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Celebrators outline *Irreechaa's* value for peaceful coexistence

• Mark the festival in Addis Ababa

BY TSEGAY ETILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The preservation of cultural festivities including *Irreechaa* should be sustained as they are the foundations on which the peaceful coexistence and tolerance of the country rests upon, celebrators.

A large number of Oromos coming from Ethiopia's four corners as well as Diasporas and foreign nationals attended the annual thanksgiving festival (*Irreechaa*) here yesterday.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, the celebrants stated that cultural festivities have laid the foundations for peace, tolerance and coexistence in the country, besides their societal values.

Sorecha Asfaw, one of the participants, stated that this year's *Irreechaa* is unique in various ways in terms of a warm accord Addis Ababa residents extended to them in clear manifestation of the city is a home for all Ethiopians. "Today, *Irreechaa* is

See Celebrators outline ... page 4



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ICHREE termination normalizes Ethiopia's relations with West: Diplomat

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The termination of International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) opens the venue to normalize Ethiopia's relations with the EU and the U.S., a senior diplomat said.

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HalalaKela resort heralds benefits of Dine for Ethiopia initiative

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Birtukan Bassa, 24, is a BA graduate in business management from the University of Gondar. She works at the HalalaKela resort that inaugurated in May 2023 as part of the 'Dine for Nation' initiative - a countrywide program initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to

See HalalaKela resort ... page 4



EU lauds Ethiopia's TJ, Nat'l Dialogue efforts

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The Government of Ethiopia is exerting its utmost efforts to sustain lasting peace through Transitional Justice (TJ) and National Dialogue, European Union (EU) Commissioner for International Partnerships said.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen said that as a key regional partner, the EU bestows great importance to its cooperation with Ethiopia as the latter is aggressively engaged in a peace process, transitional justice and economic reforms.

Mentioning that Ethiopia is a key strategic

partner for the EU, Jutta said that the government of Ethiopia is currently taking strict measures to ensure sustainable peace and security overall the country.

Furthermore, she pinpointed that the European countries are keen to operate in Ethiopia to reform the business

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No deal better than a bad deal

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News



Afar eyes more revenue from minerals

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Afar State's Mine Resource Development and Job Creation Bureau said it has been striving to collect 50 million Birr from mines during the current fiscal year, mentioning the consolidated efforts to increase the sector's revenue.

Bureau's Deputy Head Ebrahim Dihilu told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the state has executed consolidated tasks to enhance the mines revenue and to utilize the area's untapped potential. "Last year, we managed to collect some 35 million Birr from our plan of 35 million Birr and currently we set the plan to earn 50 million Birr.

Besides the identified minerals such as gold, salt, copper, manganic and construction minerals, the bureau is undertaking a study in three districts to explore other mineral resources.

Ebrahim further noted that the bureau is working closely with Semera University to conduct more research to exploit the area's rich mineral resources and to help artisanal associations to extract more gold and other precious minerals. Plan is also set to increase the number of artisanal associations and employ more citizens in the sector.

Apart from creating a conducive environment for miners and offering them capacity building training and essential equipment, the State has also been recognizing association based on the amount of gold they provide to the central bank. "Last budget year, the State awarded gold searching and melting machines for two associations for their better performance."

In Afar, there are over 12 artisanal associations with 1200 members.

"Parallel market and traditional gold extraction has remained a challenge in the State," he said, adding that the National Bank of Ethiopia is providing the necessary support and creating a platform that would allow miners make direct contacts. Moreover, strong control and inspection activities have been taking place in checkpoints to deter mine smuggling.

Mentioning Afar's capability to cover 85 percent of the nation's salt demand, the deputy head called for stakeholders' participation in the establishment of strong market linkage. "The legal extraction of minerals would have a paramount importance for the state and national economy and the bureau is ready to provide ceaseless support to investors and youth who wish to do a legal business."

Irreechaa inclusive festival: Scholars

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- *Irreechaa* festival, which is the annual Oromo people 'Thanksgiving Day' is a culture of inclusivity, according to scholars.

Irreechaa is an annual festival celebrated to mark the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvesting season. The festival is observed to thank God for his blessings that the people cherish.

This year's *Irreechaa* is being celebrated in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu town of Oromia state.

Members of Diaspora Community Express Joy Over Celebrating *Irreechaa* at Home

In an exclusive interview with ENA, Haramaya University Vice President, Prof. Jeylan Woldyie said *Irreechaa*, which is principally the Oromo culture is a culture of inclusivity.

The festival promotes cultural and moral unity as the Oromo people together with other people of Ethiopia and beyond are able to come together and share values, and understanding.

Due to this, "*Irreechaa* is the culture of inclusivity. All people irrespective of their place of origin, irrespective of the language, irrespective of their face, are not only included in the celebration but they are embraced."

Kenyans Applaud *Irreechaa* Festival as Symbol of Unity among People

Irreechaa festival transcends linguistic, cultural and territorial boundaries; it transcends cultural boundaries he said, adding that all people irrespective of where they come from are united around the principle of peace, mutuality and coexistence which are deeply embedded in the *Irreechaa* culture.



Prof. Jeylan Woldyie

"People coming from all civilizations, all age groups are brought together and allowed to exercise their values, moralities. That's why we say it's the culture of creativity."

The Addis Ababa University Associate Prof. Tadesse Jaleta said for his part *Irreechaa* is an inclusive national festival because it includes all persons coming from different religious, cultural backgrounds or different ages and sex.

"Any person participates in *Irreechaa*. *Irreechaa* includes not only human being but also nature. It is a symbol of the combination of nature and the human beings. It is a festival where human beings express a unity to nature and give thanks to God. That's why we say *Irreechaa* is an inclusive national festival," he stated.

Moreover, he elaborated that the values of *Irreechaa* are applicable to people of all cultures.



Associate Prof. Tadesse Jaleta

"It is about peace. It's about unity, it's about love. It is about being respectful and being brother with other people. These values are applicable to all people. *Irreechaa* is useful not only to Oromo but to all nations, and nationalities of the country."

The festival unites different cultures and brings different people together, Tadesse indicated adding that people from different cultures and languages learn, enjoy and express their beauty with each other.

It is one of the best festivities of Ethiopia where cultural singing and dancing are common.

This grand festival attracts a large number of the Oromo people and people from all parts of the country regardless of age, religion, political affiliations and sex to come together and celebrate the festival with extraordinary love, chanting and unity.

South Sudan eyeing benefits from Ethiopia's telecom liberalization, digitization

ADDIS ABABA(ENA)- South Sudan is looking forward to benefitting from Ethiopia's telecommunication liberalization and digitization, South Sudan National Communication Authority Director General Gai said.

South Sudan is avidly following Ethiopia's telecom reform and digitization, the telecom liberalization, and technological innovations which benefit neighboring countries that share borders with Ethiopia, including South Sudan, the director general added.

"The liberalization in Ethiopia is welcome news for the region, and particularly for countries that are bordering Ethiopia. We are following the development keenly. We are following with the purpose of tapping into Ethiopia's great technological innovations that have been here and that have not been tapped into the region."

According to Gai, the telecom liberalization in Ethiopia could usher in rolling out of technologies that were limited before in the country and beyond.

"We have already reached out to Ethio Telecom. Its CEO Frehiwot was in Juba and we did a great exchange with her where South Sudan is looking into creating a point of presence on our border," he revealed.

There is also a potential study of the infrastructures development being done

from Ethiopia to South Sudan to incorporate telecommunication infrastructure.

South Sudan is looking to get electric power from Ethiopia and connect the countries on the road, especially to the oil-rich Upper Nile region, it was learned.

"We are hoping that as those infrastructures are rolled out, a telecom sector is integrated into it."

The director general stressed the need to add telecom infrastructure and electric power connectivity to the LAPSET Corridor infrastructure connecting Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan together and with Somalia for the countries in the sub-region to tap potential and maximize benefit.

Ethiopia is a giant country that has the potential to penetrate the largest population of East Africa, Gai noted, adding that South Sudan sees the opportunity and the emerging digitalization of the telecom sector in Ethiopia that carries a great promise for the region.

"We, as South Sudan, are looking for Ethiopia to benchmark many of its technological innovations, especially in the e-government sector," the director general pointed out.

For him, introducing the e-government services will enable citizens to access services digitally, improve service efficiency, and eliminate corruption.

As a new nation, South Sudan is learning about the great experiences of Ethiopia and the region, Gai said.

"We are trying to complement that by encouraging regional connectivity through developing communication infrastructure that has a transit onward capacity."

East Africa has great potential to interconnect the region as we have seen from other infrastructures development like the LAPSET, the director general pointed out.

The LAPSET Corridor Program is Eastern Africa's largest and most ambitious infrastructure project bringing together Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

This mega project consists of seven key infrastructure projects starting with a new port at Lamu, interregional highways from Lamu to Isiolo, Isiolo to Juba, Isiolo to Addis Ababa, and Lamu to Garsen, crude oil pipeline from Lamu to Isiolo, Isiolo to Juba, product oil pipeline from Lamu to Isiolo, Isiolo to Addis Ababa; interregional standard gauge railway lines from Lamu to Isiolo, Isiolo to Juba, Isiolo to Addis Ababa, and Nairobi to Isiolo; 3 international airports: one each at Lamu, Isiolo, and Lake Turkana; 3 resort cities: one each at Lamu, Isiolo and Lake Turkana; and the multipurpose high grand falls aam along the Tana River.

Editorial

Harnessing our cultural, religious assets for common good

The *Irreechaa* festival being marked this weekend with an electrifying vibe heralding peace, harmony and forgiveness is one that has profound socioeconomic and cultural values. And as is the case with the significance of other festivities or assets of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, it serves a key ingredient for forging and solidifying the national identity. Its contribution to this end is incalculable.

Irreechaa is a transition period from a rainy season to a sunny one and from a grim period to a rosy one. As it is impregnated with hope of blessings in store and great expectations, it is an occasion to express gratitude to the Almighty. It serves a ripe moment for people nursing a grudge to apologies to one another burying the hatchet. It punctuates a landmark when people coming together supplicate to abundance and mercy. Celebrants as well exchange thanks. This lends impetus to augmenting national humanistic virtues.

At the country level, cementing social ties helps to consolidate people's unity. In warding off fracas and conflicts, it demonstrates an amicable conflict resolution mechanism. As it takes aboard celebrants from other ethnic groups and religions too, it has an accommodative bent.

It could not be again said that the pivotal role values of such festivals play for the actualization of the development ventures, the country embarked on, is immense.

In cognizant of this fact, letting the right perception of *Irreechaa* and similar festivities sink in among the general public, it is imperative to ensure the festivals' peaceful furtherance insulated from political interference.

The just departing month *Meskerem* (September) touches a special cord in Ethiopians' hearts. Spectrums of holidays that begin at the opening of the month, in a row up to the end, accentuate the month. The salient one is the holiday that rings in the new Ethiopian year, which showcases Ethiopians peculiar calendar.

On day one in this month a new calendar will be issued bearing the dates of major festivities of the year. This trend that turned an invaluable asset has been handed down to generations for long. It spans back centuries.

Though *Meskerem* is a common new year for Ethiopians almost all of the over 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia have their unique traditions and histories. Embedded in these cultures is found a mechanism whereby most groups specify their respective New Year.

Such traditional values of ethnic groups obligate a thorough research and preservation task, for beyond cultural significance the outcome of the study could serve as an input for anthropological knowledge. Especially people in the southern part of Ethiopia who boast of unique calendar. *Gifata*, *Yahode* and *Yoyo Meskela* are but to mention a few.

Also the festivity that takes a bright chapter and galvanizes a lot of attention in *Meskerem* is *Meskel* the finding of the true cross, a celebration that is globally unmatched in its kind. Because of this it is registered under UNESCO's intangible heritage list. The festival has been rolling under the time lane and passing down from generation to generation intact to date.

Irreechaa is an outdoor festival that takes place between the end of September and the beginning of October. The Oromo people heading to the riverside carrying lush grass express reverence and gratitude to God for allowing those separated by the rainy season rejoin again and also for promising a better tomorrow.

If these festivities individually or collectively pass under the microscope of research, they will garner stunning power from the whole world. If promotion works are done pertaining to the time calendar of the holidays, the intangible holidays will get magnetic pulls to draw multitudes of tourists from every corner of the globe. Not only that, the promotion works done ahead of time could extend the stay of tourists here creating a springboard for the thriving of the smokeless industry.

A concerted action on the part of stakeholders especially on tour operators is called for to the aforementioned end. But maintaining the nation's tranquility is exigent as peace is the fertilizer of tourism. Last but not least, such festivities create an occasion for acculturation and cohesion, tightening the bond of oneness or unity, which is a source of strength. *Mawlid* was also one of the Jewels in the crown of *Meskerem*.

Opinion

Realizing Africa's health sovereignty through health harm reduction

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

Recently experts from various countries of the world gathered in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh to deal with issue of health harm reduction in Africa. While usually health harm reduction is associated with addressing the health risks that emanate from substance abuse like drug use, alcohol and tobacco the conference has expanded the domain to dwell at length on ensuring health sovereignty of the continent.

The conference which was organized by a non-governmental organization called African Global Health (AGH) with the support of the African Union and the Africa CDC, aimed to empower Africa to take the lead in spearheading South-South initiatives aimed at collaboratively achieving health sovereignty in Africa and throughout the world.

At the conclusion of the conference, panellists have issued a resolution called Marrakesh Declaration which stipulated that the objective of ensuring Africa's health sovereignty will be achieved through Health Harm Reduction with a particular focus on water, environment, and food security in line with the relevant SDGs.

It indicated that with a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and equity, we envision a future where African nations not only achieve universal healthcare but also contribute their expertise and resources to uplift health systems across the global South.

As a developing continent Africa contends with various economic and social problems. The health sector is among the problems that Africa needs to give due attention. What makes health a due priority is that it determines overall prosperity.

Any country needs healthy citizen to be productive economically and socially. For this end it needs to put in place a health service system that fits in to the objective situation and financial situation of the people. It also needs health system that complies with the cultural and social values of the people.

Therefore all out efforts need to put in to consideration the needs of the continent to ensure health sovereignty. According to ethnobiology.net, the notions of health security and health sovereignty are analogous to the discussion of food security and food sovereignty. Similarly, the idea of health sovereignty includes the ability to choose medicines that are socioculturally and ecologically appropriate; thereby, providing practical, reliable and contextually relevant health care options. Furthermore, food and health sovereignty are interrelated; although not all medicine is food, food is often medicine.

Ethnobiology.net further states that health sovereignty relies on knowledge. Ecological knowledge is derived from the web of interactions between humans, plants, animals, natural forces and land forms. For example, presence of knowledge about medicinal plants is directly connected to their use. In addition, researchers can contribute to health sovereignty by building on local and indigenous knowledge and generating new

insights that are practicable for novel realities.

Africa is a diverse continent with multitude of culture and indigenous knowledge. That indigenous knowledge also encompasses diverse areas in health. This has been handed down from centuries of knowledge and experiment. Efforts that governments and concerned international organizations do to ensure health sovereignty in Africa must also consider the rich indigenous knowledge of Africans and support it with science, technology and research so that it can serve the peoples need to choose the medical treatment needs as well as the service that is compatible to their physical health condition, economic capability ... etc.

The participants of the conference have adopted a declaration at the end of their series of panels which pledges to promote strong collaborative work under the stewardship of African leaders and experts, both public and private progressing African health development.

It also signified the need to create a solidarity movement in which South-South expertise is mobilized and shared for continental sovereignty in health management. The other important issue it touched up on it the importance of fostering collaboration and thought leadership between African countries to create unified pan-African evidence-based health policies, health and disaster preparedness frameworks, and application of technology and innovations.

In this regard the initiative taken by Morocco to gather experts from Africa and across the world needs to be given due support by the governments of African countries and relevant non-governmental institutions that are working to improve the health service in the continent. Especially the issue of ensuring Africa's health sovereignty needs to be promoted as it can speed up the quality and accessibility of health service in the continent that is struggling to redeem the lives of thousands of its citizens from various types of illnesses induced by infection, contamination, food insecurity, natural disaster and climate change, among others.

More importantly the conference participants have also passed decision to adopt a Pan-African Charter for Health Harm Reduction that incorporates medical, social, economic, and psychological factors related to population health in diverse African communities. As Africa is forming various types of integration among countries in the fields of trade, transport ... etc, this charter would come as a handier initiative to advance the health sector along with all other networking and integration efforts.

It is to be recalled that the Second African Conference on Health Risk Reduction, took place in Marrakech (Morocco), under the theme "Health in Africa: Water, Environment and Food Security". It was organized under the initiative of King Mohammad VI by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests, in collaboration with the "African Global Health" association.

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



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News

Abbey Dam benefits downstream countries, stabilize flow : Expert

ADDIS ABAB –The Abbey Dam will stabilize the flow of water into the Nile River, hugely benefitting the downstream countries, Israeli energy expert told ENA.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, the solar energy developer Mikael Alemu said that the claim that the dam would affect the flow of the water is “scientifically irrational.”

Egypt has repeatedly been claiming that the construction of Abbey Dam will have a major impact on water flow into the Nile River.

Ethiopia's hydropower dam will, however, provide benefits to countries in the region as a source of affordable electric power and it is vital to manage drought and water stability.

According to the energy expert, Egypt's fear that the renaissance dam will stop the Nile water has nothing to do with technology and the reality.

The “Egyptian complaint on the Abbey Dam has nothing to do with technology and reality. Everything they are saying about this project is not scientific and hydropower engineering at least.”

As the project is set to generate electricity, the expert pointed out that the intention of the project can never be to stop water, Mikael added.

The expert believes that the dam is beneficial for the downstream countries especially for their agriculture development since the dam stabilizes the flow of the water.

“The idea of the dam is always to be the battery to stabilize the water when the flow of the Nile water is not enough. And you can get water from the dam. If there is too much water, you just regulate this. So for them it is very predictable and advantageous.”

Mikael stressed that the downstream nations should realize the dam will also have tremendous benefits.

Most importantly, the dam will hugely contribute to managing drought and stabilizing the water flow and as well as to avoiding floods, he noted.

The Israeli expert urged Egypt to abandon emotional thinking, adding that “it is not rational what people think about this project.”

For him, the non-scientific approach by Egypt has prevented substantive progress in the negotiation of the Abbey dam.

Moreover, Ethiopia has the right on the Nile River to develop its own territory and other countries downstream have to be convinced in this regard.

Acknowledging Ethiopia's untapped potential for energy development, Mikael said that the country has remained far behind to supply enough electric power in the country.

An economically developed country has at least one gigawatt of electricity generation per a million people, the expert noted, adding that Ethiopia has installed capacity for electricity generation at just five gigawatt, which is unbelievably little for a country of 120 million people.

The household electrification rate in the country has remained stubbornly low, at only 20 percent with more than 60 million people without access to electricity.

As everything needs electricity in this day and age, Mikael noted that is why it is the most important for the development of Ethiopia.

The expert urged Ethiopia to diversify its energy supply and invest more to accelerate the country's modern economy in all spheres.

He particularly stressed the need for generating electric power from wind, geothermal, solar panels from different resources without investing extra resources.

EU lauds Ethiopia's...

environment to create investment-friendly economy and other societal engagements that promote social cohesion, trust, and a culture of mutual respect and dialogue.

She said: “Under the Global Gateway investment strategy, the EU stands firm to build trusted and sustainable relations with partner countries including Ethiopia through core cooperation priority areas such as the biodiversity, agriculture, biodiversity, human development and governance and peace building.”

As to her, the EU has consistently supported these tracks to reinforce bilateral through structured political dialogue and rebuild a mutual reinforcing partnership.”

The recently announced EU's cooperation priorities for Ethiopia would be a springboard to advance Ethiopia's development in a transformative, inclusive and forward-looking manner.

Moreover, the EU's partnership will broaden its support to national policies to stabilise and improve the overall economic, financial and trade perspectives in Ethiopia.

Lauding the government's firm commitment on the sustained implementation of the Cessation of



Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), she underscored that EU looks forward to reinvigorating political dialogue with a view to promoting democracy, rule of law and human rights at all appropriate levels.

It was also indicated that the green deal would help the country to support policies and structural reforms to trigger innovative financing and private sector investments to advance Ethiopia's green transition.

It is to be recalled that under the Global Gateway investment strategy, Ethiopia and EU recently launched a partnership Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2024-2027 to mobilise resources for Ethiopia's stability, post-conflict reconstruction and macro-economic recovery.”

HalalaKela resort...

develop eco-friendly tourist destinations.

Birtukan was born in Dawro Zone of Southern West Ethiopia where the HalalaKela project is being constructed. She joined the resort by leaving her job at Ethio telecom where she had been working since her graduation.

Birtukan has never had a dream of working in the hotel industry. The presence of tourist facilities in the town inspired her to join the sector and gain a salary better than the previous one. Later on, she recognized that the benefit of the hotel industry for the country that's why she decided to pursue her education in the industry.

“I am very happy since the Halala resort come to my village. Previously the area was unreachable due to poor infrastructure. Thanks to God, when Dr. Abiy brought this project to our area, the hidden potential of the captivating nature of the site has become clear. Now things are changed, the natural resources are intertwined with tourist infrastructures and created mesmerizing scenery. The resort is now very beautiful, please come and visit us and spend a pleasant time,” she said.

It is not only Birtukan that benefits from the Project. The HalalaKela resort also created many jobs in which WalegnOnsilay, who transferred from Arba Minch Paradise

Lodge is one of the beneficiaries.

The HalalaKela resort is comfortable not only for workers but also totourists. “That is why I prefer to work here than any other places,” he expressed. The presence of the project is also created job opportunities for youth residing in the area, Walegn added.

The HalalaKela resort has hired 80 workers of which 72 are from the local community, said Rafile Onyango, General Manger of the resort. He stated that the number one priority of the resort is assisting the community.

“It is a magnificent and superior resort with all the facilities that tourists need,” he

said while elaborating that the resort has convention center accommodates about 200 people, a swimming pool, among others.

He also stated that the resort has luxuries rooms and a restaurant that can serve over 100 people at a time. “We also have beautiful accommodation of presidential unit, family villas and superior rooms. The food quality and service standard is super. This is what represent and make the place what it is,”the General Manger noted.

The HalalaKela resort is conducive for conferencing, food and beverage service that brings people to the area. Today it is receiving international travelers and domestic visitors, he added.

Celebrators outline...

becoming the common festival of all Ethiopians.”

For Mesfin Birhanu, another participant, the vibe of the festival and Addis Ababa residents' warm welcome highlight the role of cultural festivities and traditions in in sustaining the age-old peace of the country.

“*Irreechaa* enshrines the values of unity, brotherhood, tolerance, fraternity and togetherness. I am glad to be part of the celebration which would be of a great importance in promoting Ethiopia's positive image and giving an impetus to tourist inflow.”

This generation should display not only *Irreechaa*, but also other Ethiopian cultures and festivals. To ensure Ethiopia's holistic development, it is crucial to respect one another's values and the public should focus on common elements and nurture

the value of peaceful coexistence, Mesfin emphasized.

“I observed the youth and other segments of the society marking the festival while preserving its values. The communal observance of *Irreechaa* should be sustained as it would have immense importance in keeping the long-cherished value of tolerance and mutual existence of the society,” a member of the *Abba Gadaas* (Oromo community leaders) said.

Haadha Siiqqee (Oromo women tribal leader) Walebo Ture noted for her part that women have a great contribution to transfer the festival to the next generation while preserving its core values.

In the ceremony, Abba Gadass, Haadha Siiqqee, youth, participants from neighboring countries displayed cultural attire, and singing and dancing.

ICHREE termination...

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), European and American Affairs Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Zenebe Kebede indicated the country fully normalizes its relations with those who proposed the investigation. “The recent high-level visits of the EU including the Commissioner's stay in Addis Ababa is a manifestation for this.”

Mentioning the government's extensive diplomatic engagement for the termination of the probe, Ambassador Zenebe called the measure a huge diplomatic achievement to Ethiopia. “The investigation had no constructive mission other than threatening internal efforts to resolve human rights issues with transitional justice and reconciliation.”

The Ethiopian government has been opposing the investigation since the measure disregards its efforts to ensure reconciliation and lasting peace in the country. Even though some actors imposed the decree under the UN framework, they tried to force another one named Item 10

considering the end of the first one. “Currently, those actors cease the imposition and weigh on the importance of domestic frameworks to human rights issues.”

The diplomat further reiterated the government's commitment to collaborate with penitent human right bodies for positive and constructive outcomes. “Hence, we open the door to them to support us in the ongoing National Dialogue and transitional justice processes.”

Zenebe; however, stressed that the role of foreign bodies in the National Dialogue and transitional justice should be only to support the mechanisms adopted by the government.

“We have learnt a lot from the past war and should cease hostilities. Instead, justice and reconciliation has to be implemented. The government is also working with deep commitment to ensure justice. Independent institutions to facilitate reconciliation and transitional justice are also in place.”

Opinion

China's telling growth lessons for developing realm

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

China has been registering miraculous economic growth for the last successive four decades. This country can be taken a pioneer and exemplary for other developing countries like ours.

When the China communist party led by Mao Ze-dong assumed power by overthrowing the then-leader Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, China had been totally pauperized country in the world as the economy relied on subsistence farming and was vulnerable to climate variation. Experiencing famine due to agricultural failure was also a common phenomenon, and the country had been fragmented and governed by various warlords. The country's industrial development had also been in its infancy at that time.

As the economy was framed following the socialist strata and was command one, foreign and local private investment was banned. The Chinese economy was not able to galvanize capital from foreign sources as technology and knowledge transfer was unthinkable.

Land transaction cost was also diminutive enough because it was illegally privately owned and agriculture was also practiced in the form of collectivization. The Cultural Revolution introduced by the communist party had also pushed the country to a state of chaos.

Since the Cultural Revolution leaders labeled the intellectual segment of the society as reactionary, imprisoned and put in exile. Such an atrocious measure led the nation to the disadvantageous position. Consequently, the country lost what it should have obtained from the comprehensive capacity of intellectuals. As a result, loopholes were made wider for poverty to be aggravated.

The government led by the communist party took various measures to lift the people out of poverty and modernize the country, but attaining the objectives had been in vein. The sudden death of Mao Zedong in 1978 provided Xiaoping, who is often credited as the "General Architect," with access for power, and the reform was introduced by reformists within the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The CCP thence carried out the market reforms in two stages. The first stage, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, involved the de-collectivization of agriculture, the opening up of the country to foreign investment, and permission for entrepreneurs to start businesses. However, a large percentage of industries remained state-owned.

The second stage reform, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, had involved in privatization and contracting out of many more state-owned industries. The lifting of price controls was a major reform, and the lifting of protectionist policies and regulations soon followed though state monopolies in the commanding heights of the country economy such as in banking

and petroleum remained intact.

In 2001, China joined the world trade organization (WTO). Not long after, the private sector grew remarkably, accounting for as much as 70 percent of China's gross domestic product, (GDP) by 2005. From 1978 until 2013, unprecedented growth occurred, with the economy increasing by 9.5% a year. Ethiopia and other African countries can draw important lessons from these Chinese remarkable achievements.

The 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China was marked recently. Taking advantage of the anniversary celebration Chinese Embassy Deputy Chief Shen Qinmin said the comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership between Ethiopia and China has deepened the bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Embassy Deputy Chief Shen Qinmin at the vent stated that China and Ethiopia have jointly made great efforts to promote peace and development in the Horn of Africa in a bid to make contribution to peace, stability, development and prosperity. He also stated that the BRICS mechanism presents a new vision and new opportunities for the two countries' common development.

"Ethiopia plays an important role in regional cooperation and global progress. Therefore, Ethiopia's joining BRICS will bring new vitality and the momentum to the BRICS cooperation and thereby building the mechanism into a key platform for a fair and just global political order and economy with inclusive and sustainable development," he added.

According to him, China has been supporting development endeavors in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China helps Africa exert effort for putting modernization into a faster track. Moreover, Deputy Chief Shen Qinmin noted that both China and Ethiopia have been attaching due emphasis to green development.

He said, "The Green Legacy initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is highly impressive and goes in line with the concept of Chinese modernization characterized by a harmony between the human being and nature."

The deputy chief further elucidated that the two countries are committed to preserving the ecology and environment so as to effectively cope with challenges posed by climate change.

Finance Minister of Ethiopia, Ahmed Shide praised China for achieving a lot of results in terms of economic development, poverty alleviation and societal development in state institutions to become the pillar of global order over the past 74 years. As to the minister, Ethiopia is the best example as far as China-Africa cooperation is concerned. The cooperation between Ethiopia and China is very comprehensive and strategic, too.

As a result, the two countries have been working together in infrastructural

development, including railway, expressway, energy, telecom, industrial development and capacity building, among others. Ahmed further noted that Ethiopia's membership in BRICS is going to add new dynamism for cooperation between Ethiopia and China.

"The membership of Ethiopia to BRICS is the testament for the potential and bright future for Ethiopia, and for the comprehensive development and reform on which the country is embarking, given the population and geographic location."

Former President of Ethiopia, Mulatu Teshome on his part said that China has always been defending common interest in pursuing common prosperity of countries in Africa.

As Ethiopia is one of the most promising countries in the continent trekking at a faster rate than ever before, the BRICS platform will help it enhance cooperation with other countries. He said, "Our commitment to deepening cooperation with China and ASEAN countries for mutual benefit remains consistent."

African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson Monique Nsanabaganwa also said that China and Africa have forged an unbreakable fraternity in the struggle against poverty over the past 70 years. Africa and China have written a splendid chapter over mutual assistance amid complex challenges and set a shining example for building a new type of international relations, she added.

"We need to further open new prospects for China-Africa cooperation, expansion of trade and investment, experience sharing on poverty reduction, strengthening cooperation on the digital economy," she opined.

Nsanabaganwa reiterated that the African Union will continue to appreciate the Chinese accompaniment in the implementation of the global development initiative, which dovetails with African Union's Agenda 2063 and UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Ethiopia is a country with more than 120 million people and abundant natural resources, but due to lack of finance, technology and well qualified human resource and absence of steadily continued peace, the resource is not fully exploited. As the result, the country has still remained one of the poorest countries in the world. As mentioned above, forty years ago, similar to other developing countries, China was poor but within few decades it liberated millions of people out of poverty and recorded an historic and historical chronicle. Now it became the second economy in the world next to the United States.

Ethiopia has a potential to achieve economic growth and its past growth was proved by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The construction of infrastructures such as roads, rail ways, air ports, dry ports, industrial parks played pivotal role in

attracting foreign investment and boosting export and import. Ethiopia has vast areas of arable land and huge water resources that can be used for the cultivation of agriculture. But the country only utilizes 5 percent of its water resources for agriculture. Therefore, the ongoing cultivation of crops through irrigation farms must be strengthened. Particularly the dry season wheat production through irrigation has portrayed that the country can ensure food security.

Though agriculture is the mainstay of national economy, it is still in its subsistence form. China also passed through the experience of subsistence farming, but through time by increasing the utilization of inputs and fully exploiting the water resources, it could enable to produce surplus and become the major food suppliers to the world market.

Ethiopia can draw lesson from China's economic development regarding modernizing its agriculture.

Shifting the excess agricultural labor force to the manufacturing and the service sectors needs to be achieved well. Expanding manufacturing and labor intensive industries such as textile and sugar factories is vital to realize structural change. China has rich experience in expanding the manufacturing which could create job opportunities to millions and currently some of the China companies are engaged in manufacturing sector and created job opportunity for a number of citizens. Therefore, attracting more Chinese foreign direct investments should be continued.

As it is well known, numerous manufacturing firms have produced below average due to power interruption, shortage of hard currency and raw materials used as inputs. Such a sluggish situation has its own impact on productivity. Thus, pulling foreign investment as much as possible should be seen as a way out to mitigate the problems particularly shortage of hard currency.

In order to alleviate foreign currency crunch the government has given green light to foreign banks to operate here, but it has not been still realized. Therefore, sticking on the implementation of the decision is vital. The other sector which has the potential to attract foreign investment is the energy sector, which is mainly the renewable one like hydro power, wind, solar and geothermal.

The government has allowed foreign companies to invest in the sector and some foreign investors are already investing in the sector. The exploitation of the sector would boost the nation foreign currency garnering capacity in addition to easing the shortage of power supply. Therefore, strengthening cooperation with China helps realize technology and knowledge transfer.

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

Business & Economy

Relationship for economic progress revival

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

As Ethiopia is a developing country with undersized economy, it needs to cement association with development partners and mobilize resources from various centers and effectively as well as efficiently allocate it to make a difference.

The country has faced various challenges, among others, macro-economic imbalance, foreign currency crunch, foreign debt, inflation, unemployment, trade deficit, obsolete logistic system, which deter its development endeavors. Hence, apart from capitalizing on homegrown spheres, strengthening relation to mobilize resources from partners is essential to tackle hurdles and move steps forward.

The government has since long back established good relation with partners entertaining bilateral and multilateral maneuvers.

The already established relation with USA, European Union, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, China and others have brought about fruitful outcome, but maximizing the benefit through strong commitment is essential. Ethiopia has trade relation with these countries and exports agricultural products in its raw form and imports capital goods, industrial inputs chemicals and other materials. Ethiopia imports more goods than it exports to these countries, and this implies how the country finds itself in the negative trade balance and tries to fill the deficit. The nation should thus increase its exports in terms of volume and quality to overcome all these perplexities.

Instead of exporting raw materials, distributing them adding value would enhance the competency of the products in the world market. On the other hand, substituting the import goods by local products, in addition to reducing dependency on foreign products, enables to save the badly needed hard currency.

The partner countries, apart from having good relation with Ethiopia, need strongly support the country's development endeavor. The European Union can be cited as an example in this regard. The EU in the past provided direct budgetary support to Ethiopia in addition to providing development assistance. The United Nations development support to Ethiopia with its various institutions can also be rightly mentioned along this line.

Finance Minister of Ethiopia, Ahmed Shide, recently said that the European Union (EU) is an important strategic development partner for Ethiopia as it has been supporting the country's development endeavors in various areas. He forwarded this idea when he met EU Commissioner for International Partnership, Jutta Urpilainen and shared a range of issues with a view to strengthening bilateral relations between Ethiopia and EU.

Briefing the media after the discussion,



Promoting manufacturing industries is of the major step to help the nation boost economic growth

the minister said EU is a very important strategic development partner, which has been supporting the development of Ethiopia in various areas of growth, social development, and other support programs.

He said, "EU has been supporting Ethiopia's development in various areas in terms of growth, competitiveness, social development and providing multi donor development programs which has been supporting Ethiopia's growth."

Ethiopia and EU signed a new cooperation agreement which signifies strategic importance as well as strengthening development partnership between the two parties.

They also discussed how, through the Global Gateway initiative, EU businesses will be supported to invest more in Ethiopia, which is going to be very important as Ethiopia moves forward in terms of implementation of its homegrown economy reform. Such a bold move is also a fundamental pillar in leveraging private sector growth.

Therefore, attracting more investment is very important and EU is a major source of investment for Ethiopia and trading partners.

The commissioner on her part said that she discussed bilateral cooperation between the government of Ethiopia and the European Union. She further said that Ethiopia is a strategic partner for the European Union and important steps are forwarded.

As part of the visit, Ethiopia and the EU signed a 650 million euros cooperation agreement. According to the commissioner, the agreement is an important step which enables the two sides utilizes budget support to the selective sectors in the future.

She said that human development, peace building, governance, democratization as well as the implementation of Pretoria peace agreement through the national dialogue and transitional justice are the priorities of EU in its cooperation with Ethiopia. European Union supports Ethiopia to eradicate poverty, foster inclusive and sustainable economic, social and environmental development as well as promote human rights, democracy and other elements of good governance. Development aid further contributes to increase cooperation and dialogue in the

main areas of mutual interest, as identified in the EU Ethiopia strategic engagement.

Furthermore, European solidarity is being effectively and visibly ensured through prompt help and relief assistance to Ethiopian Population affected by various crises.

She also reiterated EU's commitment to support Pretoria peace agreement. The EU Commissioner had discussed the sidelines of the 78th UNGA, in New York on September 20/2023 with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen. During the occasion, the commissioner commended the progress that has been registered so far in due course of consolidating peace in Ethiopia.

She also stated that, the EU attaches special value to its cooperation with Ethiopia and appreciates the huge political commitment of the Ethiopian Government.

Obviously, Ethiopia is located in the very strategic place of horn Africa flanked by red sea, Gulf of Aden and the Indian ocean in the East. Considering the vitality of the Horn of Africa, many superpower countries including China established military base in Djibouti. The Gulf of Aden is the root which forty percent of the world petroleum is transported from the gulf countries to Europe.

It is also a populous country in the region with more than 120 million and this indicates that how the country is gifted by huge labor force which could be both productive and consumer. Being the origins of Nile water, it has been endeavoring for constructing Grand Abbay Dam, which is the largest in Africa, increased its strategic importance.

As it is understood, the government has an ambition to open the economic sectors to the private sector and took various measures among others introduced new laws, provided tax holiday and working place in a reduced price. However, the government has still a monopoly power on the economy and the role of the private sector is negligible and attaining sustainable growth is very hard in such a situation.

According to experts, liberalizing the economy encourages the private sector to invest more, work energetically, expand competition among firms and protect the economy from uncertainty.

The country, as compared to the other countries, is relatively stable and regarded as stabilizing force in the region. In fact, partner countries need to establish strategic partner and to that end they need to look the prevalence of peace, stability, good governance and rule of law thereby achieving the desired goals in Ethiopia.

The government mobilizes financial resources despite gaps due to budget deficit, and it is mobilizing resource from foreign sources for the effective accomplishment of the development endeavors.

No doubt, sustainable development is a prerequisite for poverty eradication, social development and the creation of an inclusive, strong and diversified economy.

The EU and Ethiopia engage in reinforcing mechanisms aimed at promoting decent work and the economy and social integration of vulnerable population, paying particular attention to situations of extreme poverty and social exclusion.

The two sides also look at ways of maximizing the social and economic impact of development cooperation while ensuring sustainability including through improved alignment of EU donors with the previous Growth and Transformation Plan and Ethiopia's Climate -Resilient Green Economy Strategy.

The EU works with Ethiopia to exchange information and best practices on issues related to education, vocational education and training and capacity building.

As mentioned above, the mainstay of the nation economy is rain fed agriculture which is vulnerable to climate change and global warming. Drought and extreme weather conditions have been the recurrent phenomena for years. When rain delays, comes early or absence, crop failure occurs followed by famine and displacement. Ethiopia for long participated in climate negotiation because it is the major victim of climate change, but not the major contributor to climate change.

Since advanced countries including members of the European Union are the major carbon emitters, they should show sympathy to the developing countries in the climate negotiation and should fulfill their pledge in reducing their emission to the atmosphere and in such a way can help the poor countries reduce poverty.

Planet Earth

Gov't must leverage research institutions' longstanding knowledge to achieve "Yelemat Tirufat"

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Research on animals is a broad topic that encompasses various areas of study. It can include research on animal behavior, physiology, genetics, ecology, conservation, and more. Animal research is conducted for various reasons, such as understanding biological processes, developing treatments and vaccines, studying diseases, and improving animal welfare.

Animal research is conducted in Ethiopia by a variety of institutions, including universities, research centers, and government entities. Livestock production and health, wildlife conservation, and veterinary care are all important areas of animal study in Ethiopia.

The goal of livestock production research is to improve the productivity and health of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry. This research attempts to improve breeding tactics, animal nutrition and management practices, and disease control in livestock.

It is important to note that animal research is governed by ethical norms and laws to assure the welfare and ethical treatment of the animals involved. Before doing any animal studies, researchers are supposed to observe ethical norms and receive essential licenses from relevant authorities.

More importantly, people have been employing animal products for food self-sufficiency because it is the practice of keeping and utilizing animals for diverse food sources to suit one's nutritional needs. This can include rearing animals such as cows, pigs, chickens, or goats for meat, milk, eggs, and other animal products.

Essential nutrients including protein, vitamins, and minerals that are required for a balanced diet can be found in animal products. By including these foods in their diets, people or communities want to rely less on outside sources for their food needs.

It is vital to take into account aspects such as the availability of adequate land for raising animals, acceptable animal husbandry practices, accessibility to veterinary care, and the capability to handle and process animal products safely to attain food self-sufficiency utilizing animal products.

However, animal welfare must be prioritized in this procedure. Ethical factors should be taken into account, such as providing animals with adequate housing, nutrition, and healthcare, as well as minimizing undue injury or suffering.

Furthermore, to reduce environmental



Assistant Professor Tibebe Manaye



Lecturer and Researcher Gemechu Taffa

consequences, sustainable practices should be employed. This includes reducing dependency on unsustainable feed crops by controlling animal waste, employing appropriate grazing techniques to prevent overgrazing, and investigating alternate feed sources.

Taking these factors into consideration, the Ethiopian government introduced the "Yelemat Tirufat" program in 2022. The program is a development strategy centered on nutritional opulence. The term "Lemat" refers to a traditional food container that represents the interaction between farmers, pastoralists, and consumers. It is all about getting enough nutritious food. The campaign's principal goal is to accelerate efforts in Ethiopia to attain food self-sufficiency at the family and national levels.

Moreover, the program focuses on generating high-quality animal products in large quantities. The Yelemat Tirufat will be implemented over the next four years, to expand dairy output, provide food security, create job opportunities, enhance exports, and substitute native animal products for imported ones.

The program has now begun with milk, eggs, chicken meat, and honey, and it will be expanded to other products after the results are evaluated. More specifically, the initiative intends to raise chicken meat output from 90 thousand tons to 296 thousand tons, milk production from 6.9 billion to 11.7 billion liters, egg production from 3.2 billion to 9.1 billion, and honey production from 147 thousand tons to 296 thousand tons.

Haramaya University (HU) School of Animal and Rangeland Sciences Assistant Professor Tibebe Manaye said that the program is vast and is being implemented across the country. As a result, for the program to be successful, the government and stakeholders must

support it through research.

Unlike crops, animal research is time-consuming and expensive, and it is a work that is being embraced by a generation. As a result, in any developing country, research on animals and consuming animals, chickens, and dairy products are considered a luxury. Even people start consuming them when their living conditions improve and their lifestyle is changed.

As a result, the government's efforts for the Yelemat Tirufat program are commendable and should be backed by research. Furthermore, the current focus of the country's decision-making bodies strengthens the efforts of higher education institutions, particularly Haramaya University, on animal research activities and implementation, he noted.

Haramaya University (HU) School of Animal and Rangeland Sciences Leader for the Animal Production and Health Research Sub-theme and Lecturer and Researcher Gemechu Taffa in his parted noted that the government's Yelemat Tirufat program will allow research institutes, independent researchers, and universities to perform essential work in the field of animal husbandry and poultry farming research.

Animal research is typically assumed to help future generations. Nonetheless, launching the Yelemat Tirufat program is critical not just for future generations, but also for ensuring food security and healthful foods for the current generation. For example, HU integrates the program with its longstanding extensive knowledge and experience. This will assist in making the program project-based, reliable, and sustainable, among other things.

Furthermore, firms around the world have monopolized chicken production, and no

country can use their chicks without their permission. Ethiopia can have its own, improved, efficient, productive chicken species in terms of meat and eggs if the government strongly continues the Yelemat Tirufat program by motivating and supporting research institutes to employ their experience and expertise, he said.

According to him, Ethiopia exports livestock, notably cattle raised in pastoral and semi-pastoral settings. Their meat is great and organic; however, it is less expensive in contrast to other countries. To make cattle pricing competitive, it is critical to fill the gaps through research. The pastoralists face water shortages, fodders insecurity, health issues, and educational challenges. So, without harming community customs and cultural values, it is also beneficial if the government and higher education institutions work together to ensure community ranches. Furthermore, universities and the government should work closely together to address market, health, transportation, and other difficulties.

In general, livestock production research is typically focused on increasing the productivity and health of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry. The goal of this research is to improve cow breeding processes, animal nutrition and management practices, and disease control. Furthermore, employing animal products for food self-sufficiency might be an attractive alternative for people or communities desiring greater control over their food supply. As a result, the government should leverage the research expertise, knowledge, and experience of livestock institutions to realize the "Yelemat Tirufat" program and provide improved strategies, policy briefings, and execution implementation.

Art & Culture

Irreechaa:

Time for prayer, reflection, and celebration

SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Ethiopians are distinguished by being a conglomerate of diverse communities that have a rich and unique culture in which they celebrate life and their Creator. Ethiopia has numerous and varied holiday seasons. The first five weeks of the Ethiopian calendar can be considered the time of the first holiday season. At no other time in the Ethiopian calendar are there so many different national holidays and cultural celebrations that create an exuberant spiritual ecstasy as at this time of year. This year, Ethiopians celebrate such colorful holidays as the New Year, Mawlid, Meskel and *Irreechaa*.

Irreechaa is a time for prayer and reflection, but also a time for celebration. It is a unique event celebrated bi-annually [in the fall and spring] in different parts of the country in places with symbolic meaning, such as on hills, lakes, riverbanks, and in the shade of large sacred trees. The main date for the celebration is the second Sunday in October. The locations symbolize the innate connection between the Oromo people and the natural world. The serene ambiance and mystical aura of these venues create an ideal setting for spiritual reflection and communal celebration.

Irreechaa ceremony is undoubtedly the time for one of the largest human gatherings in Ethiopia. The epicenter of the *Irreechaa* celebration has been at Lake Hora Arsadi in Bishoftu about 40 km south-east of the capital, where the Oromo people from every corner of the country would converge to celebrate thanksgiving day. The capital city, Addis Ababa, itself also is host to this major celebration, which some tourism experts described as a “miss it not” festive event.

The *Irreechaa* celebrated in spring is an ancient Oromo cultural tradition that celebrates the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvest season. The festival serves as a reminder of the collective strength and the unity that exists among the Oromo people. It is a significant occasion in the Oromo culture that brings together all members of the community irrespective of age, sex, and religion. During *Irreechaa*, the people gather at the sacred places and give thanks to the Creator for the blessings of the past year.

Some scholars explain *Irreechaa* as a thanksgiving, forgiving, and forward-looking expression day for the Oromo. They describe *Irreechaa* as the oldest form of monotheism. With the magnificent *Irreechaa* processions, the Oromo extend their praise and appreciation to Waaqaa (the Creator) for providing life necessities to human beings and other living things.

Irreechaa has links with the original way of life of the Ethiopians which is closely linked to agriculture. It is a vibrant celebration of the agricultural cycles that sustain the Oromo community and



all Ethiopians in general. As an agrarian society, the Oromo people deeply rely on the land and its bountiful offerings for their sustenance. *Irreechaa* acts as a spiritual and social event expressing gratitude for the successful harvests and hoping for future abundance and prosperity.

Celebrating the harvest is deeply ingrained in Oromo culture, and *Irreechaa* embodies this tradition. The Oromo people come together during this festival to express their appreciation for the abundance that nature has provided. Through joyful celebrations and heartfelt prayers, they honor the crops, the fertile soil, and the toil of farmers that sustain their way of life.

Moreover, the *Irreechaa* celebration also provides an opportunity to address important issues that impact the community. The Oromo elders urge the congregation to engage in dialogue, share ideas, celebrate their shared identity, and collaboratively work towards a better future for all.

During the *Irreechaa* festival, led by the wise men and the elders, the Oromo perform rituals of thanksgiving, to express gratitude to Waaqa (God) for the bountiful harvest and the blessings bestowed upon them throughout the year. This auspicious event is marked by colorful rituals, and cultural performances, with an overwhelming sense of unity. The unique processions and ritual performances of the *Irreechaa* festival are attended by an increasing number of foreign tourists.

The Oromo elders lead prayers for peace, prosperity, and togetherness and reflect on the values that bind their community together. They remind the young people in the congregation of the resilience, wisdom, and rich cultural heritage of the Oromo culture. They express their wishes and hope for a peaceful and prosperous future.

The Oromo traditional leaders, Abba Gedas, play a vital role in preserving and

perpetuating the traditions of *Irreechaa*. They carry the responsibility of passing down the knowledge, customs, and sacred rituals associated with this grand celebration from one generation to the next. Their unwavering commitment to safeguarding *Irreechaa* ensures that the festival remains an integral part of Oromo culture.

Irreechaa ceremonies are replete with symbolic elements that reflect Oromo’s spiritual beliefs and cultural values. Symbolic gestures, such as wearing traditional attire, carrying blessed grasses and flowers, and giving offerings to the spirits, permeate the festivities. These rituals serve as a tangible representation of the Oromo people’s reverence for their ancestors, their connection to the land, and their desire for harmony and prosperity.

During *Irreechaa*, the Oromo people adorn themselves in vibrant and intricately woven traditional attire. Ornate jewelry, distinguished headdresses, and meticulously designed garments grace the participants, adding to the majesty and uniqueness of the celebration. Each piece of clothing and every ornament holds profound cultural significance, emphasizing the pride the Oromo people take in their heritage. They also exchange gifts and enjoy traditional foods, such as foulda, a kind of porridge made from wheat, barley, and maize.

In addition to the traditional rituals and practices, *Irreechaa* showcases a diverse range of cultural performances. From vibrant dances to melodious songs, and other organized traditional performances that reflect the dynamism and diversity of the Oromo community.

Traditional dance is an integral part of *Irreechaa* celebrations, with rhythms and movements that reflect the spirit of the Oromo people. The Oromo perform a variety of traditional dances, each with its distinctive style and purpose. The “Warra

Qallu,” a dance celebrating Oromo culture and the beauty of community life, and the “Dhaanto,” a lively dance expressing joy and unity, are among the captivating performances that captivate participants and spectators alike.

The Oromo dance movements exude grace, strength, and profound symbolism. The Oromo elders explain the fluidity of their motions conveys unity and harmony, while the energetic leaps and stomps represent the resilience and determination the Oromo people possess. Each gesture and step holds a profound meaning, echoing the rich history and struggles of this remarkable community.

The vibrant sounds of traditional Oromo music fill the air during *Irreechaa*. Musicians skillfully play a diverse array of musical instruments, each instrument carrying a distinct tone and rhythmic pattern. The “Jaaloo,” a stringed instrument, resonates with nostalgic melodies, while the “Dagaa,” a drum made from hollowed-out tree trunks, infuses the celebrations with captivating beats. The harmonious blend of these instruments amplifies the captivating atmosphere of *Irreechaa*.

The spirit of gratitude permeates the atmosphere during *Irreechaa*, reminding the Oromo community of the importance of unity and collaboration. It serves as a moment for reconciliation, a time to put aside differences and come together in celebration.

Irreechaa promotes a sense of collective appreciation, fostering strong bonds within the Oromo society. It is celebrate with the spirit of inclusivity and harmony that defines the Oromo people. The Oromo from all walks of life partake in this event of gratitude and joy to strengthen the bonds that connect them and continue to strive for a bright future filled with peace, prosperity, and unity.

Society



Celebration of Irreechaa festival

Irreechaa: Festival of thanksgiving, peace, unity, fraternity

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Ethiopia is truly a land of diversity, with a rich tapestry of cultures and a home to various ethnic groups. The country celebrates a multitude of cultural practices and festivals, each holding their own unique significance. Some of the notable cultural and spiritual festivals in Ethiopia include Enkutatash, Timket (Epiphany), Meskel (The Finding of True Cross), Fichee-Chambalaalla (New Year festival of the Sidama People), Genna (Ethiopian Christmas), and *Irreechaa* (Thanksgiving celebration of the Oromo People). These festivals are not only cherished by the diverse nation, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia; but also eagerly attended and appreciated by tourists flooding to the country from around the world.

Irreechaa, specifically, is an annual thanksgiving holiday celebrated by the Oromo people in Ethiopia. It is a significant cultural and spiritual event that marks the transition from the rainy season to the sunny new season known as Birraa. *Irreechaa* holds deep roots in Oromo culture and carries immense importance for the Oromo community.

Traditionally, the festival is celebrated around the shorelines of rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water, as water symbolizes life and fertility in Oromo culture.

During *Irreechaa*, people gather in large numbers, adorned in traditional attire and carrying flowers and branches as symbols of gratitude and blessings. The festival serves as a moment of extending gratitude for all the blessings, offering prayers for peace, prosperity, and abundant harvests, and paying homage to ancestors.

In recent years, *Irreechaa* has expanded beyond its traditional location in the Oromia State, gaining recognition and participation from Oromo communities residing in

different parts of Ethiopia. The celebration has also extended to the capital city of Addis Ababa and the town of Bishoftu (Debre Zeit).

Irreechaa is not only a thanksgiving holiday but also a manifestation of Oromo culture and a symbol of Oromo national unity. It promotes peace, unity, and fraternity, emphasizing the importance of togetherness and considering the interests of others. As preparations are underway for this year's *Irreechaa* festival (2023) in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, scholars have been interviewed to shed light on the spiritual and cultural values of *Irreechaa* festival.

Tadesse Jalata (PhD), Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at Addis Ababa University, emphasized that *Irreechaa* represents the core values of the Oromo people. *Irreechaa*, as it centers peace, unity, and fraternity, promoting togetherness and considering the interests of others, serves as a symbol of peace that goes beyond individual interests and encompasses the well-being of the community as a whole.

The celebration of *Irreechaa* demonstrates the richness and diversity of Ethiopia's cultural heritage, providing a platform for unity, gratitude, and cultural exchange. It is a time when people come together to celebrate their shared values, strengthen their bonds as a community, and foster mutual understanding among different backgrounds and cultures.

Indeed, according to Tadesse, peace and fraternity are fundamental values of *Irreechaa* festival. He highlighted that peace leads to unity and tolerance making *Irreechaa* not only a celebration of Oromo culture but also a symbol of cultural identity and unity. The festival attracts multitudes from all over the country and abroad, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere that marks the diversity and heritage of the Oromo people.

Tadesse further emphasizes that *Irreechaa* is deeply rooted in Oromo culture and

encompasses both cultural and spiritual aspects. "Thanking the Creator is at the core of *Irreechaa*, bringing people together in a designated location to praise and magnify the Creator, regardless of religious differences or political affinities. *Irreechaa* also marks the transition to a new season and symbolizes hope. It is a time to express gratitude for the blessings and abundance of life, signifying the end of the rainy season," he reiterated.

Additionally, *Irreechaa* holds a strong connection between humans and nature. The physical objects used during the spiritual rituals represent the relationship between humans and nature, ultimately leading to the Creator, who is the source of all blessings and abundance. That is why the Oromo people celebrate *Irreechaa* in and around the bank of rivers, highlighting the importance of this relationship.

Getachew Tadesse, Researcher and PhD student in Gedaa System and Administration at Bule Hora University said that *Irreechaa* is a form of thanksgiving to the Creator and signifies the unity and fraternity of the Oromo people.

On the cultural side, *Irreechaa* involves the display of traditional Oromo culture. Individuals adorned in traditional attire and ornaments that represent the cultural values of the people. Seeing women and men, young girls and boys, adults and elders embellished with traditional attire is a common scene during *Irreechaa*. Cultural songs that reflect the society and cultural dances are integral parts of the celebration, showcasing unity, value systems, love, and tolerance.

The festival also features cultural troupes and performers who entertain the crowds with traditional songs, poetry recitations, and storytelling, highlighting the rich oral traditions of the Oromo people. Various rituals and ceremonies hold cultural significance, including blessings, prayers,

and offerings to express gratitude for the harvest and the blessings of life.

Furthermore, *Irreechaa* provides a platform for exhibiting Oromo culture through exhibitions. Artisans and craftsmen showcase their traditional crafts such as pottery, weaving, and woodwork, adding to the cultural experience of the festival.

According to Getachew, the day of thanksgiving, *Irreechaa*, takes place around sacred lakes such as Hora Finfinnee and Hora Harsadi. Festival-goers immerse themselves in the water, sprinkle themselves with freshly cut green grass, and engross the flowers they carry into the water. This practice is a way of praising the Creator, who is at the center of all the rituals, and has no significance to the physical entities themselves.

Getachew emphasizes that the Oromo people glorify the Creator and express gratitude for the blessings and protection they have received in the previous year. Through the rituals and cultural activities of *Irreechaa*, they praise the Creator, known as Waaqa or God, for various reasons. This includes seeking peace, fertility, mercy, and protection, as well as desiring increased agricultural productivity and cattle numbers. The Oromo people recognize the omnipotence of the Creator in their lives.

In terms of inclusiveness, Getachew highlighted that *Irreechaa* is now attracting participants from various ethnic groups in Ethiopia, representing different nationalities and peoples. Additionally, several tourists from around the world are seen enjoying the event. *Irreechaa* provides an opportunity for the Oromo people to come together, share their experiences, and strengthen their bonds as a community. It also serves as a platform for cultural exchange, enabling visitors from diverse backgrounds to learn about Oromo culture and promote mutual understanding.

Law & Politics

No deal better than a bad deal

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) represents a critical milestone in the development of the Horn of Africa and has the potential to unlock immense benefits for sustainable development and regional cooperation. Construction of the dam stems from Ethiopia's desire to harness its extensive water resources and drive economic growth through hydropower generation. Started in 2011, the project was conceived as a catalyst on Ethiopia's path to becoming a regional powerhouse and a key player in the sub-region's economic integration.

The GERD project is a critical step in Ethiopia's efforts to achieve economic independence. By harnessing the Abbay's immense hydropower potential, the country aims to eliminate its energy deficit and pave the way for industrialization and electrification. In addition, the export of surplus electricity to neighboring countries is expected to boost economic growth and promote regional integration.

Although the realization of the GERD occurred in the present generation, Ethiopians have been dreaming of utilizing the Abbay for several decades. In fact, the first feasibility study on the construction of a dam on the Abbay was done in 1964 during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, about half a century before the dam construction began.

Now, with the construction of the GERD nearing completion, Ethiopians have begun enjoying the bounty of the Abbay, like the Sudanese and the Egyptians, with the partial commencement of power generation. Ethiopians have practically demonstrated the possibility of utilizing the Abbay River without causing harm to the interests of the downstream countries.

The GERD has been filled four times under procedures in line with the Declaration of Principles signed by the tripartite states in 2015. Fortunately, all four years were blessed with heavy rains, and the filling was conducted at the season when the rainfall was at its peak. Even the Ethiopian authorities did the last round of filling in the later days of the rainy season as proof of their mindfulness of the concerns of their downstream states and the principle of good neighborliness.

Ethiopia is optimistic and genuinely committed to the successful outcome of the ongoing tripartite negotiation that has been restarted after a long hiatus. It has only been just over two and a half months since the Ethiopian and Egyptian leaders jointly declared their commitment to settle the GERD dispute with a negotiated agreement in four months. Therefore, it is too soon to declare the negotiation a failure, as some media outlets have tried to portray it.

The international media has intentionally

or ignorantly skipped the fact that the bottleneck on the path to a successful end to the negotiation is Egypt's fixation on obsolete colonial treaties from which it derives the so-called 'historical rights.' If the negotiation is to move ahead, Egypt must realize that the days when the Abbay served only Egypt and Sudan have gone, and agree to the formulation of a new equitable water-sharing arrangement. Thus, the compromise to bring a breakthrough in the GERD negotiation is expected from the Egyptians, not Ethiopians.

Robin Scher, a writer based in South Africa recently wrote: "A good example where a water-sharing agreement helped avoid conflict can be found in Southern Africa. In 2000, with tensions rising over shared resources, an agreement was reached between Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia that helped avoid further issues."

Political and geopolitical dynamics influence the GERD negotiation process, with external actors and regional organizations playing significant roles. Over the years, third parties have been involved as mediators, observers, facilitators etc to address the challenges surrounding the GERD negotiation. Diplomatic efforts, facilitated by regional organizations and international mediators, have sought to bridge gaps, explore compromise, and build trust among the parties involved.

External actors, such as the United States, the European Union, and countries in the Gulf region with vested interests in the Horn, have shown varying levels of involvement in the GERD negotiation. Sadly, geopolitical considerations, economic interests, and historic alliances have made their engagement and influence on the negotiation dynamics biased and unacceptable.

Let us see some instances. The Arab League has made several unfair statements on the GERD on various occasions. We won't forget the immense diplomatic pressure the Trump administration exerted on Ethiopia to sign a GERD deal it cooked up with an Egyptian recipe. Besides, there was shuttle diplomacy by the US officials at times when the GERD dispute was at fever pitch. They were roving around Jeddah, Cairo, Ankara, and Abu Dhabi etc.

No doubt, similar pressures of soft power and undercover diplomatic wooing are still active to seduce Ethiopia into signing a deal with the GERD that potentially compromises its sovereign power to utilize and develop its natural resources without causing harm to its neighbors. It is quite commendable on the part of the Ethiopian government to stay consistently open and ready to reach an equitable deal and defy all pressures against it to sign unfair and unjust deals. The Ethiopians have remained loyal to their mantra: better to have no deal than a bad deal.



The GERD project is a critical step in Ethiopia's efforts to achieve economic independence

The GERD has the potential to bring about significant socio-economic impacts and benefits for all parties involved. Assessing the potential economic benefits for all parties involved, the GERD's successful completion and operation promise immense economic benefits. For Ethiopia, it ensures sustainable energy supply, attracts foreign investment and drives economic growth. For downstream countries, such as Egypt and Sudan, access to reliable electricity and the potential for increased trade, investment agricultural productivity, as well as reduced risk of floods are substantial benefits.

Identifying areas of common interest and mutual benefit is crucial in building a foundation for cooperation. By focusing on shared aspirations for sustainable development, energy security, and economic growth, the three states involved in the GERD dispute can foster an environment of collaboration and ultimately find a mutually acceptable resolution.

The GERD negotiation is not only a challenge but also presents an opportunity for economic cooperation and regional integration, fostering a spirit of collaboration among all Nile Basin countries. The GERD can serve as a catalyst for collaborative

projects and infrastructure development in the region. Enhanced cooperation on energy trade, transportation, and trade corridors can unlock the economic potential of neighboring countries, stimulate regional integration, and contribute to mutual prosperity.

Of course that is not easy to achieve. It requires respecting the rights of others, willingness to compromise, and vision of shared prosperity. Establishing trust and fostering cooperation among the riparian countries present notable challenges. Historical disputes, differing priorities, and perceptions of power imbalances must be overcome through sustained dialogue, confidence-building measures, and a commitment to shared outcomes.

Applying the lessons learned from successful trans-boundary river agreements is essential to peacefully navigate the complexities of the GERD negotiation. By incorporating principles of equitable allocation, shared benefits, and dispute resolution mechanisms, the parties involved can forge a path towards cooperation, understanding, and sustainable development.

The GERD negotiation presents an array of future scenarios and potential outcomes, each with unique effects on the region's sustainable development. Multiple scenarios can unfold depending on the outcomes of the negotiation process. These scenarios range from a comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement that fosters regional cooperation to heightened tensions and conflict. Thorough examination of these scenarios helps to anticipate potential effects and formulate informed policies.

By learning from past water disputes, fostering transparent communication, and embracing cooperative approaches, the GERD negotiation holds the promise of promoting sustainable development, fostering regional cooperation, and ensuring a brighter future for all involved parties. We do hope that the Egyptians would come to their senses and respect Ethiopia's sovereign rights to develop its natural resources and recognize its entitlement to share the bounty of the Abbay River. We do hope the GERD negotiation would reach a breakthrough by the end of this year.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Bank Accounts Outdoors!

Aren't you tired of people who try to dump their own political, religious, current affairs etc. narratives on you, narratives mostly dangerously ill-informed and meant not to update you on any significant issue but to benefit them one way or another! As we raised earlier you are out for a walk to stretch your anatomy and sooth the aches giving you some hard time. Three or four of them practically block your way. If you're not familiar with such theatrics for a few seconds you might end up with racing heartbeats. After all, these days despite the how well people are dressed and how 'civilized' they look it's hard to know who is who. We're in times where exteriors could deceive you so much so you'd only wake up from your trance halfway down whatever slope you're sliding. Tough, real tough times.

Anyways such happenings could sometime fly off track and ugly scenes might ensue. People for one reason or another take such incidents personally and nothing less than some sort of attack to harm them and react with such fury things descend into physical altercation. That's what happened with a fellow we know some time back. At the time he was so furious with his bugling veins telling the greater part of the story calming him down was a mini-project sort of undertaking. Once the veins disappeared and the heartbeat normalized he tells us that these foul men literally stop facing him. Having come across such situations a number of times he just waves his hand like "I know what you're after and I want none of it." But they literally refused to let him pass and this time the fellow said, "I'm not interested, and tried to keep on moving. But one "heavyset guy," these were his words, just

kept stuck face to face with our fellow. The fellow was so angry he grabs the collars of the King Kong 'look alike' (Ha!) and yanks him to one side almost throwing him on the ground. He says all four were so shocked no one moved. Without apologizing or anything he continued on his way. We met him hours later and he still wasn't over with the whole incident. It's difficult to justify or even criticize his actions because such things are so personal.

On various occasions I've come across in the streets some guys who, maybe not word for word, promise me the 'Golden Key to Heaven' if I joined their group. Believe me I don't feel comfortable with such people. So I just act as if they didn't exist and kept on walking.

These days it is not only such people who try to pump some narrative into you in the streets. I'm not sure what kind of marketing strategy such moves could mean other than practically harassing people who are moving around minding their own business and most probably a hundred and one problems having taken their brains hostage. Such things maybe they are the latest moves before the Davos guys come claiming us as trophies for their 'Project 2030 or whatever. I mean issues like religion and politics are usually sensitive issues which people rather keep for themselves. And when the lines are invaded by others no wonder they sometime go into 'full metal jacket' sort of combative mood. In the information age we are in, there are lots of ways they could send whatever message they have. Why, oh why, do they disturb you in the streets? Yes, during such instances 'disturbance' is the word that

comes to many of us these days.

I don't know if they do it in other places. You know maybe the industry works better this way. But the 'street campaigns' of banks trying to convince you to open accounts in the streets is a little over the edge. You come across youngsters who approach you with all the forms to be filled. You don't have much money with you! No problem. I mean bank accounts or any such accounts are the most private things and doing it in the streets doesn't at all seem a very 2030 sort of move! (Ha!) "You can do it with fifty or a hundred birr!"

And there are those who try to sell you all those of telecommunication services like sim cards and the like. Well those might not be as private as bank accounts as long as you don't tell the world, "My password is..." But still being stopped in the middle of the street is not at all a good experience. These days there so many bad apples out there don't blame us for being suspicions of such actions. Unless you somehow share some of the capabilities of the AI thing it is impossible to even suspect what actually goes on behind those big smiles.

"She is the friendliest guy you'd find anywhere."

"How did you know that? As far as I know you two aren't chums."

"It is there for all too see! Haven't you ever seen her smiling? I tell you when that lady smiles the angles must be smiling with her." (Someone should send this whoever the lady!)

But things no more work that way. Smiles and sweet talks are no more litmus tests for real character. In fact they more than ever serve

as camouflages hiding the real character of people.

While we are at it there is this discipline factor of the mostly young people running the 'street marketing campaigns.' (I don't know where that came from! 'Street marketing campaigns!' No, that's not me. I mean with the Chat GPT and AI scare pardon me for being edgy! Hmmm...) I'm trying the discipline of the young campaigners isn't always nice and dandy. More than a few times I've seen youngsters by the side of the small tents promoting sim card or whatever actually dancing to blaring music! And in fact at least one time I think they played heavy metal music right in the open streets! And you know all the stuff about heavy metal music! Not nice; not nice at all!

Anyways all said from the people almost claiming, without using the actual words, that they were sent through some sort of divine intervention to save us sinners from the overcrowded hell, to the banking industry army trying to convince us to open accounts right under the very eyes of hundreds of passersby, to the tele services sellers things seems to be the new normal and we've to learn to live with a 'changing world.' By the way I didn't mention the mobile apparatus sellers who are nothing but a bunch of mobile snatchers, those who try to sell shiny watches probably taken from unsuspecting victims' wrists, memory cards, and what have you because this constitute the crime playing out under your eyes!

Opening accounts outdoors! I tell you that would be one hell of a decision to make.

'Living' by the Tongue

Maybe those who are fond of making speeches, or what they think are speeches, those who like placing themselves in front of cameras for interviews, opinions or even so-called expert advice should be charged hefty sums for every additional word they voice. How about that! Imagine the amount of quality time we would have saved other than preventing people from developing fresh stomach cramps or digging out the never-leaving gastric nightmares. What maybe we can do is tell what ever speaker, "It'd be a 500-word speech and no more. Others should get the chance to voice their opinions." And if Mr. Speaker he's too smart to stick to such directive smart and goes into 501 he should pay a sum which would really rock his wallet. The heftier the fine the better we would be. Well, you can place some "Maybe..." or any word that carries the same message in large fonts at the start of the sentence; because this is a big 'maybe' to the while idea which seems to have from some nerd who has lost three quarters of his brain's capacity. With brains already underperforming that would be a big problem. It's unluckily many of us think the longer our speech goes the higher our rating within the public. Nothing would be more slippery.

I have a friend who for long was a civil servant. He happened to be an employee of a certain organization where meetings seem to be the most important 'active duty' in the place. There would always be some reason to hold meetings and the brass, so the rumors go, liked it that way. Why? I'll tell you why. Now there were all kinds of stories that made the rounds about the brass taking home per dime which made the salaries of the midlevel workers chickenfeed.

The story would have been if they were against the meeting mania as it serves them as the cow which never ages old enough to decrease the amount of milk it produces.

Now my friend, who is one guy who seems to have nothing he hates more than meetings. By some not-so-nice luck his immediate bosses always assured he attended the meetings. But even then he was never of the woods. A few minutes into any meeting he starts dozing once past the first phases he helps like a doll despite all the sounds. As the number of meetings grew he relocated and sat somewhere in the middle trying his best to have a couple of taller guys in the seats directly in front of him. Yes, that worked quite well for some time as he dozed more without being noticed. But like many things that didn't last. Some ill-hearted fellow from among the staff reported him this bosses and he was in for some heavy real reprimand. He refused to accept the order to sit somewhere in the front rows during meetings saying that the brighter lights up front interfered with his vision. They didn't push him any further and he backslid even the more and started sitting in the very last rows. It was the smartest move of him. After that whenever he goes to meetings he joked "Let me have my nap." His hate for meetings wasn't without reason. It happened that most of the people who climbed the podium to make speeches made so long and so boring speeches that it was as some sort of torment. The game here is that going out onto the podium and making speeches was the foolproof way of making the bosses happy. You can imagine the flowery report the send to the upper brass about the 'momentous and

highly fruitful' meeting. In other words there are too many of us out here who try to climb all scales of life on the 'strength' of our tongues! Believe me these days there seem to be far too many of us who have decided to live by our tongues and do anything and everything to achieve our goals. That stark reality of 'modern' life is there are much fewer who live by their brains as many of us prefer to flex the muscles of our tongues.

Living by the tongue isn't about beliefs and principles. It is not about values, morale or anything like those. I mean those who have self-confidence and who don't need any ...

But of course it would not be wishful thinking that many times there can be self-destruction due to the wrong vibration of our tongues. Here is a piece of story courtesy of social media.

Two snakes are hanging out, when one asks the other... "Hey, are we venomous?"

The other snake replies, "I'm not sure."

"Well I hope not," the first snake says, "Because I just bit my tongue."

That's the most terrible thing to happen, wouldn't you say? I mean some sake dying with its own poison! So maybe just maybe those of us given to usage our tongues for the most venomous narratives better watch out because any self-bite might turn out to be a virtual catastrophe.

There's this thing we use frequently. Say someone asks you the name of a childhood chum who seems to have ended up into

something you never thought. Now during your school days he was so humble and well-mannered and controlled that his friends used to say he'd end up a preacher or something like that. And what is he now? A politician! "What? Are you kidding me?"

"No, I'm not. In fact he is executive member of some political party which I never knew existed!"

"So what does he preach as a politician? I mean are they liberals, conservatives communist or..."

I once heard some politician saying that his party 'so and so liberal.' I mean they put so much luggage before, and sometimes after, the word liberal you can't even say it correctly. The extra terminology could be so out of tune at least when you voice it! So he said his party was 'something liberal.' It might have been a couple of years and I don't know what they're doing. I mean it is so easy to talk these days no one presses you. I remember the journalist talking to the fellow never pressed him "Could you explain that so our audience wouldn't be confused..." or "What are the core beliefs of such" No he said they were something-liberal and that was that.

So maybe 'living by the tongue' could do wonders for some time to the practitioners. But then even the snake was worried if biting his own tongue would mean he'd be gone for good. And we never know when our own teeth do damage to our own tongues. That could in no way be a comfortable experience to any hard-boned person as even the snake worried for biting its own tongue.

In Pictures

Irrecha, Oromo thanks giving day, celebrated colorfully

BY DARGIE KAHSAY



Irrecha, a thanks giving festival among the oromo people, is celebrated annually between late September and early October. The festival is marked in Addis Ababa and in Bishoftu with the names of “Hora Finfinne” and “Hora Arsedii” respectively. The Hora Finfinne is marked on Saturday, while the Hora Arsedii is celebrated on the morrow, Sunday.

The 2023 Irrecha festival of the Addis Ababa version, Hora Finfinne was celebrated colorfully and peacefully yesterday. The people of Oromo gathered from all corners of Oromia region and attended the thanks giving colorful festival in Addis Ababa.

The picture shows Oromo Elders attending the Irrecha festival. Irrecha which is part and parcel of Gadaa System (Oromo democratic and political administration), is a bi-annual (one in September and the other in April) religious and cultural festival that takes place throughout the land, Oromiya among the Oromo Society.



The picture shows Oromo youth wearing the traditional Oromo cultural cloth taking lush grass and a stick in their hands. They are traveling to attend the Irrecha celebration and everyone celebrant wears a traditional Oromo cultural cloth.

The Irrecha festival marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of bright season. The people of thanks their God for the smooth transition from the rainy season in to the bright and flowery season. Irrecha is a thanks giving festival where the people of Oromo thanked Waqa (God) for the blessings and mercies they have received throughout the previous season and a praying for the new year.

The festival is a street carnival and the main part of the celebration of the festival conducts near a water, be it river or lake. The Aba Geda, traditionally elected leaders, leads the celebration program early in the morning with thanks and prayers to the creator. They take lush grass in their hands and soak in the water to thank God for all the blessings, including the rain that makes Oromia green.

The holiday is an inclusive holiday where celebrated without any religious, political, gender differences.



Women, wearing a traditional Oromo dress, taking a lush grass and flower are walking to the Irrecha festival to thank the creator for the peaceful transition from the black rainy season to the new bright season.