions

such as finance are starting to operate and deliver effective service in the free trade zone.

Since Free trade zone is new experience to Ethiopia as well as Africa, best experiences have been adopted from well qualified countries and it is approved by the Board, he said.

Jaclin Pimer from the Africa Trade Policy Center said AfCFTA became operational officially on January 2021. As to her, recently, some producers from Kenya and Ghana have started using AfCFTA.

She also added that the initiative provides an opportunity to foster collaboration with other producers and enhance value chain to provide products with higher value.

Didiye Havivana from the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) also indicated that ECA is supporting about 14 countries in East Africa on the implementation of AfCFTA.

Goni Diyapa, Director of West Africa Bureau, ECA indicated that AfCFTA will be a game changer if implemented appropriately, and it brings economic benefits.

Ethiopia's geographical location coupled with the Ethiopian Airlines which is Africa's largest airline as well as owning vast natural resources such as coffee make the country the best destination of AfCFTA, as to her.

AfCFTA has been signed by fifty-four African countries and forty-four countries have started implementing the agreement, it was learnt.

Ministry attempts to restore water...

clean water supply, improve sanitation and energy accessibility in Amhara, Tigray, and Afar states following the peace accord that was signed in Pretoria, South Africa.

"The Ministry is benefiting 3.8 million citizens in terms of potable water supply, which is estimated to be 395 million Birr in Amhara state and addressing 1.3 million communities in Tigray during the past few months. We have established task forces aiming at identifying the level of water infrastructure damages and directing the real solutions in the listed areas."

According to Habtamu, the Ministry has been providing training to water experts to build their capacity and bring significant impact in the sector. Besides, the Ministry has allocated 60 million Birr to address clean water supply in the war-affected areas this year. In this regard, international development organizations have been supporting through providing generators, water pumps, sanitaria, and the like.

"Though the states of Amhara and Afar Water and Energy Bureaus have played a crucial role to provide the necessary support to establish clean water supply there, it

is difficult in Tigray state because of the absences of the water institution, which was damaged by the conflict."

The minister added: "we have been working with the state offices and other international development organizations including UNICEF to address the potable water shortage in the conflict-ridden areas. Besides, we are working with the Ethiopian Electric Power and Ethiopian Electric Utility and water resource administrations to bridge the energy gaps and use the groundwater and river costliness in the listed areas."

Though access to clean water and sanitation has been improving in the past six months in the war-affected areas, this does not mean that the Ministry fully addresses the challenge. Due to the destruction and looting of water pumps, treatment plants, and water lines, there is a lot to restore the service to a pre-conflict level.

To ensure the potable water supply in the conflict-impacted areas, the Ministry will continue its endeavors by making strong linkages with all relevant stakeholders, Habtamu underlined.

Effective diplomacy hinges on...

that utilizing digital platforms has become the order of the day for Ethiopian diplomats who have been tasked to forge a strong partnership with a country of deployment.

The effective utilization of digital diplomacy is of great significance in countering the intensified disinformation and misinformation campaigns and promoting Ethiopia's positive image among global actors. Accordingly, the ambassadors should also use social media to the furtherance of cooperation that will contribute to the peace and development of Ethiopia.

"To make effective and fruitful digital diplomacy for the nation, all should stand united, support the leaders wisely and share the experience of other countries that bring tangible results in digital diplomacy. Moreover, the proper use of new information communication technologies is significant to help Ethiopian diplomatic missions abroad to achieve their goals," he added.

By the same token, through this digital diplomacy, the envoys can change the negative perception of some interest groups

towards Ethiopia and would also nurture new partnerships.

The veteran diplomat said, however, that digital diplomacy is not immune from problems and it is a favorable ground for the dissemination of misinformation which could potentially undermine Ethiopia's domestic stability by enticing foreign interference.

"Digital diplomacy should not be used for the political market, rather to keep our national interest in global arenas."

Nowadays, government leaders communicate with one another through digital diplomacy tools anywhere, they speak directly to the audience they seek to influence and the platform plays a great role in promoting one country's positive image with the rest of the world. Also, many world leaders increasingly follow each other, creating virtual diplomatic networks on Twitter through which they can converse informally and through private direct messages, Ambassador Teferra remarked.

Per Premier's directives, NBE sends...

Minister's National Security Advisor Ambassador Redwan Hussein stated that Ethiopian Airlines has also increased its flights from 3 to 5 as of yesterday.

It is to be recalled that in his first-time in-person discussion with TPLF Peace Talks Committee members last Friday, Premier Abiy gave a set of directives to speed up air flights and restoration of essential services in Tigray.

Accordingly, Ambassador Redwan Hussein tweeted that the federal government agencies have demonstrated an overwhelming response to Abiy's order to intensify the air

flights and resumption of essential services in Tigray.

Commenting on the issue to local media, a member of the Peace Agreement Implementation Coordinating Committee and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen also said that a discussion was held with TPLF delegates on the current situation of Tigray. "The federal government and TPLF peace committees are passing through positive developments, and their efforts to end hostilities have brought tangible outcomes though some key issues are still undone yet."

Demeke added: "As Ethiopians, we have encountered both problems and prospects. The problem we face and the prospect we have need our cooperation. Then, we will prevail together."

Other members of the committee also indicated that consensus was reached to improve the war-affected service and to hasten the reconstruction activities.

Redwan, who is also a member of the committee, noted that they evaluated the progress of the peace process so far.

Both sides evaluated the current situation of Tigray and a consensus was reached to

strengthen positive development, and to fully implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). The discussion between the parties would build trust and change the livelihoods of the people of Tigray, he emphasized.

It was learned that the Prime Minister held the first face-to-face discussion with members of the federal government and TPLF Peace Talks Committee at the HalalaKela cluster section of the Koysa dine for Ethiopia project in the Dawuro Zone of southern Ethiopia.

Opinion

Religious institutions need to avoid politics, theft and ethnocentrism

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

In his recent televised briefing to the members of his cabinet, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed gave a stark warning to the religious intuitions of the country to guard themselves against politics, theft and ethnocentrism and also warned cabinet ministers not to interfere in the recent crisis in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. He added that these three shortfalls are common among all religious institutions in the country. He said that religious institutions are concerned about eternity while both politics and theft are provisional and temporary and therefore should not be concerned about both.

The author of this article is mindful of the fact that religious intuitions have indeed been part of the history, culture and social consciousness in the country and cannot be ignored at any point in time. For instance, the introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia in the fourth century A.D. and Islam in the 7th century as well as evangelical churches in the early part of the 19th century have directly or indirectly affected, influenced and shaped the development of the socio-economic and political systems in Ethiopia.

The 1931 Constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia does not explicitly provide for the relationship between the state and religion but the regalia and ceremonial procedures of the coronation of the Emperor are attributed to the blessings and benedictions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. The 1954 Revised Constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia provides that *"The Ethiopian Orthodox Church founded in the fourth century on the doctrine of St. Mark is the established Church of the Empire and is, as such supported by the state. The Emperor shall always profess the Ethiopian Orthodox faith. The name of the Emperor shall be mentioned in all religious services."* Indicating the relationship between the church and state and the existence of a state church.

However, both the 1987 and 1995 constitutions of Ethiopia provide the separation of religion and state as an important component of these constitutions.

The fact that politics, theft and ethnocentrism are visible in the religious institutions, according to the views of the author is not a recent phenomenon. This has always been the case in the Ethiopian political and social order. Although the parties that have ruled the country for the last 50 years have practised their power based on the respective constitutions issued at all stages and regimes, they all needed the support of the religious institutions to strengthen their political

pross in linking up with the electorate and the entire public.

The Derge repressed and oppressed almost all religious institutions and in several cases killed their leaders but also officially legalized several religious holidays of the Muslim religion.

Religion and religious institutions in this country have been participating in the relief and development programs of the respective governments. For instance, for centuries, the monks in the monasteries of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church have been engaged in preserving the floral in the country through their afforestation and soil conservation activities in monasteries across the country. The monasteries preserved the herbal plants that were used to heal various illnesses as a cure in traditional medicine while the development wings of the Evangelical Churches and several Muslim NGOs conducted massive relief programs and water and sanitation projects across the country. Both the Orthodox Church and evangelical churches played a huge and commendable role in religious and secular education in the country.

On the other hand, religious institutions are certified to teach their followers the doctrines of their beliefs and are fully expected to profess peace, unity, love and compassion in the country.

The controversy that flared up in the Muslim community in Ethiopia over the past several years has made their faithful and respective institutions pay huge sacrifices to ascertain their unity. Although at a lower scale, the squabbling among the evangelical churches has made them pay the sacrifices that were on several occasions managed through mutual dialogues.

The author thinks that whenever issues of rank, finance and ethnic politics sneak into religious institutions, the believers and members of these institutions are seriously affected because everything they do hinges on their spiritual values and commitments and not on their carnal earthly desires which could compromise their strong faith.

The people of Ethiopia are generally religious and this has certainly paid off in strengthening the traditional moral standards of the country and social harmony. This is an important intangible heritage that should prevail from generation to generation among all Ethiopians.

Ethiopian religious intuitions are expected to be the custodian's love, unity, and forgiveness. Their leaders and followers need to live what they profess. Religious institutions need to cherish peace and tranquillity and spiritual accountability

in the country and among the faithful. Politics is all about political power on earth and has nothing to do with heavenly issues for which Ethiopian religious intuitions are mandated. The danger of mixing politics with religious affairs could affect not only the sovereignty and statehood of the country but the adverse effects could overflow into the Horn of Africa and affect the livelihood of millions in the region.

Ethiopia has huge challenges that need the full participation of religious organizations. Given the magnitude of the challenges the country is facing, there should be no time to waste to address these problems through a united action of all religious institutions. The vast areas of Borena Zone are suffering from drought which is snatching the livestock they have been using as their only coping mechanism. Ethiopia has more than 20 million citizens that await relief food support. The number of IDPs that have been displaced has now reached more than 2 million. Religious organizations have made commendable contributions to the 1984 food crisis in northern Ethiopia through the JRP project today such cooperation is needed and not balkanization.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed mentioned ethnocentrism as one of the challenges that religious organizations should avoid. The writer of this article understands that there is a bitter truth in this as in heaven there is no ethnicity as all are considered as children of God who is not of any earthly ethnic group. This is where politics set into religion by focusing on ethnic identification. There is no problem in worshipping or following any religion with one's language as this has been practised in Ethiopia for at least 50 years. The author recalls his personal experience from childhood in which Christian Orthodox believers, Catholics, and Muslims were worshipping their creator in the Oromiffa language. There is nothing new in this and it is not an entirely new demand. This is expected to continue as a democratic and constitutional right of all Ethiopians.

Theft as he said is almost universal in every religion in the country. All religions in the country preach the doctrine of stewardship. This is of two kinds including material and spiritual stewardship. In the Bible, in one of his teachings, Jesus Said. "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). It would therefore be inappropriate to engage in theft as it would be a gross breach of religious stewardship.

It might be possible to understand religion both in its way and in carnal perspectives but this does not rule out the cross-cutting

religious value of unity and love that needs to be cultivated in the country. The people of Ethiopia have lived together for thousands of years and this needs to continue unprovoked and uninterrupted.

The author thinks that the current issue in religious denominations is another old agenda that is being polished to be used to create country-wide havoc to destabilize the nation and derail the current focus on national reform and development programs. At face value, religious demands are legitimate and constitutional but need not be politicized.

Ethiopia used to be called the "island of Christianity" and the author begs to defer with those who believe in this. Let alone being an island of Christianity, innocent citizens have been killed simply because they belong to a certain religious denomination and ethnicity. This summersault pattern of thinking may not hold water today as Ethiopia is home to various religions.

This country is known for the existence of religious tolerance among various religions and this has not been the case in many countries. It is important to develop this as part of the national identity of the country and a source of pride for its people. Democracy in this country demands the combination of rights and accountability and the maintenance of the necessary balance between the two. Instead of living in grudges and a continuous spirit of hatred of this and that, it would be useful to tolerate each other and engage in constructive engagement by focusing on common issues and historical traits that cement unity among the people of Ethiopia.

The timing of such religious incidents is carefully tailored to mix ethnicity with religion. As stated above, the country is grappling with a series of manmade and natural calamities and the promotion of peace in the northern part of the country is just taking shape. The people of Ethiopia belong to different ethnic groups but the reality on the ground vividly shows that they do not necessarily belong to a single religious denomination. People of a specific ethnic group follow different religious denominations as has been the case in Ethiopia. This has so far not been a *casus belli* for any kind of confrontation.

What are the most important factors to ensure the stability of the country now? The author thinks that peace and stability in the country is the most important factor that needs to be ascertained before anything else. Our political, economic and social demands can be fulfilled only when peace prevails in the country and not through any kind of confrontation.

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

Business & Economy

Strengthening Micro Finance Institutions through raising their paid capital

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The Ethiopian National Bank has continued to take measures to strengthen financial sector and introduced new instruction that micro finance institutions to enhance their capital amount by seven fold. The recent regulation stipulates that the institutions to raise their total capital amount from 10 to 75 million birr.

In the past it is remembered that the NBE introduced instruction that stipulates the financial institutions such as banks to raise their paid capital from 5 hundred million to 5 billion birr. Similarly it implemented new regulation which stipulates that insurance institutions to raise their paid capital from 75 million to 500 million birr.

After the introduction of the new regulation people who want to establish micro finance institutions required to show their document which indicates that, their paid capital amount is 75 million birr.

There are 45 legally registered small scale financial institutions licensed by the National Bank of Ethiopia operating all over the country. Among them five financial institutions promoted to formal banks. Therefore, the new regulation is applied on the rest of the financial institutions. Among the institutions 75 percent of them have below 75 million birr capital. Therefore based on the new regulation all the remained micro finance institutions must raise their capital to 75 million birr in the coming seven years.

Teshome Yehise is the Yemisrach micro-finance institution executive director. As to him, for long micro-finances were asked to raise their paid capital hence the new regulation introduced by the NBE is an expected matter. He further said that, in the past in order to encourage micro finance institutions, NBE made their paid capital set to be small. But the small amount of their capital hampered their financial activities. Therefore, the introducing of new instruction can be taken as remedial action. Particularly it eases restricting their loan providing capacity. Hence, the new phase can bring a solution to the problem witnessed in the sector.

In addition, due to the decreasing purchasing power of the birr, the amount of money provided in the form of loan to customers was not sufficient enough to meet their business aspiration. Therefore, the increasing of the capital helps to raise their loan provision capacity. According to the micro finances financial governance, they are required only to provide loan not more than one percent of their deposited money. As the result, for long they were unable to provide sufficient amount of money to customers.

For instance, one micro finance institution with the capital of 10 million birr could only provide 100 thousand birr to its customers. If it has 20 million deposited

birr can only provide 200 thousand birr to customers. Therefore, the new regulation can serve as remedy. As to Teshome when the micro finance institutions deposited amount raised to 75 million birr, they will have the capacity to provide loan to customers up to 75 thousand birr. The new regulation also helps the institutions to broaden their capacity to reach their customers.

As to the information obtained from Teshome and others, currently about 15 micro finances have 10 to 20 million paid capital. Therefore, the introduction of new regulation by the NBE helps to strengthen their loan provision capacity. On the other hand, there are microfinances which have up to 400 million paid capital and the new regulation can serve to narrow their loan provision capacity gap.

But Teshome did not show his reluctance to explain some weak aspect of the new regulation with regard to raising financial capital of the microfinance institutions. As to him, the regulation though it has immense value to strengthen the institutions loan provision capacity, it has also its own demerit. He said that some micro finance institutions with small capital amount may face hard to full fill the requirement because of shortage of money and might forward their complain to the NBE. But as to him, they have to look options help full to raise their capital and among other not to take their dividend when they make profit and adding it to their deposited capital.

In addition to this, selling shares to shareholders should be taken as mechanism to raise their capital and meet the requirement to enhance their capital amount. The other good opportunity created by NBE is that, micro finance institutions are allowed to sell share to Ethiopian diaspora therefore, they can mobilize resources by tapping the opportunity so that they can meet the requirement to make their paid capital to 75 million birr.

Nevertheless, as to Teshome, there are some sub articles on the new instruction introduced by NBE which hampers microfinance institutions not to sell share to Ethiopian diaspora. According to the instruction in order to buy share from MFI diaspora should come here physically and made agreement with MFI and such situation discouraged many diaspora and looked the situation as burdensome because to some of them it might be impossible to come here due to various reasons.

Many diaspora showed interest to purchase share from MFIs but they are dismayed by the new instruction and such a situation made MFIs to miss the opportunity. Therefore, NBE must remove these constraints so that MFIs can sell their share.

In the past many diaspora purchased share from Misrach micro finance and from other finance institutions. They were also

allowed to open bank account by Dollar but the newly introduced instruction stipulates that diaspora must come here and must make agreement with MFI and such situation forced diaspora to show reluctance to come here and purchase share. Therefore, NBE must consider the matter and amend the instruction so that MFI also tap the opportunity.

Teshome further said that MFIs play pivotal role in the economy and supporting them enables to increase their capital and to broaden their services to reach out the disadvantageous segment of the society.

Most of MFIs provide small amount of finance to the low income groups and created job opportunities. They also can have more than 5 million customers and provided credit to them. Therefore, paying attention to them is essential. They provided such amount of money not because they are banks but because they have the capacity to reach large segment of the society.

Particularly small scale and medium size business could obtain loan from MFI and this indicates that how MFI are essential and if they raise their capital they can also enhance their capacity and boost the sector.

As to Teshome, previously he conducted study on how MFIs reach the rural community and the study outcome indicates that no rural person get access banks to secure loan and almost all rural population got credit facility from MFI and one can understand how MFI are active in rural areas.

According to the information obtained from NBE, in the year 2013, 250 thousand people could secure loan from Banks and one year later the number reached to 300 thousand. Contrary to these, the number of people obtained loan from MFI is reached to 5 million and this shows how MFI are vital particularly in rural areas. They also play pivotal role with regard to poverty reduction scheme

The NBE 2013 report also explained that the total capital of MFI institutions reached to 27.9 billion birr however, out of it, 84.8 percent of the capital was owned by 4 major MFI institutions which are now promoted to Banks. These institutions are allowed by NBE to provide none interest banking service to customers and their capital amount with other 36 MFI by the year 2014 reached to 15.4 billion birr. MFIs which got license to be promoted to Banks are Amara, Dedebit, Omo and Addis Saving and Credit Association. These institutions by 2013 out of the total amount owned 88.8 percent of saving and credit, 82.7 percent credit and 84.2 wealth. But at the end of 2014 the rest 40 percent saving and credit association's capital amount reached to 28.3 billion, their total credit amount reached to 36 billion birr and their total wealth amount reached to 58.8 billion birr.



Particularly small scale and medium size business could obtain loan from MFI and this indicates that how MFI are essential and if they raise their capital they can also enhance their capacity and boost the sector

Planet Earth



Centers should provide overall support to ensure food security

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

The current agricultural practices have faced several challenges, including new crop diseases, lack of modern technologies, climate change, and so on. As a result, states through their agricultural research centers strive to reverse these challenges by using new and improved technologies developed through scientific research.

Besides, to solve large-scale problems, agricultural research centers provide solutions to the challenges come across by farmers. For instance, low production of crops, livestock, and fish could be overcome by newly developed and improved species, varieties, and breeds. Agricultural research also works to have better nutrition and food sufficiency through diversifying diets.

Taking improved technologies and scientific research for agricultural development into account, Ethiopia has established many Agricultural Research Centers which are important to modernize, improve, and transfer technologies. These centers have been conducting various researches in different areas to see an improved livelihood for all Ethiopians who engage in agriculture, agro-pastoralism, and pastoralism.

The country's Agricultural Research Centers have evolved through several stages since the late 1940s, following the establishment of the agricultural and technical schools of Ambo and Jimma. Besides, Haramaya University and Debrezeit Agricultural Research Center were the major research entity. The establishment of the then Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) in 1966 saw Ethiopia's first nationally coordinated agricultural research system.

According to the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), currently, there are over 20 research centers and sites found across various agro-ecological zones. These centers are responsible to coordinate diverse research results and national commodities. Some of the research centers

and sites have one or more sub-centers and testing sites. Even, they serve as sources of national agricultural research policy formulation.

The centers are expected to provide and supply better and improved agricultural technologies, coordinate and training to the farmers, promote national agricultural policies and work on capacity building, perform agricultural extension activities, manufacture prototypes, conduct research, and so on.

However, the Agricultural Research Centers are responsible to achieve a lot in improving the livelihoods of the communities and the farmers, but the connection between the research and agricultural development is not up to the expected results throughout the country.

In Ethiopia, agriculture is still the backbone of the country and contributes a significant share of the GDP. Hence, the agricultural research centers are expected to support the sector to be resilient. This would help to overcome the regular food shortage that occurred due to droughts, sudden outbreaks of natural disasters, pests, lack of rainfall, and shortage of technological advancement in the past centuries.

They are also expected to support the implementation of improved service in agronomic practices, afforestation, protection of livestock and crop plants, accessing financial support, and accessing time-based markets which advance the livelihood of the community.

Cognizant of the role and the mandate of agriculture research centers to ensure food security and agricultural development into account, the House of People's Representatives put directions on how the centers should be helped and also how they can help the communities to alleviate the challenges of ensuring food security.

The House of Peoples' Representatives Agricultural Affairs Standing Committee

explained that the agricultural sector is the backbone of the country's industrialized economic transition, so the capacity of agricultural research centers should be increased and well-equipped with updated modern and improved technologies.

The standing committee clarified that if it is not possible to modernize the research centers and strengthen their manpower structure, it will be difficult to ensure and achieve the national agricultural development plan.

The Chairperson of the Agricultural Affairs Standing Committee Mr. Solomon Lale said that the standing committee made a random field visit and observation at six agricultural research centers namely Wondogenet, Hawasa and Awade, Qulumsa and Melkasa, Holtana, and Ambo.

The Committee, during the field visit, has the opportunity to identify the challenges faced by research centers in creating, adapting, and distributing improved varieties of crops and animals, as well as vegetables and fruit, so that solutions can be sought from the government and efforts to ensure national food and nutrition security will be successful.

The centers have their own limitations in terms of fulfilling the national responsibility of generating, adapting, and disseminating new technologies. Despite their cumulated experiences and practices in the crop, animal, fruit, and vegetable research and distribution of improved species, the centers are not performing well due to a lack of budget and trained manpower.

The equipment and laboratory facilities of the research centers are promising to conduct field research activities and support the efforts for ensuring food security and creating job opportunities. They also help to improve agricultural activities like generating, adapting, and distributing new technologies and so on, he stressed.

However, the research centers have been

conducting research on animals, vegetables and fruits, soil, and various types of crops, but the centers have a gap in distributing improved technologies and seeds due to the lack of an organization or institutions that multiply the improved technologies adequately. Hence, the stakeholders, the concerned bodies, and the government should find the possibility that the research centers will be able to fulfill their national mandate.

Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute Administration and Capacity Building Department Deputy Director General Dr. Chlot Yirga noted that since budget and other related issues are national problems, the centers will work diligently to fulfill the demand of the communities. The centers are also ready to enable the communities to work to the best of their ability and choose the national mandate they are entrusted with.

Besides, the standing committee should help the agricultural research centers in solving the challenges such as budget, trained manpower, equipment, and so on. The challenges hinder the centers for modernizing agricultural work and tasks, he requested.

Indeed, in some parts of Ethiopia, people are vulnerable to climate change problems which have disastrous impacts on agriculture, and the livelihood of the people. Droughts, floods, pests, and disease occurrences are challenges to farmers and contributed to reducing agricultural productivity and food insecurity.

Therefore, agricultural research centers should be committed to generating, developing, and adapting agricultural technologies while the government should strengthen its support to the centers. Furthermore, the centers need to work on overall agricultural development, coordinate and provide technical support for the farmers, widen capacity-building tasks, and popularize agricultural research results.

Art & Culture

Developing a Vibrant Intellectual Culture in Africa

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The Cambridge dictionary defines an intellectual as “a person whose life or work centers around the study or use of ideas such as in teaching or writing.” The term intellectual has various connotations. According to one of them, an intellectual is someone “relating to the ability to think and understand ideas at a high level, or involving ideas.” An intellectual is also “a very educated person who is interested in very complicated ideas and enjoys studying and careful thinking.” We can in fact keep on defining an intellectual from different perspectives.

Perhaps the definition given by Wikipedia can be relatively more holistic or complete. It says that, “An intellectual is a person who engages in critical thinking, research and reflection about the reality of society and who proposes solutions for the normative problems of society. Coming from the world of culture, either as a creator or mediator, the intellectual is participates in politics either to defend a concrete proposition to denounce an injustice usually be either rejecting producing or extending an ideology and by defending a system of values.”

French philosopher and writer Albert Camus used to say that to be an intellectual is to differ, that is to say to differ from the run of the mill ideas and attitudes of the common people. This is because intellectuals are supposed to be well-educated, well-read and able to analyze the complex economic, social and political problems of society and come up with palatable solutions. This may be true in the context of European intellectualism. African intellectuals have the double or triple responsibility of leading their communities to the road kingdom of Reason and out of the narrow spectrum of tribalism and ethnic identity so that they can embrace globalism and metropolitan culture in their thinking and actions.

Intellectuals are thinkers as well as doers. They think to produce new and feasible ideas to society and put their ideas into practice. They are the producers of theories and the translators of these theories into practice. Theories guide actions and vice versa. Theories are born of practical actions and actions are guided by practical theories. Not everyone can become an intellectual as the quotations above show. One has to be educated at the highest levels in order to become an intellectual or a man capable of thinking independently for the good of society. This is everywhere true. Intellectuals in the West and the developed countries in general have similar objectives, tasks and responsibility of their peers in less developed countries.

The intellectual tradition is born in ancient Greece. Aristotle maybe considered the foremost philosopher who wrote and said a great deal about the nature and education of intellectuals. According to Aristotle, “In sum the intellectual virtues in the proper sense of the term appear to be wisdom. Prudence, deliberative excellence. And consideration for others, as well as consideration in the narrow sense of

the word. We could also add cleverness, since Aristotle suggests that ingenuity in achieving good ends is praiseworthy.”

According to Aristotle, education or learning is key to producing intellectual virtues. “One overlooked area of Aristotle’s contribution to educational thought is his

conception of five intellectual virtues. While Aristotle claims that ‘moral virtue’ comes by habit, intellectual virtue “owns its birth and growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time).”

African intellectuals can generally be divided into two groups. First those who deliberated in a learned way, about the genesis of ancient African communities, their mode of existence and interaction as well as the values they developed and the world view they shaped in their interactions with other communities near and far. The second group of African intellectuals can be categorized as the post-colonial intellectuals whose education and value systems are borrowed from European intellectuals and occupied the intellectual space in many African countries after the advent of political independence in the 1960’s.

These intellectuals were shaped by the Western educational and value systems and tended to look at their respective communities with jaundiced eyes because of their ignorance of their societies or their deliberate distortions of their value systems. For this reason, “The intellectual history of Africa, like its international counterparts, is concerned with understanding how communities in the past understood and debated the spaces they inhabited, and how discourses circulated and changed over time.”

The post-independence African intellectuals were the new elites who guided and impacted or shaped the political, economic and moral orientations of the African communities under the leadership of political elites, when many of them tried to copy the European systems of government and paste them on the African body politic. The results were not always successful and often led to serious dislocations, contradictions and upheavals simply because their ideas did not reflect the wishes, aspirations and values of the African communities. In this period, African intellectual activities boiled down to power struggle among the various elite groups that vied for control of their respective societies.

However, it would be unrealistic to say that all African intellectuals of the post-independence period were the same. True, many of them did not understand African societies because of their alienation and ignorance of African history and anthropology or because of the distorted way they were looking at these things as a result of Western education.

However, some of them could break out of the colonial intellectual or mental cocoons in which they were kept and tried to articulate the dreams of their compatriots in a radical way as being a rebellion against not only colonial intellectual paradigms but also against neocolonial influences that were always more tenuous and more dangerous than the pre-independence intellectual bondage imposed on them by Western thinkers in the service of European powers.

Perhaps we can single out a third group of African intellectuals who were rather passive or neutral in their endeavors and followed personal interests of power and prestige at the const of African societies.

Ethiopia’s situation is slightly different from other African countries in terms of intellectual contribution to the enlightenment of society or to the modernization and continuity of ancient intellectual values that were mainly religious in origin. No viable research is available as to the origin and growth of Ethiopian intellectual life. According to a paper entitled “Ethiopian Intellectual History and the Global” by Sara Marzagora from the University of London, the role of intellectuals in Ethiopian society has its origin to the period after Ethiopia’s victory at the Battle of Adwa and the country’s membership to the League of Nations from which Ethiopian intellectuals took great pride of and considered themselves equals to their European peers.

According to Professor Emeritus Bahru Zewde of the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian intellectual life in the post-1941 period was uninteresting compared to the pre-war period. Sara tells us that “Bahru Zewde has described the post-1941 period as characterized by “Drab intellectual climate” in contrast to the “intellectual vibrancy that prevailed in the 1920s”. It appears that intellectual developments do not follow a linear trajectory and tend to swing up and down following historical events.

By the same token, the intellectual climate in Ethiopia in the 1960s and 1970’s was rather vibrant while the decades that followed it, including the present one have seen sharp intellectual declines that coincided with the sharp decline in educational quality and the lack of initiative on the part of the older generation of intellectuals that were the victims of state repression during the half century from the Revolution to the present. It is therefore no accident that Ethiopian intellectuals are presently wrangling with a very weak legacy they are trying to redeem through better education of the next generation.

However, this is not to imply that Ethiopian intellectuals have no role to play in contemporary Ethiopia. On the contrary, what happens in the country is more or less the product of the intellectual resources of the older generation of learned citizens whose ideas and actions are continuing to shape the destiny of the country. Whether they will succeed in their present endeavors is something that will be up to the next generation to judge because, As Aristotle long said, the rise and fall of intellectual activities need time and experience to mature and produce the desired results.

The vibrancy of African, and by implication, Ethiopian intellectuals at [present should be measured in terms of their contribution to research and development, the spiritual enhancement of their people and the material and mental emancipation of African societies. Otherwise being educated might remain an empty and non-functional or dysfunctional claim. The links between research and development as well as investment and growth would only be effective when government, the intellectual class and society form strong bonds. The other alternative would be stagnation, alienation and underdevelopment.

Society

Towards creating charming Addis Ababa

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is undeniable fact that Addis Ababa, the political and diplomatic capital of Africa, is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Owing to its historical, cultural and religious heritages; and other important attractions, the capital has numerous attractions worth visiting.

However, to make the city more clean, green and attractive and conducive not only for its dwellers but also visitors, all dwellers ought to develop a scientific approach to beautify and keep it tidy in accordance with government's regulations and municipality sanitation framework.

Abeba Setargie is an environmental scientist with whom this writer stayed and talked about some aspects of making Addis Ababa charming and eye-catching city. She said, "political will and commitment of the mass matters to make Addis attractive and catchy as its name bespeaks. We have to give over the responsibility to build beautiful city to private corporations, too. A beautiful city has only ever been created when municipal officials impose strict and ambitious regulations."

"The goal of growing skyrocketing buildings is to give Addis Ababa majestic look. People need to decide on their local flavor of beauty and gather the political will to enforce it. That is really how citizens can build a good-looking city," she said.

Since Addis Ababa houses numerous population drawn from every corner of the nation, apart from those who were born here, all need the city to be healthy, productive, enriching, and functional—not just beautiful and beguiling. Active and bustling streets are also important because they build strong economies, offer mental and social stimulation, and provide city dwellers with a density that makes public investments worthwhile.

"As far as my experience of many cities around the world is concerned, it is overly strict regulation that can stifle the complexity and variety that give most cities beauty and function. It is time to create and expand the urban village model tourist attraction sites like the Unity Park that Addis Ababa has become famous for," she added.

She further stated that the capital must provide varying levels of activities and privacy for its residents and visitors. Many seek out urban environments for their bubbling activity and social nature. But some will always need a quiet, private place to relax and refresh.

As to her, she said a beautiful city without function is its own vice. It is well recognized that only a few cities in the world are truly beautiful—and none of them has been built in recent history. There are many aspects that have to be



Cleaning has to be carried out as a culture not on a campaign basis



taken into account to make Addis Ababa comfortable to its dwellers and attractive to its visitors. Cleaning up is one of the fundamental ways to attract people to a city. From the waterways to the protected environments to the side of a busy road, keeping debris contained and trash cleaned up will make a more attractive city to people wanting to settle, reside and visit. Besides, having monthly trash collection community events in a bid to bring people together for the right reasons by giving them a vital role in keeping the city clean. If dwellers are involved in making the city more attractive, they will probably feel more connected to it."

Another important step to make Addis Ababa clean is keeping waterways clean, which entails reducing the amount of unwanted water pollution from silt, trash or debris in waterways.

Yes, she said, investing in parks, recreation centers, city beautification initiatives and riverside projects is of significantly useful in providing Addis Ababa with majestic look and mesmerizing stay in it.

Creating an environment that brings citizens problems and concerns to the

forefront of community conversations through collaborative community growth discussions is decisive, too. A well rounded, attractive and a city that values citizens safety and invests things that will bring its community together is a decisive step to come up with memorable and comfortable city to live in.

With all big projects, there is always an opportunity for many organizations and companies to get involved in a range of ambitious projects playing dual role: benefiting them out of schemes and creating a haunting and appealing city.

She said, "Providing hygiene training using hygiene curriculum developed by implementing partners has to be well focused on as it is one of the invaluable measures to make the city clean."

"Urbanization has long been associated with human development and progress, and it refers to the mass movement of populations from rural to urban settings and the consequent physical changes to urban settings. True, Addis Ababa is known for playing multifarious functions to all its inhabitants. It has been the heart of various businesses, industries, technological development, economic growth and societal change and at the same time serving as a breeding ground for poverty, garbage hub and center of serious sanitation challenges."

Some of the major health problems resulting from urbanization, she said, include poor nutrition, poor sanitation, pollution-related health conditions, housing conditions and health related aspects. As all these have direct impacts on individual or community quality of life, embarking on sanitation and

environmental hygiene pays off.

Undeniably, infrastructure should be well secured, sufficient space for recreational activities has to be well thought of and immense employment opportunities need to receive increased attention along with making neat and tempting city, she underlined.

Although urbanization has become an irreversible phenomenon, some have argued that to resolve the problems of the city, dwellers must tackle the root causes of the problem, such as improving the socio-economic situation of the urban poor.

Ephrem Debela is working on sanitation and environmental hygiene. Having a stay with this writer, he said a successful city is economically and culturally vibrant, healthy, safe, clean and attractive to business and tourism, and provides its citizens with quality of life. This vision is appealing but remains hard to realize as a developing city like Addis Ababa has faced with numerous challenges such as severe sanitation hurdles.

What is required is a radical shift in mindsets and practices towards an urban sanitation approach that impacts political priorities, funding, planning, design, management and governance, he added.

This radical shift will require the engagement of all stakeholders and a political transformation that touches all citizens, at all walks of life, informal and formal, to facilitate the roll out of universal urban sanitation services. This is critical not only for reasons of equity, and to respond to the human right to sanitation, but also because the consequences of inadequate sanitation eventually affect everyone, as excreta-related pathogens spread easily across urban environments.

"Policy makers, municipal officials, organizations working on sanitation and hygiene, like Addis Ababa beautification and sanitation bureau, and the likes need to better understand how sanitation impacts the functions and form of the city and how it supports economic development and promotes equity to make a difference and real progress," he underlined.

Every urbanite in Addis Ababa, no doubt, would like to have a beautiful city having bustling public squares where people can drink coffee or read the newspaper, recreational spots and alluring resorts and spas. These places have to be intimate and enclosed enough to feel like an extension of everyone's home, and give citizens relief from their cozy private quarters.

Yes, these days, the showpieces of Addis Ababa exhibit its priorities to citizens as a multidimensional city. Hence, all city dwellers are expected to work from dawn to dusk to make Addis Ababa quite clean thereby comfortable to work and live in.

Law & Politics

Building confidence for full realization Pretoria peace deal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met for the first time with members of the Pretoria peace agreement implementation coordination committee. As a matter of fact, in the course of the discussion, an evaluation on the subject of the ongoing implementation of the peace agreement has been carried out.

Prime Minister Abiy has met with members of the federal government and TPLF peace talks committee.

The prime minister held this face-to-face discussion at the Halala Kela cluster section of the Koysha dine project in Dawuro Zone of southern Ethiopia.

The Premier has convened a discussion with members of the peace agreement implementation coordination committee for the first time.

During the discussion, the ongoing implementation of the peace agreement was evaluated and directions have also been put forwarded on issues requiring further attention.

Both parties expressed confidence and trust in implementing the peace accord while vowing to do their level best to work on certain issues.

The meeting is said to cultivate trust between the parties to peace deal. Previously the Ethiopian government and Tigray People's Liberation Front met in South Africa and Kenya. The strings of discussions served as trust building mechanism paving the way for the full implementation of the peace pact. On Friday's meeting the peace committee also reaffirmed commitment to fast delivery of humanitarian assistance to Tigray state. So far, humanitarian aid is entering Tigray via all modes of transportations.

Subsequent to the end of the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country and the signing of the peace accord between the two parties, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure has been producing results more than ever before with flying colors.

It is widely acknowledged that in the wake of the uncompromising stance of the government to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance and other urgently needed things, the whole lot has been making progress in the right direction.

In the course of the war that lasted for two years, some groups were making the most of the delivery of humanitarian assistance provided by the government and relief agencies for various purposes apart from playing a part in tarnishing the positive images of the country.

By the same token, in times gone by notwithstanding the fact that quite a lot of endeavors have been made in many situations by some groups to distract the delivery of humanitarian assistance by thwarting humanitarian corridors, they failed to accomplish their hidden intentions on account of the unwavering stance of the incumbent.



It is important to remember that the federal government had avowed a humanitarian truce that drew recommendations from the wider international community. In the current state of affairs, the move of the federal government to beat swords into plowshares and return the conflict-affected areas into normalcy has been greatly appreciated by the global community.

The sad thing is that even though the much-needed humanitarian assistance has been entering the Tigray State via road and air, some entities have been engaged in a smear campaign against the federal government giving a lower profile to the positive developments. In the wake of the federal government's firm stance to make peace happen relief agencies on several occasions have been providing humanitarian aid to the people of Tigray.

No matter what the challenges may be, strings of convoys carrying humanitarian assistance have been entering Tigray State. In defiance of some impediments, the Ethiopian government has vowed to assist the progress of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the northern part of the country.

No matter how far Ethiopia's adversaries travel to tarnish the actual accomplishments blossoming across the country, all their endeavors have been going for a burton and kissing the ground. It is an indisputable fact that since the start of the cessation of the hostilities agreement, noncombatants in the war-ravaged areas have been breathing a sigh of relief.

It is common knowledge that after the signing of the cessation of the hostilities agreement, a significant amount of encouraging acts have been taken by both parties. Other than that their readiness for realizing the peace accord has been paving the way for restoring peace and tranquility in every corner of the northern part of the country.

Despite the fact that there have been speedy developments on the subject of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and resumption of basic services in all quarters of the Tigray State, some groups have not distanced themselves from spreading lies and tarnishing the positive moves of the

government. But the truth is that in the aftermath of the positive developments surfacing in every corner of the northern part of the country, the federal government has been receiving a pat on the back from a wide spectrum of bodies.

Aside from causing to happen the sought-after goal, the peace agreement has been assisting the path of ensuring lasting peace and attaining major milestones in taking the country.

Even though doomsayers pulled out all the stops to hoodwink the wider international community with their usual bogus stories concerning the positive moves, the federal government has sustained making the impossible possible and the unthinkable thinkable.

In addition to this, regardless of the fact that troublemakers do a hatchet job on the cessation of hostilities agreement, the incumbent has sustained accelerating the peace implementation in addition to making noteworthy developments.

Recently, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) announced that 71 percent of the second round humanitarian aid has been distributed to people affected by the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

NDRMC Public Relations Director Debebe Zewde told local media that 5,202,297 people in Tigray State, 2,440,677 people in Amhara and 715,132 people in Afar have been recently receiving a humanitarian support that includes food and nonfood items, medical supplies, medicines, therapeutic foods and others.

As to the director, over 1,113,961 liters of fuel has been delivered to the areas and 29 international and local partners and government organizations have participated to support the needy using trucks and air transports.

The director also said that 1.6 billion Birr has been sent to Mekelle and Shire towns.

It is to be recalled that over 8.35 million citizens in the conflict-affected areas have received full-fledged first round humanitarian support following the peace

agreement signed between the government of Ethiopia and TPLF.

The National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), along with various donor groups, has continued delivering humanitarian aid to the war-ridden parts of the country.

In its latest Twitter post, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-Ethiopia (UN OCHA-Ethiopia) announced that the government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners continues to deliver food and non-food assistance to conflict-affected people through the air and all available corridors.

While quoting NDRMC, the UN OCHA Ethiopia indicated that the government of Ethiopia and Humanitarian Partners assisted IDPs and War-affected communities in Amhara, Tigray, Afar states through the air and land corridors.

"Looking at the latest food distribution round, the three food partners namely, EDRMC, WFP and the NGO Consortium-JEOP have assisted more than 415,000 people in Afar under round 5 including more than 138,000 people last week. In Amhara, more than 972,000 people received food aid under round 5 including 149,000 last week."

More than 532,000 people in Tigray have also received food assistance under the third round including more than 2,300 people last week. The number of beneficiaries in Amhara and Afar states has been collected as of January 27; and Tigray's report as of 18 January.

The UN OCHA said, however, that limited areas across the three war-affected states remain hard to reach. "Humanitarian partners continue to flexibly re-prioritize the most urgent needs with available resources in the face of conflict-induced displacement."

It is to be recalled that NDRMC Commissioner Shiferaw Teklemariam (PhD) recently held talks with the UN Secretary-General Special Advisor Robert Andrew Piper and FAO representative to Ethiopia, Farayi Zimudzi on the subject of aid assistance to IDPs.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Of waiting for 'Your Turn' and the "Denkuan Sebaris!"

It was a long line of visibly frustrated people who've been waiting for over an hour and nothing has yet happened. The staffs at the place were in on tie since they've to sign in or else the next payday wouldn't be a happy one. However, once they're firmly placed in their offices the storyline of the 'disciplined' worker changes. It's already mid-morning and nothing has yet started rolling. Midmorning should have been the time when they have serviced to thirty or forty people. Through some open door and ort glass partition customers meekly waiting for their turns could see the workers were having quite a nice day. They laughed almost at every line each one of them uttered as if they were collection of the most gifted standup comedians. Of course, seeing your fellow human beings happy a world that is becoming very unhappy by the day should be comforting. Maybe you one of these days might enjoy your day in the sun. The people waiting to be served were observing their part of the social deal by being patient despite the wrong being done to them, while the service providers were acting so irresponsibly.

So, waiting in line, while being a civilized way of doing things, doesn't always pay back. So at times people might be tempted to use other alternatives like sneaking through the back doors or those under-the-table sort of things. Of course while there can be no plausible justification for illegal and unsocial behavior, sometimes the very question of survival and living to see another day drives people into doing what they normally wouldn't have done.

Someone must have said by now that life after

all is about waiting for your turn and nothing else. Don't we know that! The sad part is these days as the world gets even messier 'your turn' doesn't come that easily. And that makes the waiting more frustrating and nerve wracking. Much of the time your place in the line is altered without you noticing what was being done. You came before even the birds started chirping and have been giving the number thirty-two card. Somehow fifty people have already gone in and you're still waiting 'for your turn.' where the eighteen people who weren't even in the line came from one of those low-level 'mysteries.'

I don't know the situation these days; but in earlier days at every wedding or other such festivity there used to be those smartly dressed and uninvited people practically bulldozing their way into the halls and tents. They are the ones who consume much of the food and drinks as their own is about the free food and drinks. There is this Amharic term describing such people; "Denkuan Sebari!" that was what they were called. It roughly means the person forces his/her way into an event they are not invited to attend. Well even the most orderly lines of people waiting for services are spoilt by the "Denkuan Sebaris!" the difference is that these guys don't bulldoze their way in by themselves as they usually have 'insider' help. Others taking your place close to the head of the line seem to have become a crude fact of life these days.

And just like the cream is in the first bites so is the possibility of getting full service which you deserve. By the time your turn comes they

have already run out of ID cards! That's how most of the time credit goes to the "Denkuan Sebaris" while you the one's the god medals are pushed to the sidelines; sidelines where the heavy curtains shut you completely out!

You're in a restaurant and all the tables are occupied. They tell to wait just a few minutes and there would be a vacant table or two. Since it's your favorite s restaurant and you came for a particular dish you relish you don't mind the fifteen minutes or so. As you're waiting people you know enter. You're sitting in an outer chair waiting to be called. After the greetings they ask; "What are you doing at this place?"

"I'm waiting for some table to be vacated. The place is brimming with people as a stadium on the day of like a United/City derby."

It takes time until they digest the information and once the message has sunk in you're quizzed; "What do you mean you're waiting for an empty table?"

"A table where I could..."

"I know that. I'm asking you what you mean waiting for a vacant table!"

"Anything wrong with that" ?

Everything is wrong with that! Things being as they are in our society no wonder people seeing you waiting for some table vacated while you can go to another restaurant are startled out of their wits. The guy is getting on your nerves.

Look waiting for an empty table in restaurants is not something you see often. Years back there was this kitfo craze which partially strangled

the city. The craving to dig one's teeth into that dish was so intense people didn't mind waiting for 'their turns.' Many kitfo houses being not so much of attractions in their designs nothing was near to comfortable. A group of us were in this insanely compact, and yet popular, kitfo house. Look, without exaggeration your backs and sides touched other persons. It was a very tight existence comfort was sacrificed for the kitfo dish which these days, so they say, costs an arm and a leg. So we were busy eating with very moderate speed and in the meantime chatting over one thing or another. The guys who were crammed at the horrifically narrow door didn't like it at all. Well in such circumstances what you're supposed to do is just eat like Armageddon just around the corner and beat the hell out of the place. One very large man in some tone of humor, and bitter humor at that, says; "Hey, we're hungry and you're talking!" It was enough to send us into a frenzy of eating. More scared of what the hungry mammoth of a human being would do to us minnows than humane considerations.

Yes, indeed waiting for your turn has become a fact of life you can't ignore. Of course it seems these days in many places people have become more accustomed to patiently waiting in lines for services. Look at the taxi lines. Some days for whatever reasons the minibuses come in very frustrating succession. The lines of would-be passengers snacking around corners and the merciless sun pounding humanity like it never did you can imagine how 'waiting for your turn' could be memory that you'd prefer to forget. And here too one way or another the "Denkuan Sebari!" spoil the show.

Researchers say we're getting dumber; Really!

In recent days I have been watching a couple of documentaries which question if human beings were getting dumber! A very interesting topic, wouldn't you say? I mean most of the things you see these days being very out-of-normal few topics could be more interesting. Wisdom, like the nicer sides of life, is being swept aside. I mean the conventional wisdom is probably that the more you know the more you become humane, the more you go looking for the right things to do; things that would benefit not only you but also your community and human beings at large. But that seems not to be happening in volumes we would have liked it to happen. It said that researches have at last confirmed indeed human beings were becoming dumber. Aha! At least having something that sounds 'scientific' makes it more interesting; even though, these days scientific interpretations seem to have become subjective.

If things have gone as they should have we would have been living in a peaceful world where the guns have fallen silent and there is nothing to interfere with the singing of the birds. We'd have lived in a world where human beings would have indeed proven that they are in a better position than most of the animal kingdom in their thoughts and actions. But alas! Things appear bleaker on that front.

What you are hearing more is not about the advance of the brains of humans but about AI. The world seems to have put all its hope and homework on AI. We seem to be praying, "Oh, most honorable AI, please look after and over us!" But then more and more worries are cropping up that we might take AI too far and out ourselves at the technology's mercy. One

writer wraps up his informative article with, "The question is not IF AI will take over. The question is WHEN." And already even some quarters of the scientific world seem to be freaking out about the prospects of how far the AI thing would go. But maybe it might be getting too late for humans to use their brains to do anything about it. The worry is that maybe the robots will get smarter than human beings. Some would argue they are already smarter! So no wonder science is telling us we indeed are getting dumber by the day.

The fact is that as if the claims about humans being dumber are as strong as they sound the world surely becomes more dangerous. Yes, that's what is happening. The world is getting more dangerous. I mean take the Russia/Ukraine war. It's dumbfounding to witness some sections calling for more destruction and more blood in a conflict that already has caused sufferings the real facts of which would come out once the dust settles, if it ever does any time soon.

Incidentally I think many of us still remember like it was yesterday the calls for peace talks to be held without any preconditions during the conflict in the northern part of our country. In fact, the threats came from the powers that if we don't sit down and talk peace we'd be hit with sanctions! Now in the Russia/Ukraine we can only wonder where all that 'peace at any cost' rhetoric went! The same sections which have been trying to scare the hell out of us seem to be the ones who don't want to listen to anything with the term 'peace' in it. Yes humanity is getting dumber as reason is being tossed as far as it can be tossed. The narrative has been hijacked and the voices calling for peace are all

but shut out. Doesn't the amount of weaponry that is being funneled to the fronts by multiple actors dumfound you? I earn, it might yet appear to be far from becoming another world war. But one can't deny unless some miracle happens sometime soon it is only a matter of time before things get out of hand. Had the world been smarter than dumber things would have been curtailed from getting any more worse!

Yes it must be because we are getting dumber that we think about military muscles rather than our ability to bring peace 'at all costs,' a favorite phrase that seems to have been abandoned. The real narrative of that war is not known, not yet anyway. Political abuses and prejudices calling the shots there is much the world doesn't know than what it does. The real picture would have meant the world would have a better understanding of the human cost and the cries for peace would have resonated. But that is not happening; we are not getting any smarter only dumber. The use of brute force weighing down on all-inclusive reasoning peace is the last word that comes to mind.

Talking of the lighter side, while reading about our becoming dumber by the day I couldn't help smiling at an article listing what the writer says were 'signs' people getting dumber. There is this picture a stretching shelf in a supermarket with packages of cat milk. 'Cat milk'! The sign by the side of the packages reads, "Please note cat milk doesn't come from cows" No, this is not a third grade nutrition awareness class or anything like that. It is for the adult shoppers. Well I've to confess that this is the first time I heard of any cat milk thing. And if it's meant for human consumption you have to promise

me half of the IMF coffers for me to take a single bite. In this article it also says, "7 per cent of American (adults) think chocolate milk comes from brown cows." Does this mean if Kanye West doesn't tell them what it is all about! The guy seems to know a hell lot of things and he should have come to the 'rescue' of his compatriots!

Let me give you a couple of signs appearing on the article; "Library is closed until opening time." Well, that could really be tricky. I mean if it is meant for regular members they probably know what "opening time" means and there is no misunderstanding. But imagine poor you going to the library for the first time to read maybe what science says about boosting your testosterone count. But the sign on the doors tells you it was closed until 'opening time.' Frustrating, wouldn't that be! Maybe your depleted testosterone count might be approaching the point of no return. No, that didn't come from any 'reliable source.' The writer is practicing his 'guessing genes.'

Take this one posted on the outdoor section of a restaurant and in bold letters too; "Our food is guaranteed not to cause pregnancy." What in the world does that mean! Maybe the restaurant might have been sued by some nerd of a lady with something like, "I became pregnant after having their onion soup." Back here the only sign restaurants seem to have fallen crazily in love with those announcements of services having been started anew. I can tell you that in some of those places the only changes you notice are the table clothes. At least they have taken the trouble of using cleaner tablecloths! Maybe that was a step closer to smartness!

International News

Somalia's neighbours vow final push against AL-Shabaab militants

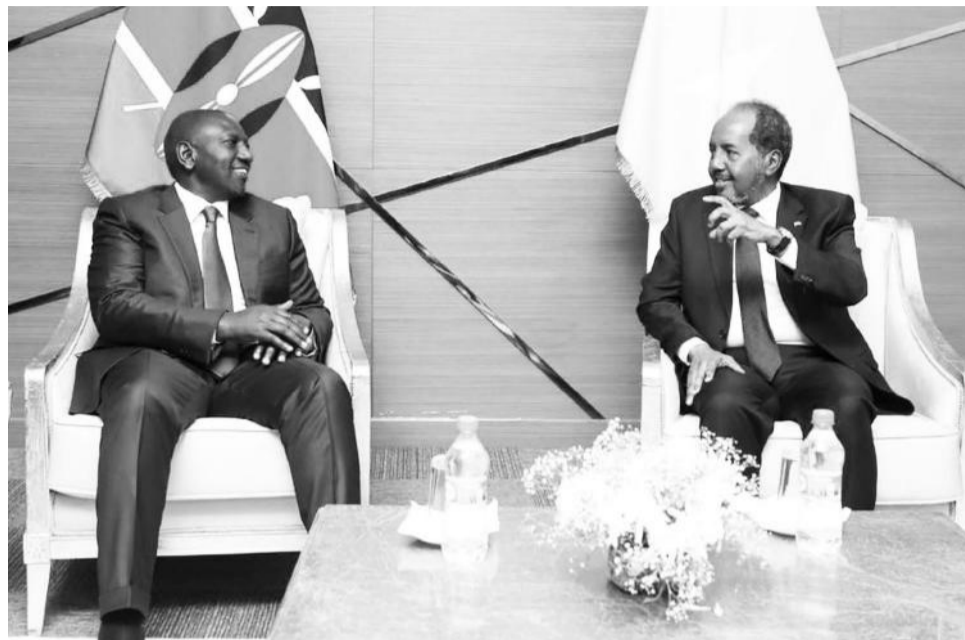
Somalia's neighbours on Wednesday approved Mogadishu's request for an all-out war — including its need for lethal weapons and coordinated support to — annihilate Al-Shabaab militants.

The decision came out of an inaugural meeting of frontline states with Somalia, a definitive gathering between Mogadishu and all its immediate land neighbours in the Horn of Africa, to draft a common counter-terrorism strategy.

Kenyan President William Ruto, Djibouti's Ismael Guelle and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed agreed with the host Hassan Sheikh Mohamud that Al-Shabaab must be smoked out of every part of the Horn.

“(The Summit) welcomes the request by the Somali government to obtain both lethal and non-lethal support to equip the newly-generated SNA (Somali National Army) units and to enhance the firepower capabilities of current SNA operational units,” a communique said on Wednesday. Somalia has lately been raising the tempo against Al-Shabaab, cheering on village vigilantes to fight alongside the SNA, while banning Shabaab narratives from the media, and freezing bank accounts linked to the militant group.

But the terrorist group has often responded with vengeance, targeting government



Kenyan President William Ruto (left) and his Somalia counterpart Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

offices, civil servants and civilian areas with explosives to avenge for lost territory.

Somalia is also still under an arms embargo, a thirty-year ban that has morphed every year from the time it was imposed to prevent clan warlords from obtaining weapons. In November, the UN Security Council extended the arms embargo until November this year, arguing Al-Shabaab was still a threat to the country.

At the time, Kenya, which was a non-

permanent member of the Council, voted among the 11 countries to support the embargo with Russia, China, Gabon and Ghana abstaining. Somalia protested the prolongation of the ban and it means it has to report every weapon it requests from the international community, as well as any military training it receives, to the sanctions committee of the UN Security Council.

The decision on Wednesday may have been influenced by the reality that the African

Union Transition Mission in Somalia (Atmis) has only ten months left on its mandate, signalling a possible gap to be filled on the security front. The communique said the Atmis, whose troops come from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Burundi have been instrumental in supporting the SNA fight. But the leaders also agreed that there is a need to plan for the future.

“The Summit stressed the urgent need to jointly plan a decisive operational strategy against Al-Shabaab and acknowledges the need to mobilise regional support for timely, decisive operations,” it said.

“The Summit agreed to jointly plan and organise a robust operational campaign at the frontline states level, of search and destroy Al-Shabaab on multiple frontlines aiming at the key strategic Al-Shabaab strongholds across south and central Somalia.”

The four countries agreed to establish a joint operations mechanism that coordinates the operations' holistic capabilities and multipliers to deter and defeat the enemy and said they will work on “new partnerships and enhancing solidarity among Somalia's neighbouring states to stand by Somalia in a united fight against a common terrorist threat to demonstrate a unified stance on confronting Al-Shabaab.”

Source: *The East African*

Multiple factors cited for plunge in 2022 volume of global FDI flows

Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) downshifted in 2022 after a 2021 upswing as economies recovered from the Covid-19 slump. Worsening investor sentiment in 2022 reflected fear of a coming recession, rising inflation and interest rates, and uncertainty from the war in Ukraine. High profitability in the fossil fuel sector put at risk recent momentum in climate change investment.

FDI of many types is sorely needed to address the world's multiple crises. Investment is critical in health systems to recover from Covid-19 and prepare for future pandemics, as well as in both climate change mitigation and adaptation at unprecedented scale.

The recent COP27 closing text noted that a global transformation to a low-carbon economy requires investments of \$4-6 trillion per year. As governments look to strengthen supply chain resilience for essential goods, more regional diversity is needed both in innovation and production capacity, which can only be provided by investment.

At the same time, the uncertainty created by these crises gives investors pause. Geopolitical complexity and swings in attitudes to industrial policy can rapidly remake the profitability of an intended investment. Witness the recent commercial conflict over green tech subsidies. Uncertainty about the exact implementation of a new international tax regime affects investor calculations.

Individual investments are getting smaller but more numerous. Due to automation and the atomisation of the value chain, an

investment might be several fold smaller than a decade or so ago. The smaller it is, the less an investor can afford to spend on the process.

This is magnified in the case of early-stage companies, which are now born-global, making their first international investments much earlier than their historical counterparts.

Further, the flavour of investment is changing. Growth in global flows of services and intangibles grew at nearly twice the rate of goods flows over the past two decades, underpinned by data movement, telecommunication advances, and new tech business models.

In situations of uncertainty, the edge comes from structured intelligence — the ability to know more, communicate better and react faster than before. Technology is increasingly providing this.

The first step is to sniff out an opportunity and matchmake.

Increasingly sophisticated databases of business activity and economic vitality can create heatmaps for potential investment. Overlaid with models of supplier networks and simulations of logistics and other input costs, they provide initial assessments of project viability.

These prototypes combined with customer relationship management software can generate leads and spark serious investment conversations.

At this stage, investment promotion agencies are beginning to look beyond the now standard use of LinkedIn and similar



networks, to offer virtual reality tours of potential sites. Estonia has been highlighted for its use of AI chatbots to engage prospective investors.

Understanding and communicating the regulatory environment, to ensure full compliance and take advantage of R&D credits or other incentives, is a complex task for investment actors.

All the more so when screening large numbers of possible opportunities and setups, in a fast-changing regulatory environment. For instance, since 2020, European and G20 governments have introduced over 1,700 legal and regulatory requirements in digital sectors.

Again, technology solutions can reduce the burden of assessing local laws as well as international frameworks, from bilateral investment treaties to free trade agreements. The extent to which different jurisdictions are digitally transparent can be a factor in how seriously investors look at them.

Once an investment decision is made, investor single windows can significantly

streamline and accelerate the process of setting up the investment, overcoming red tape on the way.

Despite strong growth in sustainable finance, only a small fraction of it makes its way into sustainable investments in developing economies. Although in their infancy, there is scope for new technology-enabled forms of project finance and trade finance to follow in the footsteps of the digital payment revolution, with more closely targeted matchmaking between needs and sources of finance.

Recognition that the success of FDI depends on more than the economic case and extends to the knowledge, process and connections surrounding it, was a driver of the Investment Facilitation for Development negotiations at the WTO since 2017, as well as a related Services Domestic Regulation agreement. The former is coming to conclusion while the latter was agreed in 2021.

As both move to implementation, technology will be a crucial enabler.

Source: *The East African*

In Pictures



(Halala Kella, Dawro Zone, Ethiopia)

Building trust, capitalizing on peace deal

BY NAOL GIRMA

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed conferred with federal government and TPLF peace deal committee members on progress of peace in northern region. The result of the discussion, as National Security Advisor to the PM Redwan Hussein is to: "PM Abiy passed decisions about increasing Flights, Banking & other issues that would boost trust & ease lives of civilians."

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen, and TPLF leaders Getachew Reda, Lt. Gen. Tadesse Worede and Lt. Gen. Tsadikan G/Tinsay were among discussants.

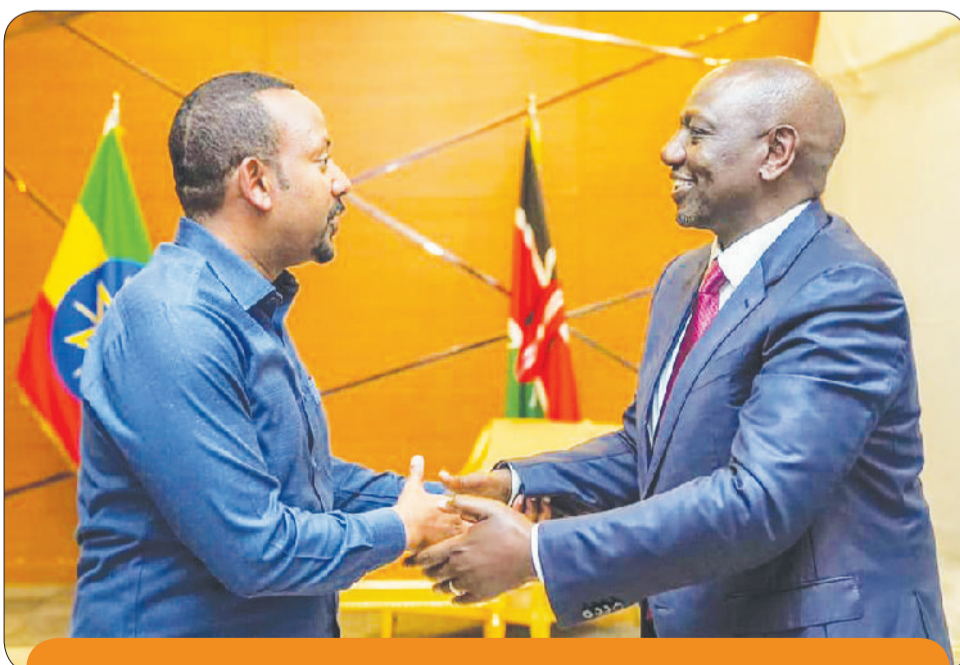
Robust operational campaign against Al-Shabaab



Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya committed to enhance regional security cooperation amongst them. Leaders of the countries have met in Mogadishu and ponder ways to stabilize Somalia by joining hands on the fight against Al-Shabaab.

Premier Abiy on the summit said the war will be won through a collective effort to, among others, disrupt their financial flows, and weapons supply chains and sanction the enablers of terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia to further strengthen cooperation with Kenya



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed expresses keenness to strengthen bilateral ties with Kenya. The Premier met Kenyan President William Ruto during Somalia-Frontline States Summit and discussed ways to build up cooperation on infrastructure, trade and investment, regional integration and other areas.

Horse riders showcased the riches of Agew tradition



The Sebat bet Agew Horse Riding festival happened for 83rd round in Injibara town, Awi Zone of the Amhara regional state last week.

Agew horse riders' association festival is celebrated every year by the Awi community administration commemorating local peoples' contribution during the fight against Italian invasion.

The annual horse-riding festival is probably the largest horse riding festival on the planet level. Riders colorfully decorate their horses, local people prepare the cultural food and beverage of the society, and it's a real day of the feast.

Watching sixty thousand horsemen competing in the event is definitely something entertaining and has the potential to attract a significant number of local international tourists.