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Ethiopia's quest for sea port justifiable: Premier

• Population to hit 150 mln in 2030

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA— The issue of water in general and the concern of the Red Sea in particular are quite important for Ethiopia's development, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

Ethiopians have to critically think over accessing sea port via negotiating in a bid to feed some 150 million populations in 2030, he added.

Consulting MPs about the issue of the Red Sea, the premier recently said that: "The Red Sea is of paramount importance in boosting Ethiopia's development via

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Photo Eyob Teferi

Selamawit Kasa

Gov't distributes over 798,000 quintals of aid to needy : GCS

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Over 7.3 million people in need of emergency aid have been reached in two rounds of distribution, Government Communication Service (GCS) announced.

See Gov't distributes ... page 5

Germany to support Ethiopia in green hydrogen export: Ambassador

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA -Germany is ready to support Ethiopia to unleash its potentials and become a green hydrogen exporter, said German Ambassador to Ethiopia.

German Ambassador to Ethiopia Stephan Auera said that Ethiopia is an important partner particularly in renewable energies including green hydrogen.

He indicated that his country is looking forward to continuing its good cooperation with Ethiopia and help the later to utilize all the potentials to become an exporter of green hydrogen.

Mentioning majority of the global greenhouse gas emission comes from the use of non-renewable energy, the Ambassador said it requires transforming this into the

See Germany to support ... page 5



Stephan Auera



Wonchi-Dendi ecotourism project to inaugurate next month

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA - Wonchi-Dendi Ecotourism Project which was launched three years ago as part of the 'Dine for Ethiopia' initiative by

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Regional Integration for economic stability in the Horn

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International Day Of Girl Child

"Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being!"

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The president's major points in her inaugural address to MPs

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News

Ethiopian delegation holds fruitful discussion with WBG, IMF leaders

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by the Finance Minister Ahmed Shide and National Bank Governor Mamo Mihretu had fruitful discussions with the World Bank Group (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials during the Annual Meetings held in Marrakech, Morocco, from October 9-13, 2023.

According to a press release of Ministry of Finance, the delegation met with WB President Ajay Banga, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, WB Managing Director for Operations Anna Bjerde, WB Eastern and Southern Africa Vice President Victoria Kwakwa, and African Department Director Abebe Aemro Selassie.

During the occasions, the minister highlighted the country's development priorities, including economic recovery, macro-fiscal stability, private sector development, human development, and reconstruction, among others.

The release disclosed that both institutions commended Ethiopia for the critical steps taken to stabilize the economy and tame inflation as well as the broad-based reform program planned under Ethiopia's second phase of the Home-Grown Economic Reform.

The meetings also discussed and agreed on a way forward on how the IMF and the WB can jointly support the country's ambitious economic program that is set to unlock Ethiopia's full economic potential, it was learned.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian delegation held bilateral discussions with the British State Minister Andrew Mitchell, and US Treasury Undersecretary as well as US and France Executive Directors on Ethiopia's current political and economic affairs and the ambitious plan for the next phase of transformative reforms needed to address present challenges on the sidelines of the annual meetings.

Association says empowering horticulture exporters

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association announced that it is deploying utmost efforts to ensure the competitiveness of Ethiopian based horticulture exporters.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Association Executive Director Tewodros Zewdie said that the association has been undertaking evidence-based policy advocacy interventions to create a better business environment for the sector operators.

In doing so, various amendments are undertaken towards revising policies, proclamations, directives, regulations among others, he remarked.

So far, the association managed to offer training exceeding 10,000 workforces of the industry on a wide spectrum of issues including compliance, crop specific topics, biological control of pest, integrated pest management, solid and liquid waste management aimed at elevating and building the capacity of the horticulture sector operators, Tewodros stated.

Mentioning the presence of potential



Tewodros Zewdie

partners globally, he said the association has been linking Ethiopian based growers with international buyers through business-to-business schemes thereby executing ranges of sales agreements with buyers in Europe, Middle East, Far East, North America and other destinations.

Furthermore, HortiFlora Expo, which brings wide segments of Horticulture supply chain actors under one roof, has brought lots of buyers from Europe, Middle East, Far East, US and Canada as well as African Countries. Besides, it has given additional impetus to members to broaden its market destination.

Having said the sector is the second largest in terms of boosting forex to the country and the opportunities in the global market, he added that the industry kept on bringing more than half a billion USD every year.

He stated that the cost of doing business in the horticulture sector is getting expensive in many countries, and hence it is becoming a windfall opportunity for Ethiopia to lure more investment.

He said: "Ethiopia is one of the top five producer and exporter countries in the cut flowers globally following Columbia, Ecuador, the Netherlands and Kenya, however a lot remains to be done in fruit and vegetable. Also, Rwanda and Uganda are also on the pipeline to create favorable conditions for investors.

"We have been engaging in various tasks such as carbon and water footprint reduction, expanding investment lands of the horticulture farms to create a better enabling environment for members in the sector," he remarked.

He also called on the government and other stakeholders to ensure sustainable peace and put consolidated efforts to unleash the potential of the country to help attract more investors in the sector.



Expert emphasizes new technology, experience based approach to tourism promotion

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The promotion of tourism and hospitality activities needs to be carried out by experienced professionals as well as need to be backed with technology, so said Tourism Expert.

OZZIE Business and Hospitality Group Consultant Kumneger Teketel told to local media that promotion and marketing activities should be undertaken in a professional manner and adequate budget need to also be allocated.

Unlike many countries, Ethiopia has unique nature besides owning historical sites and heritages that dates back to many years. The promotion activities need to be planned ahead, financed but most importantly, need to be done

by professionals at standardized level.

"There is no such thing as dark shooting in hospitality and tourism activities. Everything is planned in advance and its money transaction is legal and secured. This in turn would solve the shortage of foreign currency as well as ensure ample job opportunities."

As to him, the tourism business is being categorized in to heritage/historical tourism and MICE tourism (Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions tourism in which, the past 15 to 20 years, the latter has become new trend in most developed countries.

Apart from promoting tourism resources, strengthening new trends and alternative that could serve as new source of income is significant. Thus, organizing hospitality

and tourism programs and exhibition would play crucial role in short period of time. Nonetheless, the private sector needs to take a lion share besides the government, he stressed.

While officially opening the National Tourism and Hospitality Investment and Exhibition held at science museum, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said tourism is one of the main pillars for the economic sector, considering the nation's rich history, heritage, culture, natural endowments, birds, wildlife and unique events that are marketable.

The Primer called upon all Ethiopians to explore what their country offers, to extract the potential of what they discover, to promote and to serve in the interest of positioning Ethiopia as a destination with many splendors.

Editorial

Foreign policy that cross-fertilizes with economic diplomacy

For countries pursuant of optimizing nation's benefits and expanding the frontier of international cooperation, economic diplomacy serves a viable tool.

Tapping into trade, aside from clicking in friendly gestures, countries could bring forth a springboard that allows new opportunities for growth and development fertilizing the platform with consensus, honesty and cooperation.

To crystalize political objectives, making a recourse to economic avenues is a must do. Such diplomacy runs the gamut from trade agreements, investments and creativities down to using the gambit of economic sanctions and the like as a whip to flog fledgling countries into a political domain, subject to political straightjackets. However, the robustness of the diplomatic affinity, the ultimate goal is making recourse to the economic power.

The salient point that renders the economic policy of a nation pivotal is its being interwoven with its foreign policy in a higher frequency.

Trade and investment connections are the main venues countries forge chemistry with one another. For instance, bolstering economic cooperation and support, countries could minimize or parry the cloud of conflict hovering over their common sky and resolve divergences or bickering in amicable ways.

Economic diplomacy could as well be significant in promoting the perks that could accrue to a nation. Striking trade deals, advertising windows of opportunities when it comes to export and investment as well as preserving and augmenting the contribution of industries in the country, it is possible to create new job opportunities to citizens.

Previously the Foreign policy of Ethiopia was one that upheld a cold shoulder treatment of investors if not one that followed a closed door approach. Owing to this, the situation not only turned to a hotbed for unemployment but also curtailed opportunities for knowledge transfer.

Also treating the rest of the world with a closed door had stripped the nation of a good international cooperation and support and the fruits that come in tandem with it. It does not require a crystal ball to surmise how the wrong-headed foreign policy the country pursued was affecting the nation by crippling the economic policy?

During the course of the past 25 years, specially after the past five reform years, changes for the better are actualizing. Amending its foreign policy the country has managed to synchronize its foreign policy with the international situation. After the ball of a new foreign policy began rolling, frequently, the country is seen on the ball.

In the political arena, the country has managed to wield a wider influence thanks to the new approach adopted.

In the economic sphere, coming up with a foreign policy in consonance with economic policy, it has allowed its economic benefit make an upward swing. As such the country has succeeded in turning into a much looked-forward investment hub.

The presence of an environment that does not label some foes and others fans and also that promotes common benefits and common efforts have galvanized the attention of many countries towards Ethiopia. Purchasing shares some are partaking in the country's push for a rosy tomorrow. Here it suffices to mention the commendable works done in the telecommunication sector attracting a big investor. Another investor is flexing muscles to join the former one and ethiotelcom.

The aforementioned ventures serves as a green light for foreign investors to set their eyes on Ethiopia.

Not only that, in cognizance of the country's conducive foreign policy IMF and WB have nodded yes to allow loan to the country. Needless to mention when the money is outlaid for infrastructural development, the task will serve a go ahead for foreign developers to gush into Ethiopia. An Italian investor this week has made a statement to this effect corroborating the case in point.

The success story in this respect could serve a launching pad for similar perks down the road. As countries are practicing in African Free Trade Zone they are benefiting from the harvest obtained. Pertaining to this, Ethiopia is engaged in multifaceted activities. Rail and road transport as well as telecome works are but to mention the overarching ones. When undergoing infrastructural developments tasks see completion, they will underpin the opportunities for countries to develop together. The country's friendly relations with neighboring countries is not a windfall. It is one that tagged along numerous diplomatic activities. Suffice here to mention works done with Eritrea and Sudan. Due to the peace that prevailed in the environ subsequent to the country's diplomatic effort, Ethiopia has not only managed to sell electricity but also export Ethiopian Made products to neighboring countries. When this clicking gathers momentum the chemistry among neighboring countries will turn vibrant. Consequent to this the region will be an Eldorado boasting tranquility, development and prosperity.

Affluent nations appreciative of the new foreign policy and activities of the country are showing disposition to cancel debt.

Opinion

Kazakhstan's Republic Day: Celebrating Progress and Journey to Global Prominence

BY BARLYBAY SADYKOV

Every October 25, Kazakhstan commemorates Republic Day, a day of unique significance, as it marks the pivotal moment in 1991 when Kazakhstan declared its sovereignty. This declaration was more than a political statement; it signalled the nation's commitment to its people to carve out a destiny reflecting their aspirations and cultural identity.

Today, Kazakhstan stands tall as the biggest economy in Central Asia. Since gaining sovereignty, the nation has witnessed a meteoric rise in living standards, with its citizens experiencing improved health, education, and overall quality of life.

In the realm of domestic politics, Kazakhstan's journey since gaining sovereignty is nothing short of remarkable. Establishing a stable republic in a region historically characterized by empires and nomadic confederations was no minor achievement. The nation swiftly adopted a constitution, delineated the roles of president and parliament, and has since conducted several rounds of competitive elections. The emphasis has always been on unity in diversity, ensuring that its myriad ethnic groups find voice and representation in the nation's political fabric.

The last few years have been especially transformative for Kazakhstan. The country has achieved substantial progress in its democratization journey, exemplified by the implementation of wide-ranging political reforms, including constitutional amendments following last year's national referendum. These changes have enhanced the democratic fabric of the nation by enabling diverse political perspectives and by redistributing power in favour of the elected legislative body. In line with constitutional amendments, the country witnessed the direct election of rural mayors and the adoption of a proportional-majoritarian model in the last parliamentary election. This marked a significant shift in the electoral landscape of Kazakhstan, allowing for the substantial participation of independent and self-nominated candidates in the election, an occurrence that is truly unprecedented in the nation's history.

Kazakhstan's commitment to progress is also evident in the country's economic story, one that has earned international acclaim. With vast reserves of oil, gas, minerals, and metals, the nation effectively leveraged its natural wealth. Strategic infrastructural developments, enticing foreign investments, and diversification initiatives propelled Kazakhstan from an agrarian landscape to become a leading economic powerhouse. The decision to establish Astana as the capital in 1997 symbolized this forward-looking vision, melding modern architectural wonders with the indomitable spirit of the steppes.

More recently, Kazakhstan has become the top investment destination in the region and a major financial centre. This is a result of concrete reforms and initiatives over the years, including the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre. Yet the journey is far from over. In his latest state of the nation address on September 1, the country's President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, proposed additional economic reforms with the aim of promoting fairness, inclusiveness, and pragmatism. He outlined objectives to diversify the economy, strengthening industry, and targeting stable economic growth of 6-7 percent. The country's new economic plan provides a clear vision for the country's development over the next three years and will have broader ramifications for regional development and cooperation. These economic transformations, inspired by the president's vision of a Just Kazakhstan, aim to contribute to the creation of a more balanced, sustainable, and globally integrated economy.

On the international stage, Kazakhstan has etched a unique identity through its astute diplomatic endeavours. By championing nuclear disarmament—evidenced by the closure of the

Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the relinquishing of its nuclear arsenal after the country gained independence—the nation positioned itself as a global advocate for peace. It initiated the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in 1992, a multilateral forum aimed at promoting peace, stability, and cooperation in the Asian region. Additionally, Kazakhstan has fostered regional cooperation, playing significant roles in platforms such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union. By ensuring positive relations with major powers like Russia, China, the European Union, and the US, Kazakhstan manifests as a bridge between East and West, offering a harmonizing narrative in an often-divided world.

Kazakhstan has friendly political relations with Ethiopia. Kazakhstan considers Ethiopia as a friendly country and an important partner in Africa. We note with satisfaction the positive dynamics of the development of bilateral relations in recent years. Kazakhstan is the only country from Central Asia represented in Addis Ababa. Twelve years ago we opened our Embassy, and many things have been done since then.

We are interested in intensifying bilateral trade and investment, and, as a result, in Ethiopia's entry into the TOP-10 economic partners of Kazakhstan in Africa. Visits of the business delegations to Kazakhstan in June and September this year we hope will give a positive results, by making a joint ventures in promising fields.

Our experts estimate the export growth potential even only of processed Kazakh products at more than \$100 million. A positive signal is the three-fold increase in trade turnover at the end of last year. In this year trade growth continues.

Kazakhstan attaches particular importance to our cooperation within regional and global structures. Ethiopia is recognized as one of the active political leaders of the African continent and the center of multilateral diplomacy. Kazakhstan, like Ethiopia, upholds the multilateral order based on the UN international law. Our countries have similar positions on the international agenda, including problems common to the two countries. We are needed to continue support each other within the framework of the UN, and other international platforms.

During his address at the most recent UN General Assembly, President Tokayev reaffirmed that his country will continue cooperation with its major allies on all strategic issues. This approach has positioned Kazakhstan as a viable mediator in international crises, a role that it has already fulfilled successfully through the Astana Process on Syria.

The progress Kazakhstan has made since its declaration of sovereignty is not just a testament to its past, but a robust foundation for its future. This foundation is fertile ground from which new innovations, deeper diplomatic ties, and further advancements in all spheres—social, political, and economic—will undoubtedly spring. The momentum generated by these achievements is poised to propel Kazakhstan even further in the coming decades, reinforcing its position as a global beacon of growth and development.

For the people of Kazakhstan, Republic Day is not just a nostalgic nod to the past, but an embodiment of their commitment to a unified and prosperous future. This day is a celebration of their resilience and vision, a vision that elevated Kazakhstan from a former Soviet republic to a beacon of progress and diplomacy on the global stage. The promise of tomorrow, illuminated by the achievements of today, ensures that Republic Day remains a celebration of not just sovereignty, but of endless possibilities.

Barlybay Sadykov is Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Ethiopia, Permanent Representative to the African Union

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



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News

Ministry plans to secure over 500 mln USD exporting minerals

ADDIS ABABA -The Ministry of Mines has announced that it has planned to earn more than 500 million USD from mining sector in during the current Ethiopian fiscal year.

Large areas Ethiopia's ground are endowed with mineral resources that have not yet been adequately tapped for the benefit of the country.

However, the government has been working to reverse this as it has given utmost priority to the sector in its 10-Year Perspective Development Plan. According to the plan the nation expects over 17 billion USD.

State Minister of Mines Million Mathewos told ENA that in the current Ethiopian fiscal year, more than 500 million USD is planned to be earned from this sector.

He indicated that in order to achieve the plan, efforts are being underway by closely working with companies engaged in the sector, and in particular, support will be given to enhance the development capacity of the companies.

According to him, attention will be given to increase the diversification of minerals for export trade, including industrial minerals.

"In addition to middle level gold producers, there are companies that produce gold in Oromia, Gambella and Benishangul and



South West as well as in the Tigray state. We mobilized these companies, including the middle-level companies, and we are working hard to achieve the plan for the year," he said.

On the other hand, the number of international companies engaged in mineral exploration and development is growing, the state minister added.

In particular, he pointed out that companies that have been engaged in mineral exploration for years have completed their exploration works and are moving to development citing the gold mining company Kumrock Mining Company, a subsidiary of Australian gold mining company

Allied Gold Mining, that is working in the Benishangul Gumuz state.

The company has now completed its exploration of gold mines and is building a production facility, which is expected to be the largest gold company in Ethiopia, with a cost of more than 500 million USD.

He explained that when the construction is completed in a few years, it will contribute significantly to Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings from the sector.

Mathewos explained that companies engaged in nickel, copper, tantalum, lithium, potassium and other minerals will complete their exploration and start work in the next few years.

In addition to foreign companies, the interest shown by local investors to engage in the sector is encouraging, he said.

He mentioned that the amount of gold entering the National Bank of Ethiopia is showing a significant improvement due to the measures being taken.

According to the data obtained from the Ministry of Mines, 226.8 million USD was earned from exported minerals in the fiscal year 2015.

Ethiopia's quest...

entertaining a give and take policy with a view to owning port in the Red Sea. As Ethiopia does have everything to be developed, all citizens should be well aware of the abundant resource of the nation."

According to the Premier, the country needs to be in a position to garner benefits by sharing ethio-telecom, the Grand Abay Dam, Ethiopian Airlines by analyzing cost benefit analysis.

He further stated that the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, among other, are expected to closely talk about the issue and reach consensus to help Ethiopia access sea port and options to use multiple ports as the country has to meet the demands of the ever increasing population growth.

"When we entertain discussions and hold close talks, we can device a range of mechanisms to deal with our country's problems. Since port rent has been pulling Ethiopia's growth back, we all are expected to be concerned on the issue and openly discuss instead of being quite as if the issue was an untouchable one," he said.

So long as Ethiopia has the right to use the Red Sea waters both historically and geopolitically, the generation has to capitalize on the major concerns to make the country a well-developed one utilizing water resources in general and that of the Red Sea in particular, the Premier elucidated.

Gov't distributes...

It was learnt that about 798,607 quintals of emergency aid has already been distributed since last July.

Briefing journalists on current affairs yesterday, GCS State Minister Selamawit Kasa said that more people across conflict and drought affected areas are still in need of emergency aid. So, the government is providing aid to the needy.

Following the decision of two giant international aiders [the USAID and FAO], to stop aid temporarily, the government has been working on fulfilling the gap. The government has allocated 8.7 billion Birr annual budget only to address humanitarian affairs, she said.

She also stated that the distribution system is being evaluated and monitored firmly. All tasks are being carried out taking account into accountability and responsibility, according to Selamawit.

She also urged all governmental and non-governmental institutions to reinforce their provision of humanitarian aids.

Millions of Ethiopians are in need of emergency aid due to drought, conflict, flood, and locust infestation, she indicated.



Wonchi-Dendi ecotourism...

It has been monitored by senior government officials including the Prime Minister, President of Oromia State and others. The follow up and support of the officials along with community participation has ramped up the progress of the project so that it will be completed shortly, he noted.

According to the Coordinator, the project incorporates different entertainment facilities including photo booths, theater,

traditional and modern restaurants, bank and shops among others.

He also explained that the project is comprised of rare accommodations like a cave made of glasses, a 69-meter long movable steel bridge, and a parking lot that can house more than 200 vehicles at a time, lodges and various recreational transportation options.

He pointed out that the completion of the project will be of great benefit not only

for the area, but also to the region and the country as it creates a great revival for the tourism sector.

So far, more than two thousand citizens have been benefited from the project which is expected to create 700 job opportunities when it gets operational, Daba added.

Daba called on all citizens and stakeholders to protect the project and its surroundings that has been built by active public participation.

Germany to support...

modern and fossil-fuel-free energy system.

He also expressed the commitment of his government to address climate change and its root cause by transforming the energy system.

Documents indicate that Ethiopia has a large amount of renewable energy capacity from hydropower (45,000 MW), geo-thermal

(10,000 MW), wind power (100 GW) and solar system. Ethiopia's agriculture-led economic strategy, landscape, geographic location and alternative ports in neighboring countries create a huge advantage to produce and export green hydrogen.

However, the country needs immediate help to address drought-driven problems and to

apply as a long term solution. Mitigating the drought in Ethiopia requires a holistic and comprehensive approach on addressing climate change, the Ambassador noted.

According to him, Germany also supports Ethiopia to ensure enduring peace. Hence, "we are trying to contribute to achieve sustainable peace in the country," he said.

Opinion

Regional Integration for economic stability in the Horn

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Documents reveal that the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) in 1963 set five major purposes to meet. Those purposes are: to promote the unity and solidarity of African States; to coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa; to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and independence; to eradicate all forms of exploitation from Africa, and to promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In order to meet the above mentioned purposes of the organization of the African Union, member states were requested to tune their policies to cooperate on major continental matters including political, diplomatic, economic, health, transport, communication, defense and security. Member states knew that through cooperation, Africa can be the continent they wanted to create.

On the onset of the change from Organization of the African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU) which was officially launched in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, following a decision in September 1999, the vision becomes “An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”

In an attempt to realize the objectives, the African Union and member states have set both long and short term goals. One of the many objectives set by the African Union is creating ‘Africa We Want’ that is strong in economic, social, and political directions by the year 2063. The notion under the Agenda 2063 needs due coordination and support for African led initiatives to ensure the achievement of the aspirations of African people. To this regard, under the umbrella of the AU, many continental and regional co-operations have been established. African states have established numerous bodies to realize the objectives they set coupled with cooperating in the regional matters.

Speaking of the East African region in particular, the geopolitical momentum of the region needs a careful assessment and involvement. Even world’s most powerful nations take a good look at every step taken in the region as it is a focal point in the world’s social economic and political activities. Therefore, African states should also craft their own agenda to share the benefits acquired from the region. Accordingly, African states in this segment of the continent have arranged to form coalitions in order to cope up the pressure that the region creates.

Besides, there are some prominent institutions in East African Region that foster regional cooperation and economic



integration. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are the ones that have been crucial playing roles to meet regional and continental goals. East African nations including Ethiopia are becoming members of those institutions and playing their parts in unison.

Performing the vital part on the establishment of the highest organ in the African continent, Ethiopia has been involving in many scenarios as the nation is using its reputations in the international arena. For many African nations, Ethiopia is seen and taken as the beacon of freedom and independence. Again, it still builds the trust in the hearts of African states as the country is still taking part in the major activities of the continent and in the world. Likewise, the country has been participating actively in the regional issues.

In the geopolitical scenarios of East Africa, Ethiopia has a great impact in the region. The nation is playing its role as it is the most populated and resourceful nation in the region. Like the previous involvement of the country, Ethiopia is still facilitating the overall social, political, and economic activities of the region. In addition, Ethiopia has signed those agreements to be a member of regional and continental institutions in order to foster continental integrity and development.

Achieving the sought objective of regional integration, the above mentioned organs have tremendous impact. Not only that, member states should also be responsible to adapt experiences from other bodies to reflex their muscle for cooperation.

In this case, Ethiopia should carry on doing what the nation has been doing for centuries. Playing the protagonist

role in those organs is the one thing that every other African nation expects from Ethiopia. The nation should also promote the regional economic integration projects such as the Lamu Port-south Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET), and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in order to quench the thirsty of regional integration and economic independence.

Ethiopia and other nations should exert their utmost effort to help one another so as to get what is there in the region and the cooperation organs. In good truth, East Africa is the region of both intense security and full of opportunities for African countries. By using those institutions, African nations will be able to realize the economic integration of the region.

Similarly, Ethiopia has been doing everything to establish positive economic partnerships with its neighboring countries and the rest of Africa. Accordingly, the nation has established free trade area in Dire Dawa. Besides, the country has been working on constructing road and railways that help the nation connect with its neighboring countries such as Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan among others.

This helps Ethiopia to have better economic partnerships and regional integrity. Such moves show that the nation is still working for Africa coupled with creating better environment to satisfy the needs of the region. In many cases, Ethiopia shows how integrity helps nation to achieve any objective.

Talking about the issue of African economic integration, Addis Ababa University Economist Prof. Alemayehu Geda, while approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, said that Ethiopia needs to exert extra efforts to outline an unequivocal roadmap and ensure rule of law in order to realize regional integration.

Prof. Alemayehu stated that the country should work hard on realizing regional economic integration giving priority to achieving peace and stability, and preparing a clear economic roadmap to this end.

He stressed that the nation has to fulfill macroeconomic convergence criteria such as lowering the inflation to a single digit, adjusting budget deficit and foreign reserve, balancing trade deficit and others so as to achieve regional economic integration.

Professor Alemayehu recalled that Ethiopia had signed various continental and regional economic agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Inter-Governmental Association for Development (IGAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The main purpose of these agreements is to ensure economic integration through reducing tax and liberalizing trade among member states. However, Ethiopia didn’t execute its task practically like other member countries for many reasons including poor commitment among pertinent bodies, he indicated.

Due to this reason, he believes that accomplishing the regional economic integration could be difficult. “Realizing regional economic integration cannot be easily achieved without outlining regional economic integration roadmap and ensuring rule of law across the country,” he noted.

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

Planet Earth



Afar state diversifying natural resource development to multiples of minerals

BY FIKADU BELAY

The Afar Regional State is known for its unique geological features and significant mineral resources. The region is characterized by its arid desert landscapes, active volcanic activity, and the presence of the Danakil Depression, one of the hottest and lowest places on Earth. This geological diversity has resulted in the presence of various types of minerals and valuable resources, attracting attention from both domestic and international mining companies.

One of the notable minerals found in the Afar region is potash. The Danakil Depression is home to vast salty flats and large deposits of potassium salts, making it an ideal location for potash extraction.

According to the mining review of Africa research, the Afar state holds significant reserves of potash, estimated to be one of the largest in the world. Several companies have invested in potash mining projects in the area, aiming to utilize these resources for agricultural purposes and international export.

In addition to potash, the region is also rich in other minerals such as copper, gold, and tantalum. These minerals have attracted the interest of mining companies seeking to exploit the region's potential. Exploratory activities and small-scale mining operations have taken place in various parts of the Afar region, with the goal of assessing the commercial viability of these mineral deposits.

Ibrahim Dihilu, Deputy Head of Afar Region Mining and Enterprise Development Office, told to the Ethiopian Press Agency that studies are currently taking place in particular districts in the area to determine the approximate location of the other minerals in the area in addition to the amount of gold, salt, copper, manganese, and construction materials that are mined there. Among these,

the kola Ber district is the one where gold is found, he noted.

He stated that there are preparations to carry out research with the assistance of the University of Samara in all zones, reorganize the associations, extract and produce gold in large quantities and perform operations that will benefit society in the gold industry in the current year.

In the past year, the Afar state planned to generate a revenue of some 35 million birr in the sector of mineral resources, actually obtaining 41 million and expects to raise this figure to 50 million birr in the current fiscal year. And he also stated that the region's income from the sector is below what it should be, and as a result, black market, traditional gold mining is practiced in the region.

He said that despite the fact that there are 13 associations with more than 1,200 members organized in the region's gold industry, only five of them are effective and producing a positive effect on the sector.

Additionally, high temperatures, a severe lack of water supplies, and an extremely arid climate are all characteristics of the Afar state. These circumstances present difficulties for mining operations due to the fact they have the potential to have an impact on worker security, equipment performance, and the availability of water for various mining processes.

And also, the region is geographically remote and often difficult to access due to its rugged terrain and lack of developed infrastructure. The absence of proper transportation networks makes it challenging to transport heavy equipment, supplies, and extracted minerals to and from mining sites, increasing logistical costs and operational complexities.

Furthermore, the Afar region is home to fragile ecosystems and unique biodiversity. Mining activities have the potential to cause environmental degradation, including habitat destruction, soil erosion, and pollution of

water sources. Ensuring environmental protection and devotion to sustainable mining practices can be challenging and require careful monitoring and mitigation measures.

The absence of developed infrastructure, such as roads, water supply, and electricity infrastructure, as well as the restricted local labor force and abilities, hinder mining operations in the region and indicate the state's security at danger. These aspects contribute to the region's mining activities' high costs and difficulty.

In this sense, he said that the region has planned to set up four more associations this year in order to create 250 opportunities for residents by assisting citizens in organizing and creating a comfortable working environment in teams, offering trainings to improve capacity, and providing the tools and support needed for the task.

To prevent the black market in the region based on the amount and quantity of gold production that each association in the region submits to the National Bank is compared to determine an incentive award is used. And he also mentioned that two associations received gold melting and searching equipment during the 2015 E.C. fiscal year as a result.

Despite the fact that the gold produced is used for illegal trade due to a lack of infrastructure, a bank has been established in the region where the production is widespread to address the issue. He emphasized that, we are actively collaborating with the National Bank to reopen banks that were closed due to peace and security issues so as to facilitate the mines trade. Additionally, he added that the National Bank is trying to solve the issue by persuading the producers to deposit money directly into the bank by offering them various supports.

Furthermore, the state government maintains strong controls over every custom to prevent the black market, and it has been given strict directives to stop the movement of gold or any other form of mineral by individuals who are

unlicensed, he added.

He stated that the region is well known for producing 85 percent of the salt, and it is used to supply the Ethiopian market, which promoted the need for a larger market connection. He further stated that the fact that a region has a lot of natural resources doesn't necessarily mean that it will prosper. Investors and young people interested in the industry may come together in any mining sector, and the office will give them the support they need to do so.

The Ethiopian government recognizes the potential economic benefits of mining in the Afar region and has taken steps to promote responsible and sustainable mining practices. The Ministry of Mines oversees the sector and has implemented regulations and licensing procedures to ensure that mining activities are conducted in an environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner. Additionally, the government attempts to attract foreign investment and promote partnerships with experienced mining companies to maximize the region's mineral potential while minimizing negative impacts on local communities and the environment.

And also, addressing these challenges requires collaboration between the government, mining companies, local communities, and other stakeholders. Implementing supportive policies, investing in infrastructure development, promoting skills training and employment opportunities for local communities, and ensuring environmental sustainability are crucial steps toward unlocking the mining potential of the Afar Regional State.

Besides, the region has the potential to contribute to the economic development of the nation, but it also face challenges related to the region's climate, infrastructure, and remote location. With proper planning, regulation, and sustainable practices, can be carried out responsibly, benefiting both the local economy and the country as a whole.

Art & Culture

The infinite wait

A short story (Based on a true story)

BY DESALEGNE DAGNE

Around the beginning of 1980's, two young workers often met at sunset. Sunsets under Addis Ababa's sky signifies youngsters' vivacity and their appreciation to the natural order.

- **What is it?**

"Do you love me?" Meron asked eying Teddy's bright faces. He smiled. He grasped her back, her upper lip moistened while she was looking that of his. Only few people were in the park. This encouraged her to go for tight embraces. Soon they set their ways towards the bench.

- **I see my tomorrow in you blossomed flower.**

She tightened her grasp on his hands and beamed looking his eyes up imploring for more kisses. He kissed her forehead, and she closed her eyes and continued her dreams in the middle of the kisses and hoped for a never ending life.

Time flew by whenever they met after working hours. For couple of years, they met and parted at the same place.

He was a mechanic at his parent's garage. And she was a fresh college student that year. She was working as waiter as a part time job when he met her. He didn't know details about her except meeting, kissing and parting; he only knew she lived with her aunts.

One cursed day, Teddy arrived twenty minutes earlier and began waiting for her as usual. The minute arm trespassed the 6 p.m. mark, while the hour arm anchored its leg there. He looked around, but she was nowhere in sight. Again, his eyes roamed around in vain. None of those who appeared resembled his sweetheart. Twenty minutes passed, and he stood still, fidgeting. He never wanted to think about her absences. He relinquished not his hope even when the time slowly advanced to the night.

After two years of dating, she failed to appear for the first time. Unable to believe his eyes, he gazed at his wristwatch. A few minutes remained for their journey back home. He hoped against hope that she might come past the eleventh hour. However, his hope was bashed. Chilled by a biting cold, he was shivering like a leaf on a tree. He grabbed the collar of his black overcoat, expectant of her. Addis Ababa's chilly weather was shearing everyone. Nonetheless, he waited in hope for another hour. He did not want to be desperate. He left the place, hopeful that she would come tomorrow. He spent the night rehearsing every word and every motion of Meron when the two met.

On the morrow, Teddy arrived two hours before their meeting time, and waited her for four hours, and then went to his home hoping she would come on the morrow. He didn't want to remind himself that they never met on weekends. Again he waited her for a long time, and once more went away hoping she would come the next day. In this manner he continued for weeks, months and years passed.

He turned a hero in defeating desperation. And

always he kept going to the meeting place filled with hope every minute of his life. Gradually he stopped working in his family's garage. He almost stopped talking. When he talked his voice was inaudible. He simply responded to questions. His brothers tried much to get his life back in shape. They tried to make him see to reason in vain. He simply listened to himself and hopped he might get his sweetheart the next day.

He became oblivious to his surroundings. He stopped changing clothes and washing his body. He became inured to dirt. As a wild weed cotton encroached on his black head. He disremembered the world day and night busying himself about his sweetheart.

In the passage of time, a new road got built on their meeting park, which turned into a big square. The village got swallowed by concrete jungles. Shanty houses, squalid villages and narrow corridors surrendered to investments. Only Teddy's hope on Meron remained intact. He kept on heading there day in and day out in search of her. Eon came and gone.

Fellow villagers showed tremendous life changes. Those who were students became graduates, who were kids changed to youths and youngsters became adults. The adults through procreation formed big family trees and elders ceded place, all these were nothing to Teddy. His twenty-year experience was just waiting for tomorrow and getting his sweetheart.

"My dear rest assured I am here whenever you need me" was his habitual words before he left the place. Sometimes he repaired home, and sometimes he slept all nights at the habitual place sniffing for Meron's perfume. More often than not his nephews took him back to home.

After a couple of decades, his story became a seasoning for song verses.

I am still there planting my legs like Axum, I used up my whole time sitting in the age of Lalibela, rock hewn churches, who were born after me died before me, Castles melt as salts, Mountain stooped their necks down; those who were born yesterday now walk with sticks turned elderly. A lot of water has passed under the bridge, a lot of things came and a lot of things went, I were there for you watching all these things happen, I witnessed many years changing easily waiting there your returning, many song verses echoed our story across the country and it reached many people's ear.

You will watch heaven and earth elapse

But I am there for you, as you returned,

From all poems, from all verses, this one was a special one, for couples chanted it for their beloved ones, teenager boys wrote letters to high school girlfriends from whom they estranged., Also wives took excerpts for their warrior husbands.

After the song verse won fame, one day a lady came to meet Teddy. His former chocolate face had sadly turned to roasted coffee; she squeezed her lips in dismay. She stood in front of him smote by grief. He turned around. He became froze where he was. His younger face was infested by wrinkles, furrows and burrows.



A chin that she lovingly kissed before decades was overcome by horrific white hairs.

- **"Teddiyo?"**

He called him by a name she developed as a code name. That did not ring a bell. She repeated the word again. Meron used this calling twenty five years back.

- **I go by Meron. I used to be your girlfriend.**

She proffered her hand to him. Teddy was always wondering as to what happened on him. He had forgotten his names as he did to talking with humans. She uttered her full name again but Teddy flinched not an inch. She tried a lot to conjure up his girlfriend Meron in his mind but in vain.

- **"He has forgotten you mom!"**

Said Meron's twenty years old boy from the back. His whole situation told infuriation. She

only felt sorrow for Teddy, seen an imbecile.

Currently she has a picture-perfect marriage with three children in America.

- **I was in America!**

Teddy who was waiting for his dream object Meron, whom he suddenly parted two decades and a half back for unknown reasons, didn't respond to the speech of the transformed Meron as he couldn't recognize her.

After a futile two-day attempt to rekindle the old flame, Meron, with pangs of conscience, flew back to America.

The lovesick Teddy kept on waiting the then Meron at the same spot where the sunset most often proves awe-inspiring. He could not take the unfolding as spilled water and put it behind his back.

She left him twice, but he lingers there hopeful love's God could rewind the clock back and blew the then Meron on park-turned road.

Society

“Invest in Girls’ Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being!”

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

It is unfortunate that girls at least once in their lifetimes suffer from gender based discrimination and physical and psychological traumas; be it in war and conflict times or in normal days. Mainly during conflicts, girls become victims of widespread and systematic human rights violations, which have detrimental effects on their well-being - mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

These violations include illegal detention, abduction, forced separation from their families and homes, disappearances, torture, rape, violence and even death. They are also at risk of being forcibly recruited into armed forces and exposed to various diseases. Furthermore, during such hard times, girls face challenges in accessing basic necessities and essential services such as nutrition, healthcare and education.

Understanding the complicated challenges girls face, various efforts have been carried out globally and regionally to address the challenges girls face, lessen their burden and ensure their rights. With this same target, a day that is dedicated to raise awareness about the importance of empowering girls through education, access to healthcare and protection from violence and discrimination, advocate for the full spectrum of their rights, and for the fulfillment of their human rights is marked every year on October 11.

The International Day of the Girl Child 2023 was observed last Wednesday around the world with various events under the theme “Invest in Girls’ Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being,” which is a powerful message that highlights the importance of prioritizing girls’ rights and well-being while recognizing their leadership potential.

Indeed, by investing in girls’ rights, we are not only promoting gender equality but also creating opportunities for their holistic development and empowerment.

The day was also marked in Ethiopia with a panel discussion under the theme “Let us Empower Girls, protect their rights and wellbeing.”

Speaking at the Panel discussion organized by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs in collaboration with Plan International-Ethiopia, Advisor of the State Minister with Women Sector

Opening the forum, State Minister Advisor at Women’s Sector with the Ministry, Zebider Bogale emphasized the need to protect girls from natural and human-made disasters.

“We should protect young girls from being exposed to serious problems due to natural and man-made conflicts. The Ministry is actively working to combat all forms of challenges that girls may encounter due to such disasters,” she remarked.

Protecting the future and fulfilling the dreams of girls requires more than just discussing their rights. It involves devising various measures and mechanisms and implementing them accordingly to safeguard these young children from both



Girls are the hope, the future and the strength of our world.

man-made and natural challenges.

Additionally, investing in girls’ leadership capacity includes creating spaces and platforms for them to raise their voices at every level of policy-making. It is important to address the challenges of undermining the basic human and democratic rights of girls due to harmful traditional cultures, which remains an issue in many countries worldwide. What is more, the traditional patriarchal system that underestimates the role of women is still casting its shadow on little girls and preventing them from achieving the same vision with their male counterparts.

Undeniably, patriarchy and power dynamics play significant roles in perpetuating inequality, particularly in relation to gender. These systems of social organization and control prioritize male dominance and reinforce gender norms and stereotypes that limit the rights and opportunities of women and girls.

According to UNICEF, patriarchy and power dynamics in almost every country create comparative advantages for boys over girls in various domains. These advantages accumulate over time, leading to significant divergence in opportunities during adolescence. Social and gender norms restrict adolescent girls’ access to public spaces, encourage docility and obedience, and prioritize their appearance and role in caregiving over their education, leadership, and participation in policymaking.

Investing in girls’ rights means ensuring that they have equal access to education, healthcare, nutrition, and protection from all forms of discrimination and violence. It means challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes that limit their potential and reinforcing their rights to make decisions about their own lives.

When girls are given the opportunity to lead, they bring unique perspectives, ideas, and solutions to the table. By supporting their leadership skills, we can foster a more

inclusive and diverse society where girls can actively participate in decision-making processes, contribute to policy development, and shape the future they want to see.

Furthermore, investing in girls’ rights has a positive ripple effect on their overall well-being. It enables them to develop the necessary skills, confidence, and resilience to overcome challenges and reach their full potential. When girls are empowered, they can break the cycle of poverty, improve their own lives, and positively impact their families, communities, and societies as a whole.

To truly empower girls and enable them

to reach their full potential, it is essential that we provide them with the necessary support, resources and opportunities. By investing in their education, health, economic empowerment and meaningful participation, we can create an environment where girls can thrive and contribute to the betterment of their communities and the world at large.

However, protecting the rights of girls should not be solely left for a single entity or the government; rather, it demands the concerted efforts of all and the responsibility of every citizen.

Hence, it is important for governments, organizations, and individuals to recognize and amplify the voices of these young change-makers. By supporting their initiatives, providing mentorship, and creating platforms for them to share their experiences and ideas, we can ensure that their efforts are acknowledged and multiplied. It is essential for governments, organizations, communities and individuals to prioritize investment in girls’ rights through policies, programs, and resources. By doing so, we can create a more equitable and just world where every girl has the opportunity to thrive, lead, and contribute to a brighter future for all.

It is an undeniable fact that we have witnessed that many girls are registering impressive success and driving change within their own communities. These girls are demonstrating immense resilience, determination, and creativity in addressing the challenges they faced. They are taking on roles as advocates, innovators, and leaders, working towards positive transformations. It is inspiring to see how they are making a difference and inspiring others to join their cause.

In this regard, it is crucial for every Ethiopian citizen and the government to take bold and tangible actions to bring about the necessary change for girls moving beyond mere plans and promises.

“
It is crucial for every Ethiopian citizen and the government to take bold and tangible actions to bring about the necessary change for girls moving beyond mere plans and promises”

Law & Politics

The president's major points in her inaugural address to MPs

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

In her address to the joint session of the House of Peoples Representatives and the House of Federation, President Sahlework Zewde reiterated certain points so that they are clear to all. The president highlighted the directions and plans that the government will implement in socioeconomic, political, and diplomatic spheres during the Ethiopian fiscal year of 2016. The President said that Ethiopia needs to craft a shared narrative to foster nation-state building, which has faced multitudes of challenges.

Highlighting the major programs of the year for the government, one of the priorities she gave was to secure the rule of law and avoid all sorts of security threats the country may face. She mentioned not only internal threats but also external ones and pointed out that the government followed a policy of cooperation and trust with its neighbors and noted in this context the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD, which has been a point of contention or presented as such by many media.

The president said that the dam does not harm downstream countries, as has been witnessed by what has happened when Ethiopia carried out four successful sessions of filling the dam with water. Ethiopia has hence demonstrated to the world that her action with the dam does not harm downstream countries and her sole intention is to use the hydropower the dam generates and even share it with others at an affordable price.

The Ethiopian government is required to work for the growth and wellbeing of its nationals and one way of it is by availing power to the millions of households that are still in the dark. Using its natural resources to the maximum is one of the prime programs of the government. This would help extricate citizens from poverty.

In the diplomatic sphere Ethiopia's relations with other countries are based on mutual trust and benefit and the relations extend also to trade and commerce, the president noted. The GERD is a true example of what can happen when it begins to generate ample energy that could be exported at affordable price and without constituting a threat to climate change as what is used is clean hydropower. Side by side this will help integrate the countries of the sub-region and cooperation will only help Ethiopia grow together. Ethiopia in this respect is doing all it can to bring together the region to an economic integration which is also part of the vision of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.).

The diplomatic ventures of Ethiopia which were a bit handicapped by certain events of the past years have begun to catch up and will continue this year as it did the entire last year according to the president. They have been fruitful and successful at multiple fronts. President Sahlework said that Ethiopian



President Sahlework Zewde

diplomacy is coming out of international pressures and returning to regular diplomatic relationship. Due attention will be put into improving the prevailing political relationship with neighboring countries to trade ties.

According to the president diplomatic works in compliance with international law will be pursued to resolve unsettled border issues. She emphasized that border issues will be settled based on national interest and sustainable neighborly relationship.

Ethiopia's foreign relation will focus on increasing friendly countries; deduct enmity, and embracing development partners, Sahlework noted.

Ethiopia has undertaken various multilateral and bilateral diplomatic activities on issues of international and regional concern, the President said, adding that the recent diplomatic achievements recognize the long-rooted diplomatic history of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is known as the founding member of the League of Nations and the signatory of the UN Charter in 1945 at the end of World War II. It should also be noted that Ethiopia has taken a key role in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity now the African Union and has presented it with the seat in its capital city. Ethiopia's record of participation in UN sponsored peacekeeping missions is part of history and these achievements put Ethiopia in a high diplomatic pedestal.

Hence Ethiopia's acceptance to be a member of BRICS is a sort of continuation of the diplomatic successes of the past and renewed national glory. This move is expected to enhance the country's acceptance at the international arena. It will also be an

incentive to the socio-economic sector by creating more opportunities for investment, Sahlework explained. It will have significant impact to widen Ethiopia's market options and strengthen cooperative frameworks.

Ethiopia through its diplomatic acceptance will work to ascertain Africa's interest at multilateral arenas.

Internally the president underlined the importance of agreeing on what kind of country we intend to build and inherit to our children. She said the past history of the country may have faced multiple challenges in terms of certain narratives but she said the past should only serve us to learn from and not commit the same mistakes. The history of the country has shown us that when we were united we were able to do remarkable deeds such as defeating formidable foreign enemies in battles avoiding the humiliation of the deprivation of freedom and sovereignty. These experiences must teach us something for what we intend to achieve today because the president underlined only if we get united and act as one can we have the necessary strength to achieve our objectives as a nation.

In the president's words it is the unity of the nation that has realized the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD which is not only a simple dam but a symbol of sovereignty and freedom, the perseverance in pursuing a sense of purpose and achievement. It also encompasses tourism and water resources which are vital for the protection of environment.

Ethiopians have shown to the world that if united they can achieve anything despite the immense pressure, challenges and at times

threats that may have been projected against it from multiple corners. A united Ethiopia can achieve incredible goals, the president said. And anything that tries to divide the people along any number of issues must be faced straightforward and stopped.

In this respect the role of social media as well as the dissemination of fake news and hateful and inflammatory language must be controlled by all of us by not heeding them. The government will do all it can to avoid this obstacle through its programs of the year. The president has noted that every national issue can be presented to the National Dialogue Commission established by the government to try and discuss all the differences we have accumulated along the years and may have been cause for conflict.

It is now time to bring every issue, every shortcoming or grievance to this body and solutions could be prospected. If this Commission manages to reach every corner of the country and avail of the participation of any and all groups and forces, the chances of resorting to violence or trying to obtain something by force will be reduced to the minimum and we can reach a certain understanding on our viewpoints and adopt a shared narrative. The importance of the formation and operation of the National Dialogue Commission has been underlined in the address of the president to the MPs.

The government she said is open for discussions with every political party and every force and thus restraining the chances of conflict, but if there are forces that try to impose their illegal venture on the country, the government must carry out its duty and obligation of pushing back such threats and eliminate them.

It must see to it that peace is guaranteed with the rule of law respected and conflicts such as the one we just concluded with the Pretoria Peace Deal are to be avoided at all cost.

We have seen how it has cost us economically and in terms of human resources. It has cost us a lot even in diplomatic terms because we risked losing our best friends due to certain misunderstandings and issues following the outbreak of hostilities. Furthermore, it has cost us in terms of image projecting an unnecessary and not truthful reflection of the country. Such images can have in turn repercussions in our tourism potential and investment openings and this has risked bringing about economic damages and shortcomings.

The president has also dwelt at length on corruption and its spread in the country and that it must be curtailed with the responsible ones presented before a court of law. Equality before the law is a key principle and that is what the government will be engaged with strictly. There should be no space for corruption and illegal trade moves such as contraband, she stressed.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

What about the Defenseless...the Women, the Children and the Elderly?

Perhaps just perhaps at no time in history was the world so frustrated with the so-called largely Western mainstream media. The times when whatever appears on the 'independent and free' mainstream media was "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the north," is long gone; as times go by and the curtains are raised through numerous media outrages of bias, blunder, deliberately planned fake news and other factors the real picture is finally there for all to see. The 'mainstream media wall' which was not to be breached even touched by any earthly power finally comes crumbling down!

I personally remember in my long years in the media the worship like respect and praise we had for the so-called mainstream media. Whatever they say is not subject to any sort of the simplest questions let alone deeper scrutiny. "What! You doubt the news item by such a respected media! You must be out of your mind or a diehard communist!" Any person with the foresight enough to ask questions would be target practice for all kinds of verbal abuses. You don't touch the mainstream media! It would have been impossible to convince others that all media outlets have their own agendas. "What! Did you say agendas? That could be the case in third world's media and not in the respected mainstream media of the West!" If there is any disagreement on any current affairs issue the final word is what the mainstream media says. If they say it has been done, it has been done even though not one soul in the street has seen it happening. If they say it never happened

it never happened even if it was happening under the eyes of half of the planet.

So what has gone wrong now? "Well, something must have gone wrong for the so-called mainstream media to slide to such depth of utter falsehood, arrogance, bigotry and the like!" But it's not about anything going wrong; it's about what we these days describe as scratching the surface real hard. We have our own experiences during the armed conflict in the north of the country. We have seen to what length they go to push their agendas. Why? Because they did have agendas! It all depends on who are the puppet masters. It is all about global dominance and utter inhuman hatred and evil thoughts which are strangling mankind to the point of cutting off all oxygen!

As of recent times the world is fixated on what is happening in the Middle East as things go from scary to terrifying and worth by the hour. It is indeed very distressing to hear of people man, woman and child meeting their ends in the most heartbreaking ways. Innocents whose only goal in life is to live a peaceful and worthy life having their dreams blown out with rudeness is impossible to comprehend. In light of what is happening the way the global media is covering the events is not only shocking but seems to be passing all the red lines of inhumanity. It is astounding how far the media is going gone this far to foment hatred!

Look, the world is still waiting to learn about the full story of the war between Russia and Ukraine. Since much of the

media have put themselves in the role of actual combatants for one side or the other it is shocking the scale and volume of fake news the world has been subjected to. One side is to have annihilated entire brigades of the enemy, shot down multiple drones, destroyed tanks and armored vehicles by the scores; the bigotry comes when the 'other side' is mentioned as having wiped out whole battalions shot everything that could be shot down and the like. What is scary is during such 'reports' the human cost is out in the shadows. The dead who while alive were described as courageous and all that are turns into numbers. The difference between 10 and 100 is only 'a single 0.' "So what is all the fuss about!" Sooner or later by the time the real cost of the war comes out with all its details ours will be a world which would be shocked to the bone marrow.

Now it is in another volatile and, for all practical purposes, dangerous part of the world and the mainstream media seems to have completely lost its mind. The extent of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, all deliberately and consciously done, imagining the damage being done to authenticity, truthfulness and fairness would probably taint the media world for ages to come. Raw, real, uninfected news is becoming a thing of the past. News about war zones is written not to pass real, authenticated information but to form public opinions favoring one side or the other. It would have been maybe acceptable if any person pour their personal prejudices or illicit agendas in op-

ed presentations. But that's no more the case.

What is happening over there is not just another armed conflict. How we would have liked it had it been so easy and so simple. You know, like armed skirmishes lasting a few days or a few weeks and then the guns fall silent. This time it is not that easy. Everything that has happened, is happening and would certainly happen over the coming weeks even months one way or another affects the entire world. The very possibility of the war spilling over across borders is scary. The brutality we hear, many reports subject to further scrutiny, blow out even the dimmest light of hope we might still be entraining for a better world.

As history has shown in any armed conflict the brunt of the damage and destruction falls on helpless civilians; defenseless women, children and the elderly. When innocent lives are no more than collateral damage there is no better sign proving the world has crossed lines that should never have been crossed.

Isn't it time to worry about all the innocent civilians on all sides? Isn't it time to look for ways to ensure that the innocent are protected? Shouldn't the media be in the forefront of such attempts? So in the midst of all the biased, hate mongering narratives coming from the so-called mainstream media we ask, what about the women, children and the elderly on all sides?

What about the defenseless?

The 'Muscular' VIPs!

Something happened which though would never happen to me again. Years back I had a couple of such happenings and at that time I made my stand on these clear and, lucky me, the doors were closed; or so I thought. A week or so back a lady for whom I had all the respect calls me and tells me she had an important personal issue to discuss with me. 'Personal' was the key word since our relationships weren't that much into the personal aspects. Well, though these days you're subjected more to the unexpected than the expected that thought never came to me when I agreed to meet her.

Once we met I didn't need a wiz-kid's genius to know she wasn't her usual self I thought I was familiar with. Something was wrong. She didn't lose precious minutes by the usual "How have you been lately?" "What are you doing with your life?" sort of small talk. No soft openings to the harder issues; she gave it to me as it was. "I'm told you are close to important government officials." What! What the hell is all this about? How did the narrative of me being close to very important government officials come into play anyway! (I could imagine some of my friends chocking because they are laughing too hard! take it easy guys; these days you never could tell who is who and I don't want you to be 'surprised' somewhere down the line when one of the very important officials telling an interviewer, "What a guy he is!"

(The 'guy' here is me! Ha!)

Her comment might be a little tricky as it was unexpected. My response was far from tricky; "What do you mean?"

"I've run into a very serious problem, and I want your help."

"Already the ants have begun racing all over my spine. The talk of me being close to very important officials and her seeking my help coming in the same sentence not such a good mix! My response should have gone by first telling her she can forget the fairy tale about my being close to VIP officials and second doubting I could be of any help. "I can't see how I can be of any help." That coming without me hearing her story can be very unfriendly and even brutal! Yes, brutal. I told you just by looking at her the lady is a very unhappy person. So I just looked at her, maybe an unable to decide my next move. She didn't have to wait for me to make any move and continued with her story.

She went into narratives of a major problem between her husband who backed by his "evil" family was giving her headaches. They have decided to go their way on the instance of his family and that is where the problem blew out of proportion. When it comes to the dividing of family property and assets it happened that he claims he'll be taking almost everything from spoons to

cars leaving her almost nothing.

By this time I was trying not to be as attentive as I should have been. I try to keep my distance from such very personal stories as no one has the right to dig any deeper into the private lives of others. Just by listening to the stories from those affected you might feel you're already part of the problem.

Let me tell you an experience. During the very early days of writing my Amharic column all kinds of calls came. Many were well-intentioned dealing with the general rather than the personal. Then one day around 9:00 P.M. this woman calls and tells me her husband was cheating on her what, of all women in the world, her own sister! It was one of those moments you wished shouldn't have happened. She wasn't telling me asking for any involvement on my part. She just wanted me to deal with the issue in the column. So, what's the big deal? There's no harm done!" you might say. It isn't that easy. The guilt of hearing people's private secrets from their own selves isn't something to brush away that easily.

So this lady says her husband had powerful backers who could turn the tables just with single phone calls. She wanted to tell her case to some powerful VIP and seek justice. And it's where in the most bizarre of jokes I come in. I told her there is no such official I was close to and I'm sorry I couldn't help her. (I didn't add that even if I knew one

what she asks me would be the last thing I do because there was none need of it. On second thought who knows, as time and people have changed maybe I might have agreed to help her with my question to her being, "What's it in for me?" That's how Things are done these days. Isn't it?)

Well, the lady I told you I have every respect for wasn't taking "No," for an answer. She went into all sorts of things first trying to be as calm as she could but slowly turning into someone I never met! She was all veins and contours! As I stayed tight-lipped she almost accused me of refusing to help her deliberately. What! It was my turn to try to keep calm. Then she almost accused me I would have agreed to help if it had been another person! Things were getting too much for me to handle and I tried to say a word of two trying to reason with her and she wasn't letting me do that. Her words were sliding from bad to worse. Finally I did what I've never have done before and hope would never do again; I stood up and left without another word.

Maybe thinking about it in hindsight the lady wasn't actually being rude to me intentionally. The talk is that we are in times when what matters is how strong your case is but how powerful the VIP backing you is. You know that muscular VIP narrative who could move the earth with a single phone call.

Business & Economy

Concerted effort to get better results from the agricultural sector- South West region

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The South West Ethiopian Peoples' Region, which owns many natural and social values, is a region with a favorable environment for agriculture and animal husbandry. Coffee, spices, oilseeds and honey are widely produced among the agricultural products that have of strategic importance to the region and the national economy. In addition to domestic consumption, it is also contributing to foreign exchange earnings. The region is known for various types of crops, oilseeds and horticulture.

The region receives the highest amount of annual rain. This makes the region not only look greener year after year, but also contributes to agriculture.

Ashenafi Knefu, Deputy Head of the Regional Agriculture Bureau and Head of the Agricultural Sector, said that in the agricultural sector, the region has planned to cultivate a total of 323, 294 hectares of land in the 2023 harvest season and obtain seven million quintals of produce. During the production season, 322, 911 hectares of land is covered with seeds.

He mentioned that there was a possibility that the region could go beyond the plan in covering the fields. However, it was not possible to cover the fields with seeds in a proper way due to the cessation of rain in August. Even after the cessation of the rains, eight thousand hectares of crops were destroyed and replaced by other crops.

As to him, it is planned to provide 10,000 quintals of best seeds during the harvest season. A total of 15,765 quintals of certified best seeds have been put to use. Soil fertilizer covering 36, 356 hectares of land was used.

He recalled that although there are problems related to the supply and distribution of soil fertilizers in the country, it was planned to provide soil fertilizers covering 72 thousand hectares of land. The amount of urea fertilizer is constantly increasing so that 36,356 hectares of land is covered with the fertilizer.

Ashenafi mentioned that during the autumn season, large fields in the region are covered with seeds. It was possible to cover 325, 556 hectares of land with seeds. He indicated that in addition to the one covered with seeds during the harvest; a total of around 650,000 hectares of land is covered only with crops.

When horticulture and permanent crops are added, according to Ashenafi, the land covered by crops and horticulture in the spring and autumn seasons is about 900,000 hectares. Therefore, in the two production seasons, a total of more than 85 million quintals of produce is available from the region.

While explaining about product collection, he mentioned that there is a time when the crops obtained in the spring and autumn are harvested at the same time. The crop will be harvested in a series of periods starting from September.

It is expected that 11.3 million quintals of the production will be available during the autumn and seven million quintals will be produced from the fields covered with seeds during the harvest season. In total, it is expected that 18 million quintals of crops will be produced in 2023.

The annual production of the region has a large share in the country's market when it is provided to market. The region has potential in the field of horticulture in addition to cash crops. Especially bananas, avocados and mangoes are widely produced in the area. This production is supplied to the central market beyond the local market. This has made the region's share in the economy high.

Ashenafi mentioned about the problems encountered in the region during the production period. In particular, he recalled that there was lack of rain and the occurrence of diseases and pests related to shortage of rain. He stated that this reduced the amount of crops. The problem occurred during the sprout season, and prevention of the disease and pest that occurred during this season was done. Monitoring and control work is being done on the crops that are still in sprout stage.

In connection with the fact that the region of Southwest Ethiopia is blessed with nature, what has been done in terms of irrigation development in addition to the rainy season and the harvest season, Ashenafi also said that summer irrigated wheat and horticulture development has been planned and implemented as a region. Summer irrigation work has been started in six zones of the region, namely Kefa, Dauro, Bench Sheko, Konta, Sheka and West Omo Zones, paying special attention to summer irrigation wheat.

He mentioned that they are planning to cover more than 7,140 hectares of land with wheat crops in summer irrigation, but the amount is very low compared to the potential of the region. The main problem for this is lack of irrigation infrastructure development in the region. It is difficult to carry out irrigation schemes and horticulture development in the summer when the irrigation infrastructure is not complete.

However, Ashenafi said that the necessary preparatory work is being done so that the region can use its full potential to produce various products through summer irrigation. Preparations are being made for mass production, including pumps, which are necessary for development. In connection with this, awareness trainings will be given to the farmers by creating a joint movement platform, and the region



Adoption of soil and water conservation in the Bench-Sheko Zone of Southwest Ethiopia

The region has potential in the field of horticulture in addition to cash crops

will be completely involved in summer irrigation development.

The Southwest Ethiopian People's Region has 3,000 hectares of land that can be irrigated. Although the region has a large land cover that can be cultivated by irrigation, the irrigation infrastructure in the area is not complete, so summer irrigation could not be used to its full potential. In addition to irrigation infrastructure, he mentioned the existence of road problems in areas where irrigation development can be done. There is no road in the Omo zone where there is a large land that can be cultivated by irrigation.

As he said, In addition to the Omo River, there are also large rivers in Sheka, Dauro and other areas. The areas have large tracts of land that can be cultivated under summer irrigation. However, roads and irrigation networks have not been developed to reach the area. For this, the region's government is working together with the federal government to complete the infrastructure.

However, for the time being, summer irrigation wheat is being cultivated from scratch with the help of pumps from local infrastructure and traditional irrigation users. Especially in 2023, better work is being done, he said.

Last year, 3,500 hectares of land was covered with seeds under summer irrigation, but now efforts are underway to

double this figure. In the future, when road infrastructures are completed and irrigation networks are laid and favorable conditions are created, the existing situation shows that twice as many hundreds of thousands of hectares of land can be cultivated with summer irrigation wheat and other crops.

Ashenafi mentioned that fertilizer is one of the most challenging problems for agriculture. Despite the fact that there is a fertilizer problem in the country, arrangements have been made to provide fertilizer on time during the current seeding season. One of the main problems in the region is high rainfall. Due to this, the problem of soil acidity is happening in the region. For this, the soil is being treated with lime to increase production and productivity in collaboration with the federal government, he said.

He mentioned that in the region, there is an experience of manual weed control, but now an integrated weed and disease control system is being implemented. There is a large swarm of bees in the Southwest Ethiopian People's Region, and for this reason, the region does not focus on chemicals and does not use chemicals like other regions. Manual weeding is being widely practiced by providing training to experts and this is important to maintain the fertility of the land and the biodiversity of the area.

Ashenafi stated that the use of natural fertilizers is common in the region. Natural fertilizer can be widely used for grain crops especially during the harvest season. A natural fertilizer produced by a factory called bio-fertilizer is being used in the region. This can meet the demand of urea for the crops, so it is being widely used.

In addition to this, Ashenafi pointed out that preparation of compost for horticulture crops is being widely done at the farmer level. The principle of "one farmer, one compost pit" is being widely implemented by creating common understanding. Educating the farmers and increasing their awareness will continue. Currently, some crops, including coffee, are being grown completely with compost. This will continue with other crops, he confirmed.

In Pictures



The Ministry of Finance and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa signed a 273 million Norwegian Kroner (NoK) (approximately 25 million USD) grant agreement for the second phase of the REDD+ Investment Program. The grant agreement also constitutes an unfunded amount of 148 million NOK, which is expected to be mobilized by the Government of Norway during implementation.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen received the Director General of the IOM at his office and congratulated her on her election and expressed his desire for a strong partnership with the Ethiopian government. The new Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Amy E. Pope said that a multifaceted engagement with Ethiopia is a priority where the country serves as the seat for the African Union. Ethiopia is multifaceted, and the African Union here is the best place to reinforce migration affairs as the country is the seat of this continental organ. Noting that Ethiopia itself is a mission that has been with the International Organization for Migration since 1995, the organization has been engaging with the Government of Ethiopia.



Huawei Ethiopia a consecutive years platinum level loyal taxpayers award.



October 12, 2023. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia:

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attended the 2023 Ethiopian fiscal year taxpayer recognition and award program to honor taxpayers who faithfully performed their national duty.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Revenue recognized the most loyal and highest taxpayers for the fiscal year that ended on July 7, 2023, in an event held in Unity Park on October 12, 2023. Huawei Ethiopia is among those companies recognized as platinum-level taxpayers at the event.

During his remarks, the Prime Minister called upon the private sector and other sections of society to support initiatives to improve the revenue base, restrain from corruption, contraband and illegality by insuring order, predictability, and accountability. Government offices in charge shall modernize the tax payment system and procedures. He also encouraged the private sector to introduce new technology to their works in modernizing their endeavors.

In the event, Huawei Ethiopia was recognized as the platinum-level loyal taxpayer award for the second time. Mr. Liu Jifan, CEO of Huawei Ethiopia, said: "We are honored that Huawei is recognized as a platinum taxpayer for the second time in the presence of his excellency, the prime minister. Our company is dedicated to serving every nation by bringing new technologies and inventions in accordance with the respective country's rules and regulations."

Huawei is a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, and it was founded in 1987. Since its first business exploration in 1999, Huawei has gained a reputation in the Ethiopian market for reliable products and solutions, high-quality service delivery, and standardized business management. In 2008, Huawei Group established Huawei Technologies Ethiopia PLC, a local subsidiary that serves Ethiopian clients in various industrial sectors, including telecom, finance, education, electricity, and so on. Currently, it serves millions of Ethiopians with its telecom carriers and enterprise business solutions. The company is also striving to cultivate the ICT talent ecosystem, where the future generation of the industry will be equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills.



Giving *recognition when respect is due*

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attended the 2015 Ethiopian calendar fiscal year taxpayer recognition and award program to honour taxpayers who faithfully performed their national duty.

During his remarks, the Prime Minister called upon the private sector and other segments of society to support initiatives to improve the revenue base, restrain from corruption, contraband and illegality by ensuring order, predictability and accountability. Government offices in charge shall modernise the tax payment system and procedures. He also encouraged the private sector to introduce new technology to their works in modernising their endeavours.

PM Abiy Making a speech

